`Other Empire and Dynasty

Gurjara-Pratihara

Etymology

"Gurjara-Pratihara" is a dynastic designation based on two terms, "Gurjara" and "Pratihara". The oldest form of this designation is "Gurjara-Pratiharanvayah", as mentioned in the Rajor inscription in reference to the 10th century Pratihara king Mathanadeva. The modern designation "Gurjara-Pratihara" was coined during the British rule in India by British and Indian historians of the time, and ever since has become a standard name for this medieval north Indian empire.

The term "Gurjara" originally referred to a nomadic, pastoral people, believed to have been the predecessors of modern-day Rajputand Gurjar groups. "Gurjara" is also known to have been used in a geographical sense to identify a kingdom in southern Rajasthan and northern Gujarat as well as its inhabitants. The oldest written record of this term can be found in the book Harsha Charita, written around 7th century AD.

The second term "Pratihara" is the name of a clan or dynasty. The imperial records of the Pratihara dynasty derive this name from the epic hero Sri Lakshmana, who is believed to have been known as a Pratihara, because he was a "Guardian" of his brother Sri Rama's throne. However, according to some modern scholars, a Pratihara ancestor served as a "minister of defense" (or Pratihara) in a Rasthrakutta court, and that is how the dynasty came to be known as Pratihara.

Origin

The ethnicity of Gurjara-Pratiharas has been debated by scholars since the early 20th century. V. A. Smith, D. R. Bhandarkar, R. C. Majumdar and Baij Nath Puri have held that they were ethnic Gurjaras whereas G. H. Ojha and Dasharatha Sharma have maintained that they acquired the name by virtue of being rulers of the Gurjara country. The rationale for postulating a Gurjara ethnicity is that the phrase Gurjāra-Pratihārānvayah occurs in the Rajor inscription of the Pratihara feudatory Mathanadeva in 959 CE (interpreted as the Pratihara clan of the Gurjaras). The rival kingdoms of Rashtrakutas and Palas refer to as Pratiharas as Gurjaresa andGurjarendra (the Lord of Gurjaras). On the other hand, the Pratiharas themselves never referred to themselves as Gurjaras. Shanta Rani Sharma has also noted that an inscription of Gallaka in 795 CE states that Nagabhata I, the founder of the Imperial Pratihara dynasty, conquered the "invincible Gurjaras," which makes it unlikely that the Pratiharas were themselves Gurjaras.

According to a legend given in later manuscripts of Prithviraj Raso, the Pratiharas were one of the Agnikula clans of Rajputs, deriving their origin from a sacrificial fire-pit (agnikunda) at Mount Abu. This mythical story of Agnikula does not appear in the original version of Prithviraj Raso.

The Pratihara dynasty is referred to as Gurjara Pratihārānvayah, i.e., Pratihara clan of the Gurjaras, in line 4 of the Rajor inscription (Alwar). The historian Ramashankar Tripathi says that the inscription confirms the Gurjara origin of the Pratiharas. In line 12 of this inscription, occur words which have been translated as "together with all the neighbouring fields cultivated by the Gurjaras". Here, the cultivators themselves are clearly called Gurjaras and therefore it is reasonable to presume that, in line four too, the term bears a racial signification. The Rashtrakuta dynasty records, as well as the Arab writers like Abu Zaid and Al-Masudi (who allude their fights with the Juzr or Gurjara of the north), indicate the Gurjara origin of the Pratiharas. The Kannada poet Pampa expressly calls Mahipala Ghurjararaja. This epithet could hardly be applied to him, if the term Ghurjararajabore a geographical sense denoting what after all was only a small portion of Mahipala's vast territories. Tripathi believes that all these evidences point to the Gurjara ancestry of the Pratiharas.

Dasharatha Sharma believed that the term Gurjara was applied to territory and concluded that, although some sections of the Pratiharas (e.g. the one to which Mathanadeva belonged) were Gurjaras by ethnicity, the imperial Pratiharas of Kannauj were not Gurjaras. The Gurjara country is mentioned in Bana's Harshacharita (7th century CE). It is described in detail as a beautiful country in Udyotana Suri's Kuvalayamala (8th century CE, composed in Jalore), whose residents are also referred to as Gurjaras. Xuanzang (7th century CE) refers to the Gurjara country (Ku-che-lo) with its capital at Bhinmal (Pi-lo-mo-lo). The fourth book of Panchatantra contains the story of a rathakāra (charioteer) who went to a Gurjara village in the Gurjara country in search of camels. Al Baladhuri's chronicle of Al Junayd's expeditions (723-726 CE), the Navsari grant of Avanijanashraya Pulakesi (738-739 CE) and the Ragholi plate (8th century) refer to Gurjara as a country. According to K. M. Munshi, the people residing in the Gurjaradesa, whenever they migrated to other parts of the country, were known as Gurjaras. V. B. Mishra concludes that the expression Gurjara Pratihārānvayah may very reasonably be taken to mean the Pratihara family of the Gurjara country.

Rulers

Gurjara-Pratihara rulers (650–1036 AD)	
Nagabhata I	(730–760)
Kakkuka and Devaraja	(760–780)

Vatsaraja	(780–800)
Nagabhata II	(800–833)
Ramabhadra	(833–836)
Mihira Bhoja I	(836–885)
Mahendrapala I	(885–910)
Bhoja II	(910–913)
Mahipala I	(913–944)
Mahendrapala II	(944–948)
Devapala	(948–954)
Vinayakapala	(954–955)
Mahipala II	(955–956)
Vijayapala II	(956–960)
Rajapala	(960–1018)
Trilochanapala	(1018–1027)
Jasapala (Yashpala)	(1024–1036)

Early rulers

Harichandra is said to have laid the foundation of this dynasty in the 6th century. He created a small kingdom at Bhinmal around 550 A.D. after the fall of the Gupta Empire. The Harichandra line of Gurjara-Pratiharas established the state of Marwar, based at Mandore near modernJodhpur, which grew to dominate Rajasthan. The Pratihara rulers of Marwar also built the temple-city of Osian.

Expansion

Nagabhata I (730–756) extended his control east and south from Mandor, conquering Malwa as far as Gwalior and the port of Bharuch in Gujarat. He established his capital at Avanti in Malwa, and checked the expansion of the Arabs, who had established themselves in Sind. In thisBattle of Rajasthan (738 CE) Nagabhata led a confedracy of Gurjara-Pratiharas to defeat the Muslim Arabs who had till then been pressing on victorious through West Asia and Iran. Nagabhata I was followed by two weak successors, who were in turn succeeded by Vatsraja (775–805). Vatsraja is the greatest king of the pratihara dynasty.

Conquest of Kannauj and further expansion

The metropolis of Kannauj had suffered a power vacuum following the death of Harsha without an heir, which resulted in the disintegration of the Empire of Harsha. This space was eventually filled by Yashovarman around a century later but his position was dependent upon an alliance with Lalitaditya Muktapida. When Muktapida undermined Yashovarman, a tri-partite struggle for control of the city developed, involving the Pratiharas, whose territory was at that time to the west and north, the Palas of Bengal in the east and the Rashtrakutas, whose base lay at the south in the Deccan. Vatsraja successfully challenged and defeated the Pala ruler Dharmapala and Dantidurga, the Rashtrakuta king, for control of Kannauj.

Around 786, the Rashtrakuta ruler Dhruva (c. 780–793) crossed the Narmada River into Malwa, and from there tried to capture Kannauj. Vatsraja was defeated by the Dhruva Dharavarsha of the Rashtrakuta dynasty around 800. Vatsraja was succeeded by Nagabhata II (805–833), who was initially defeated by the Rashtrakuta ruler Govinda III (793–814), but later recovered Malwa from the Rashtrakutas, conquered Kannauj and the Indo-Gangetic Plain as far as Bihar from the Palas, and again checked the Muslims in the west. He rebuilt the great Shiva temple atSomnath in Gujarat, which had been demolished in an Arab raid from Sindh. Kannauj became the center of the Gurjara-Pratihara state, which covered much of northern India during the peak of their power, c. 836–910.

Rambhadra (833-c. 836) briefly succeeded Nagabhata II. Mihira Bhoja I (c. 836–886) expanded the Pratihara dominions west to the border of Sind, east to Bengal, and south to the Narmada. His son, Mahenderpal I (890–910), expanded further eastwards in Magadha, Bengal, andAssam

Decline

Bhoj II (910–912) was overthrown by Mahipala I (912–914). Several feudatories of the empire took advantage of the temporary weakness of the Gurjara-Pratiharas to declare their independence, notably the Paramaras of Malwa, the Chandelas of Bundelkhand, and the Kalachuris ofMahakoshal. The south Indian Emperor Indra III (c.914–928) of the Rashtrakuta dynasty briefly captured Kannauj in 916, and although the Pratiharas regained the city, their position continued to weaken in the 10th century, partly as a result of the drain of simultaneously fighting off Turkic attacks from the west, the attacks from the Rashtrakuta dynasty from the south and the Pala advances in the east. The Gurjara-Pratiharas lost control of Rajasthan to their feudatories, and the Chandelas captured the strategic fortress of Gwalior in central India, c. 950. By the end of the 10th century the Gurjara-Pratihara domains had dwindled to a small state centered on Kannauj.

Mahmud of Ghazni captured Kannauj in 1018, and the Pratihara ruler Rajapala fled. The Chandela ruler Ganda captured and killed Rajapala, placing Rajapala's son Trilochanpala on the throne as a proxy. Jasapala, the last Gurjara-Pratihara ruler of Kannauj, died in 1036.

Gurjara-Pratihara art

There are notable examples of architecture from the Gurjara-Pratihara era, including sculptures and carved panels Their temples, constructed in an open pavilion style, were particularly impressive at Khajuraho.

Battle of Rajasthan

Junaid, the successor of Qasim, finally subdued the Hindu resistance within Sindh. Taking advantage of the conditions in Western India, which at that time was covered with several small states, Junaid led a large army into the region in early 738 CE. Dividing this force into two he plundered several cities in southern Rajasthan, western Malwa, and Gujarat.

Indian inscriptions confirm this invasion but record the Arab success only against the smaller states in Gujarat. They also record the defeat of the Arabs at two places. The southern army moving south into Gujarat was repulsed at Navsari by the south Indian Emperor Vikramaditya II of theChalukya dynasty and Rashtrakutas. The army that went east, after sacking several places, reached Avanti whose ruler Nagabhata (Gurjara-Pratihara) trounced the invaders and forced them to flee. After his victory Nagabhata took advantage of the disturbed conditions to acquire control over the numerous small states up to the border of Sindh.

Junaid probably died from the wounds inflicted in the battle with the Gurjara-Pratihara. His successor Tamin organized a fresh army and attempted to avenge Junaid's defeat towards the close of the year 738 CE. But this time Nagabhata], with his Chauhan and Guhilot feudatories, met the Muslim army before it could leave the borders of Sindh. The battle resulted in the complete rout of the Arabs who fled broken into Sindh with the Gurjara-Pratihara close behind them.

The Arabs crossed over to the other side of the Indus River, abandoning all their lands to the victorious Hindus. The local chieftains took advantage of these conditions to re-establish their independence. Subsequently the Arabs constructed the city of Mansurah on the other side of the wide and deep Indus, which was safe from attack. This became their new capital in Sindh. Thus began the reign of the imperial Gurjara-Pratiharas.

In the Gwalior inscription, it is recorded that Gurjara-Pratihara emperor Nagabhata "crushed the large army of the powerful Mlechcha king." This large army consisted of cavalry, infantry, siege artillery, and probably a force of camels. Since Tamin was a new governor he had a force of Syrian cavalry from Damascus, local Arab contingents, converted Hindus of Sindh, and foreign mercenaries like the Turkics. All together the invading army may have had anywhere between 10–15,000 cavalry, 5000 infantry, and 2000 camels.

The Arab chronicler Sulaiman describes the army of the Pratiharas as it stood in 851 CE, "The ruler of Gurjars maintains numerous forces

and no other Indian prince has so fine a cavalry. He is unfriendly to the Arabs, still he acknowledges that the king of the Arabs is the greatest of rulers. Among the princes of India there is no greater foe of the Islamicfaith than he. He has got riches, and his camels and horses are numerous."

Rashtrakuta dynasty

History

Rashtrakuta Emperors (753-982)	
Dantidurga	(735 - 756)
Krishna I	(756 - 774)
Govinda II	(774 - 780)
Dhruva Dharavarsha	(780 - 793)
Govinda III	(793 - 814)
Amoghavarsha	(814 - 878)
Krishna II	(878 - 914)
Indra III	(914 -929)
Amoghavarsha II	(929 - 930)
Govinda IV	(930 – 936)
Amoghavarsha III	(936 – 939)
Krishna III	(939 – 967)
Khottiga Amoghavarsha	(967 – 972)
Karka II	(972 – 973)
Indra IV	(973 – 982)
Tailapa II (***Western Chalukyas***)	(973-997)

The origin of the Rashtrakuta dynasty has been a controversial topic of Indian history. These issues pertain to the origin of the earliest ancestors of the Rashtrakutas during the time of Emperor Ashoka in the 2nd century BCE,[2] and the connection between the several Rashtrakuta dynasties that ruled small kingdoms in northern and central India and the Deccan between the 6th and 7th centuries. The relationship of these medieval Rashtrakutas to the most famous later dynasty, the Rashtrakutas of Manyakheta(present day Malkhed in the Gulbarga district, Karnataka state), who ruled between the 8th and 10th centuries has also been debated.

The sources for Rashtrakuta history include medieval inscriptions, ancient literature in the Pali language,[6] contemporaneous literature in Sanskrit and Kannada and the notes of the Arab travellers. Theories about the dynastic lineage (Surya Vamsa—Solar line and Chandra Vamsa—Lunar line), the native region and the ancestral home have been proposed, based on information gleaned from inscriptions, royal emblems, the ancient clan names such as "Rashtrika", epithets (Ratta, Rashtrakuta, Lattalura Puravaradhiswara), the names of princes and princesses of the dynasty, and clues from relics such as coins. Scholars debate over which ethnic/linguistic groups can claim the early Rashtrakutas. Possibilities include the north western ethnic groups of India, the Kannadiga, Reddi, the Maratha, or the tribes from the Punjab region.

Scholars however concur that the rulers of the imperial dynasty in the 8th to 10th century made the Kannada language as important as Sanskrit. Rashtrakuta inscriptions use both Kannada and Sanskrit (historians Sheldon Pollock and Jan Houben claim they are mostly in Kannada), and the rulers encouraged literature in both languages. The earliest existing Kannada literary writings are credited to their court poets and royalty. Though these Rashtrakutas were Kannadigas, they were conversant in a northern Deccan language as well.

The heart of the Rashtrakuta empire included nearly all of Karnataka, Maharashtra and parts of Andhra Pradesh, an area which the Rashtrakutas ruled for over two centuries. The Samangadh copper plate grant (753) confirms that the feudatory King Dantidurga, who probably ruled from Achalapura in Berar (modern Elichpur in Maharashtra), defeated the great Karnatic army (referring to the army of theBadami Chalukyas) of Kirtivarman II of Badami in 753 and took control of the northern regions of the Chalukya empire. He then helped his father-in-law, Pallava King Nandivarman regain Kanchi from the Chalukyas and defeated the Gurjaras of Malwa, and the rulers of Kalinga, Kosala and Srisailam.[33][34]

Dantidurga's successor Krishna I brought major portions of present-day Karnataka and Konkan under his control. During the rule of Dhruva Dharavarsha who took control in 780, the kingdom expanded into an empire that encompassed all of the territory between theKaveri River and Central India. He led successful expeditions to Kannauj, the seat of northern Indian power where he defeated the Gurjara Pratiharas and the Palas of Bengal, gaining him fame and vast

booty but not more territory. He also brought the Eastern Chalukyas and Gangas of Talakad under his control. According to Altekar and Sen, the Rashtrakutas became a pan-India power during his rule.

Expansion

The ascent of Dhruva Dharavarsha's third son, Govinda III, to the throne heralded an era of success like never before. There is uncertainty about the location of the early capital of the Rashtrakutas at this time. During his rule there was a three way conflict between the Rashtrakutas, the Palas and the Pratiharas for control over the Gangetic plains. Describing his victories over the Pratihara Emperor Nagabhatta II and the Pala Emperor Dharmapala, the Sanjan inscription states the horses of Govinda III drank from the icy waters of the Himalayan streams and his war elephants tasted the sacred waters of the Ganges. His military exploits have been compared to those of Alexander the Great and Arjuna of Mahabharata.[48] Having conquered Kannauj, he travelled south, took firm hold over Gujarat, Kosala (Kaushal), Gangavadi, humbled the Pallavas of Kanchi, installed a ruler of his choice in Vengi and received two statues as an act of submission from the king of Ceylon (one statue of the king and another of his minister). The Cholas, the Pandyas and the Cheras all paid him tribute. As one historian puts it, the drums of the Deccan were heard from the Himalayan caves to the shores of the Malabar. The Rashtrakutas empire now spread over the areas from Cape Comorin to Kannauj and from Banaras toBroach.

The successor of Govinda III, Amoghavarsha I made Manyakheta his capital and ruled a large empire. Manyakheta remained the Rashtrakutas' regal capital until the end of the empire. He came to the throne in 814 but it was not until 821 that he had suppressed revolts from feudatories and ministers. Amoghavarsha I made peace with the Western Ganga dynasty by giving them his two daughters in marriage, and then defeated the invading Eastern Chalukyas at Vingavalli and assumed the title Viranarayana. His rule was not as militant as that of Govinda III as he preferred to maintain friendly relations with his neighbours, the Gangas, the Eastern Chalukyas and the Pallavas with whom he also cultivated marital ties. His era was an enriching one for the arts, literature and religion. Widely seen as the most famous of the Rashtrakuta Emperors, Amoghavarsha I was an accomplished scholar in Kannada and Sanskrit. His Kavirajamarga is considered an important landmark in Kannada poetics and Prashnottara Ratnamalika in Sanskrit is a writing of high merit and was later translated into the Tibetan language. Because of his religious temperament, his interest in the arts and literature and his peace-loving nature, he has been compared to the emperor Ashoka and called "Ashoka of the South".

During the rule of Krishna II, the empire faced a revolt from the Eastern Chalukyas and its size decreased to the area including most of the Western Deccan and Gujarat. Krishna II ended the independent status of the Gujarat branch and brought it under direct control from Manyakheta. Indra III recovered the dynasty's fortunes in central India by defeating the Paramara and then invaded the doab region of the Ganges and Jamuna rivers. He also defeated the dynasty's

traditional enemies, the Pratiharas and the Palas, while maintaining his influence over Vengi. The effect of his victories in Kannauj lasted several years according to the 930 copper plate inscription of Emperor Govinda IV. After a succession of weak kings during whose reigns the empire lost control of territories in the north and east, Krishna III the last great ruler consolidated the empire so that it stretched from the Narmada River to Kaveri River and included the northern Tamil country (Tondaimandalam) while levying tribute on the king of Ceylon.

Decline

In 972 A.D., during the rule of Khottiga Amoghavarsha, the Paramara King Siyaka Harsha attacked the empire and plundered Manyakheta, the capital of the Rashtrakutas. This seriously undermined the reputation of the Rastrakuta Empire and consequently led to its downfall. The final decline was sudden as Tailapa II, a feudatory of the Rashtrakuta ruling from Tardavadi province in modern Bijapur district, declared himself independent by taking advantage of this defeat. Indra IV, the last emperor, committed Sallekhana (fasting unto death practised by Jain monks) at Shravanabelagola. With the fall of the Rashtrakutas, their feudatories and related clans in the Deccan and northern India declared independence. The Western Chalukyas annexed Manyakheta and made it their capital until 1015 and built an impressive empire in the Rashtrakuta heartland during the 11th century. The focus of dominance shifted to the Krishna River – Godavari River doab called Vengi. The former feudatories of the Rashtrakutas in western Deccan were brought under control of the Chalukyas, and the hitherto-suppressed Cholas of Tanjore became their arch enemies in the south.

In conclusion, the rise of Rashtrakutas of Manyakheta had a great impact on India, even on India's north. Sulaiman (851), Al Masudi (944) and Ibn Khurdadba (912) wrote that their empire was the largest in contemporary India and Sulaiman further called it one among the four great contemporary empires of the world. According to the travelogues of the Arabs Al Masudi and Ibn Khordidbih of the 10th century, "most of the kings of Hindustan turned their faces towards the Rashtrakuta king while they were praying, and they prostrated themselves before his ambassadors. The Rashtrakuta king was known as the "King of kings" (Rajadhiraja) who possessed the mightiest of armies and whose domains extended from Konkan to Sind." Some historians have called these times an "Age of Imperial Kannauj". Since the Rashtrakutas successfully captured Kannauj, levied tribute on its rulers and presented themselves as masters of North India, the era could also be called the "Age of Imperial Karnataka". During their political expansion into central and northern India in the 8th to the 10th centuries, the Rashtrakutas or their relatives created several kingdoms that either ruled during the reign of the parent empire or continued to rule for centuries after the its fall or came to power much later. Well-known among these were the Rashtrakutas of Gujarat (757–888), theRattas of Saundatti (875–1230) in modern Karnataka, the Gahadavalas of Kannauj (1068–1223), the Rashtrakutas of Rajasthan (known as Rajputana) and ruling from Hastikundi or Hathundi (893–996), Dahal (near Jabalpur), Mandore (near Jodhpur), the Rathores of Dhanop, Rashtraudha dynasty of Mayuragiri in modern

Maharashtra and Rashtrakutas of Kannauj. Rajadhiraja Chola's conquest of the island of Ceylon in the early 11th century CE led to the fall of four kings there. According to historian K. Pillay, one of them, King Madavarajah of the Jaffna kingdom, was an usurper from the Rashtrakuta Dynasty.

Administration

Inscriptions and other literary records indicate the Rashtrakutas selected the crown prince based on heredity. The crown did not always pass on to the eldest son. Abilities were considered more important than age and chronology of birth, as exemplified by the crowning of Govinda III who was the third son of king Dhruva Dharavarsha. The most important position under the king was the Chief Minister (Mahasandhivigrahi) whose position came with five insignia commensurate with his position namely, a flag, a conch, a fan, a white umbrella, a large drum and five musical instruments called Panchamahashabdas. Under him was the commander (Dandanayaka), the foreign minister (Mahakshapataladhikrita) and a prime minister (Mahamatya or Purnamathya), all of whom were usually associated with one of the feudatory kings and must have held a position in government equivalent to a premier. AMahasamantha was a feudatory or higher ranking regal officer. All cabinet ministers were well versed in political science (Rajneeti) and possessed military training. There were cases where women supervised significant areas as when Revakanimaddi, daughter ofAmoghavarsha I, administered Edathore Vishaya.

The kingdom was divided into Mandala or Rashtras (provinces). A Rashtra was ruled by a Rashtrapathi who on occasion was the emperor himself. Amoghavarsha I's empire had sixteen Rashtras. Under a Rashtra was a Vishaya (district) overseen by a Vishayapathi. Trusted ministers sometimes ruled more than a Rashtra. For example, Bankesha, a commander of Amoghavarsha Iheaded Banavasi-12000, Belvola-300, Puligere-300, Kunduru-500 and Kundarge-70, the suffix designating the number of villages in that territory. Below the Vishaya was the Nadu looked after by the Nadugowda or Nadugavunda; sometimes there were two such officials, one assuming the position through heredity and another appointed centrally. The lowest division was a Grama or village administered by a Gramapathi or Prabhu Gavunda.

The Rashtrakuta army consisted of large contingents of infantry, horsemen, and elephants. A standing army was always ready for war in a cantonment (Sthirabhuta Kataka) in the regal capital of Manyakheta. Large armies were also maintained by the feudatory kings who were expected to contribute to the defense of the empire in case of war. Chieftains and all the officials also served as commanders whose postings were transferable if the need arose.

The Rashtrakutas issued coins (minted in an Akkashale) such as Suvarna, Drammas in silver and gold weighing 65 grains, Kalanjuweighing 48 grains, Gadyanaka weighing 96 grains, Kasu weighing 15 grains, Manjati with 2.5 grains and Akkam of 1.25 grain.

Economy

The Rashtrakuta economy was sustained by its natural and agricultural produce, its manufacturing revenues and moneys gained from its conquests. Cotton was the chief crop of the regions of southern Gujarat, Khandesh and Berar. Minnagar, Gujarat, Ujjain, Paithan and Tagara were important centres of textile industry. Muslin cloth were manufactured in Paithan and Warangal. The cotton yarn and cloth was exported from Bharoch. White calicos were manufactured in Burhanpur and Berar and exported to Persia, Turkey, Poland, Arabiaand Egypt. The Konkan region, ruled by the feudatory Silharas, produced large quantities of betel leaves, coconut and rice while the lush forests of Mysore, ruled by the feudatory Gangas, produced such woods as sandal, timber, teak and ebony. Incense and perfumes were exported from the ports of Thana and Saimur.

The Deccan was rich in minerals, though its soil was not as fertile as that of the Gangetic plains. The copper mines of Cudappah, Bellary, Chanda, Buldhana, Narsingpur, Ahmadnagar, Bijapur and Dharwar were an important source of income and played an important role in the economy. Diamonds were mined in Cudappah, Bellary, Kurnool and Golconda; the capital Manyakheta and Devagiri were important diamond and jewellery trading centres. The leather industry and tanning flourished in Gujarat and some regions of northern Maharashtra.Mysore with its vast elephant herds was important for the ivory industry.

The Rashtrakuta empire controlled most of the western sea board of the subcontinent which facilitated its maritime trade. The Gujarat branch of the empire earned a significant income from the port of Bharoch, one of the most prominent ports in the world at that time. The empire's chief exports were cotton yarn, cotton cloth, muslins, hides, mats, indigo, incense, perfumes, betel nuts, coconuts, sandal, teak, timber, sesame oil and ivory. Its major imports were pearls, gold, dates from Arabia, slaves, Italian wines, tin, lead, topaz, storax, sweet clover, flint glass, antimony, gold and silver coins, singing boys and girls (for the entertainment of the royalty) from other lands. Trading in horses was an important and profitable business, monopolised by the Arabs and some local merchants. The Rashtrakuta government levied a shipping tax of one golden Gadyanaka on all foreign vessels embarking to any other ports and a fee of one silver Ctharna (a coin) on vessels travelling locally.

Artists and craftsman operated as corporations (guilds) rather than as individual business. Inscriptions mention guilds of weavers, oilmen, artisans, basket and mat makers and fruit sellers. A Saundatti inscription refers to an assemblage of all the people of a district headed by the guilds of the region. Some guilds were considered superior to others, just as some corporations were, and received royal charters determining their powers and privileges. Inscriptions suggest these guilds had their own militia to protect goods in transit and, like village assemblies, they operated banks that lent money to traders and businesses.

The government's income came from five principal sources: regular taxes, occasional taxes, fines, income taxes, miscellaneous taxes and tributes from

feudatories. An emergency tax was imposed occasionally and were applicable when the kingdom was under duress, such as when it faced natural calamities, or was preparing for war or overcoming war's ravages. Income tax included taxes on crown land, wasteland, specific types of trees considered valuable to the economy, mines, salt, treasures unearthed by prospectors. Additionally, customary presents were given to the king or royal officers on such festive occasions as marriage or the birth of a son.

The king determined the tax levels based on need and circumstances in the kingdom while ensuring that an undue burden was not placed on the peasants. The land owner or tenant paid a variety of taxes, including land taxes, produce taxes and payment of the overhead for maintenance of the Gavunda (village head). Land taxes were varied, based on type of land, its produce and situation and ranged from 8% to 16%. A Banavasi inscription of 941 mentions reassessment of land tax due to the drying up of an old irrigation canal in the region. The land tax may have been as high as 20% to pay for expenses of a military frequently at war. In most of the kingdom, land taxes were paid in goods and services and rarely was cash accepted. A portion of all taxes earned by the government (usually 15%) was returned to the villages for maintenance.

Taxes were levied on artisans such as potters, sheep herders, weavers, oilmen, shopkeepers, stall owners, brewers and gardeners. Taxes on perishable items such as fish, meat, honey, medicine, fruits and essentials like fuel was as high as 16%. Taxes on salt and minerals were mandatory although the empire did not claim sole ownership of mines, implying that private mineral prospecting and the quarrying business may have been active. The state claimed all such properties whose deceased legal owner had no immediate family to make an inheritance claim. Other miscellaneous taxes included ferry and house taxes. Only Brahmins and their temple institutions were taxed at a lower rate.

Culture

Religion

The Rashtrakuta kings supported the popular religions of the day in the traditional spirit of religious tolerance. Scholars have offered various arguments regarding which specific religion the Rashtrakutas favoured, basing their evidence on inscriptions, coins and contemporary literature. Some claim the Rashtrakutas were inclined towards Jainism since many of the scholars who flourished in their courts and wrote in Sanskrit, Kannada and a few in Apabhramsha and Prakrit were Jains. The Rashtrakutas built well-known Jain temples at locations such as Lokapura in Bagalkot district and their loyal feudatory, the Western Ganga Dynasty, built Jain monuments atShravanabelagola and Kambadahalli. Scholars have suggested that Jainism was a principal religion at the very heart of the empire, modern Karnataka,

accounting for more than 30% of the population and dominating the culture of the region. King Amoghavarsha I was a disciple of the Jain acharya Jinasena and wrote in his religious writing, Prashnottara Ratnamalika, "having bowed to Varaddhamana (Mahavira), I write Prashnottara Ratnamalika". The mathematician Mahaviracharya wrote in his Ganita Sarasangraha, "The subjects under Amoghavarsha are happy and the land yields plenty of grain. May the kingdom of King Nripatunga Amoghavarsha, follower of Jainism ever increase far and wide." Amoghavarsha may have taken up Jainism in his old age.

However, the Rashtrakuta kings also patronized Hinduisms, followers of the Shaiva, Vaishnava and Shakta faiths. Almost all of their inscriptions begin with an invocation to godVishnu or god Shiva. The Sanjan inscriptions tell of King Amoghavarsha I sacrificing a finger from his left hand at the Lakshmi temple at Kolhapur to avert a calamity in his kingdom. King Dantidurga performed the Hiranyagarbha (horse sacrifice) and the Sanjan and Cambay plates of King Govinda IV mention Brahmins performing such rituals asRajasuya, Vajapeya and Agnishtoma. An early copper plate grant of King Dantidurga (753) shows an image of god Shiva and the coins of his successor, King Krishna I (768), bear the legend Parama Maheshwara (another name for Shiva). The kings' titles such as Veeranarayana showed their Vaishnava leanings. Their flag had the sign of the Ganges and Yamuna rivers, perhaps copied from the Badami Chalukyas. The famous Kailasnatha temple at Ellora and other rock-cut caves attributed to them show that the Hinduism was flourishing. Their family deity was a goddess by name Latana (also known as Rashtrashyena, Manasa Vindyavasini) who took the form of a falcon to save the kingdom. They built temples with icons and ornamentation that satisfied the needs of different faiths. The temple at Salotgi was meant for followers of Shiva and Vishnu and the temple at Kargudri was meant for worshipers of Shiva, Vishnu and Bhaskara (Surya, the sun god).

In short, the Rashtrakuta rule was tolerant to multiple popular religions, Jainism, Vaishnavaism and Shaivism. Buddhism too found support and was popular in places such asDambal and Balligavi, although it had declined significantly by this time. The decline of Buddhism in South India began in the 8th century with the spread of Adi Shankara'sAdvaita philosophy. Islamic contact with South India began as early as the 7th century, a result of trade between the Southern kingdoms and Arab lands. Jumma Masjidsexisted in the Rashtrakuta empire by the 10th century[124] and many Muslims lived and mosques flourished on the coasts, specifically in towns such as Kayalpattanam andNagore. Muslim settlers married local women; their children were known as Mappilas (Moplahs) and were actively involved in horse trading and manning shipping fleets.

Society

Chronicles mention more castes than the four commonly known castes in the Hindu social system, some as many as seven castes. One traveller's account mentions sixteen castes including the four basic castes of Brahmins, Kshatriya, Vaishya and Sudras. The Zakaya or Lahud caste consisted

of communities specialising in dance and acrobatics. People in the professions of sailing, hunting, weaving, cobblery, basket making and fishing belonged to specific castes or subcastes. The Antyajas caste provided many menial services to the wealthy. Brahmins enjoyed the highest status in Rashtrakuta society; only those Kshatriyas in the Sat-Kshatriya sub-caste (noble Kshatriyas) were higher in status.

The careers of Brahmins usually related to education, the judiciary, astrology, mathematics, poetry and philosophy or the occupation of hereditary administrative posts. Also Brahmins increasingly practiced non-Brahminical professions (agriculture, trade in betel nuts and martial posts). Capital punishment, although widespread, was not given to the royal Kshatriya sub-castes or to Brahmins found guilty of heinous crimes (as the killing of a Brahmin in medieval Hindu India was itself considered a heinous crime). As an alternate punishment to enforce the law a Brahmin's right hand and left foot was severed, leaving that person disabled.

By the 9th century, kings from all the four castes had occupied the highest seat in the monarchical system in Hindu India. Admitting Kshatriyas to Vedic schools along with Brahmins was customary, but the children of the Vaishya and Shudra castes were not allowed. Landownership by people of all castes is recorded in inscriptions[136] Intercaste marriages in the higher castes were only between highly placed Kshatriya girls and Brahmin boys, but was relatively frequent among other castes. Intercaste functions were rare and dining together between people of various castes was avoided.

Joint families were the norm but legal separations between brothers and even father and son have been recorded in inscriptions. Women and daughters had rights over property and land as there are inscriptions recording the sale of land by women. The arranged marriage system followed a strict policy of early marriage for women. Among Brahmins, boys married at or below 16 years of age and the brides chosen for them were 12 or younger. This age policy was not strictly followed by other castes. Sati (a custom in which a dead man's widow would immolate herself on her husband's funeral pyre) was practiced but the few examples noted in inscriptions were mostly in the royal families. The system of shaving the heads of widows was infrequent as epigraphs note that widows were allowed to grow their hair but decorating it was discouraged. The remarriage of a widow was rare among the upper castes and more accepted among the lower castes.

In the general population men wore two simple pieces of cloth, a loose garment on top and a garment worn like a dhoti for the lower part of the body. Only kings could wearturbans, a practice that spread to the masses much later. Dancing was a popular entertainment and inscriptions speak of royal women being charmed by dancers, both male and female, in the king's palace. Devadasis (girls were "married" to a deity or temple) were often present in temples. Other recreational activities included attending animal fights of the same or different species. The Atakur inscription (hero stone, virgal) was made for the favourite hound of the feudatory Western Ganga King Butuga II that died fighting a wild boar in a hunt. There are records of game preserves for hunting by royalty. Astronomy and

astrology were well developed as subjects of study, and there were many superstitious beliefs such as catching a snake alive proved a woman's chastity. Old persons suffering from incurable diseases preferred to end their lives by drowning in the sacred waters of a pilgrim site or by a ritual burning.

Literature

Kannada became more prominent as a literary language during the Rashtrakuta rule with its script and literature showing remarkable growth, dignity and productivity. This period effectively marked the end of the classical Prakrit and Sanskrit era. Court poets and royalty created eminent works in Kannada and Sanskrit that spanned such literary forms as prose, poetry, rhetoric, the Hindu epics and the life history of Jain tirthankars. Bilingual writers such as Asaga gained fame, and noted scholars such as the Mahaviracharya wrote on pure mathematics in the court of King Amoghavarsha I.

Kavirajamarga (850) by King Amoghavarsha I is the earliest available book on rhetoric and poetics in Kannada, though it is evident from this book that native styles of Kannada composition had already existed in previous centuries. Kavirajamarga is a guide to poets (Kavishiksha) that aims to standardize these various styles. The book refers to early Kannada prose and poetry writers such as Durvinita, perhaps the 6th-century monarch of Western Ganga Dynasty.

The Jain writer Adikavi Pampa, widely regarded as one of the most influential Kannada writers, became famous for Adipurana (941). Written in champu (mixed prose-verse style) style, it is the life history of the first Jain tirthankara Rishabhadeva. Pampa's other notable work was Vikramarjuna Vijaya (941), the author's version of the Hindu epic, Mahabharata, with Arjuna as the hero. Also called Pampa Bharata, it is a eulogy of the writer's patron, King Chalukya Arikeseri of Vemulawada (a Rashtrakuta feudatory), comparing the king's virtues favorably to those of Arjuna. Pampa demonstrates such a command of classical Kannada that scholars over the centuries have written many interpretations of his work.

Another notable Jain writer in Kannada was Sri Ponna, patronised by King Krishna III and famed for Shantipurana, his account of the life of Shantinatha, the 16th Jain tirthankara. He earned the title Ubhaya Kavichakravathi (supreme poet in two languages) for his command over both Kannada and Sanskrit. His other writings in Kannada were Bhuvanaika-ramaabhyudaya, Jinaksharamale and Gatapratyagata.[60][159] Adikavi Pampa and Sri Ponna are called "gems of Kannada literature".

Prose works in Sanskrit was prolific during this era as well. Important mathematical theories and axioms were postulated byMahaviracharya, a native of Gulbarga, who belonged to the Karnataka mathematical tradition and was patronised by King Amoghavarsha I. His greatest contribution was Ganitasarasangraha, a writing in 9 chapters. Somadevasuri of 950 wrote in the court of Arikesari II, a feudatory of Rashtrakuta Krishna III in Vemulavada. He was

the author of Yasastilaka champu, Nitivakyamrita and other writings. The main aim of the champu writing was to propagate Jain tenets and ethics. The second writing reviews the subject matter of Arthasastrafrom the standpoint of Jain morals in a clear and pithy manner. Ugraditya, a Jain ascetic from Hanasoge in the modern Mysore district wrote a medical treatise called Kalyanakaraka. He delivered a discourse in the court of Amoghavarsha I encouraging abstinence from animal products and alcohol in medicine.

Trivikrama was a noted scholar in the court of King Indra III. His classics were Nalachampu (915), the earliest in champu style in Sanskrit,Damayanti Katha, Madalasachampu and Begumra plates. Legend has it that Goddess Saraswati helped him in his effort to compete with a rival in the kings court. Jinasena was the spiritual preceptor and guru of Amoghavarsha I. A theologian, his contributions are Dhavala and Jayadhavala (written with another theologian Virasena). These writings are named after their patron king who was also called Athishayadhavala. Other contributions from Jinasena were Adipurana, later completed by his disciple Gunabhadra, Harivamsha and Parshvabhyudaya.

Architecture

The Rashtrakutas contributed much to the architectural heritage of the Deccan. Art historian Adam Hardy categorizes their building activity into three schools: Ellora, around Badami, Aihole and Pattadakal, and at Sirval near Gulbarga. The Rashtrakuta contributions to art and architecture are reflected in the splendid rock-cut cave temples at Ellora and Elephanta, areas also occupied by Jain monks, located in present-day Maharashtra. The Ellora site was originally part of a complex of 34 Buddhist caves probably created in the first half of the 6th century whose structural details show Pandyan influence. Cave temples occupied by Hindus are from later periods.

The Rashtrakutas renovated these Buddhist caves and re-dedicated the rock-cut shrines. Amoghavarsha I espoused Jainism and there are five Jain cave temples at Ellora ascribed to his period. The most extensive and sumptuous of the Rashtrakuta works at Ellora is their creation of the monolithic Kailasanath Temple, a splendid achievement confirming the "Balhara" status as "one among the four principal Kings of the world". The walls of the temple have marvellous sculptures from Hindu mythology including Ravana, Shiva andParvathi while the ceilings have paintings.

The Kailasanath Temple project was commissioned by King Krishna I after the Rashtrakuta rule had spread into South India from the Deccan. The architectural style used is Karnata Dravida according to Adam Hardy. It does not contain any of the Shikharas common to the Nagara style and was built on the same lines as the Virupaksha temple at Pattadakal in Karnataka. According to art historian Vincent Smith, the achievement at the Kailasanath temple is considered an architectural consummation of the monolithic rock-cut temple and deserves to be considered one of the wonders of the world. According to art historian Percy Brown, as an

accomplishment of art, the Kailasanath temple is considered an unrivalled work of rock architecture, a monument that has always excited and astonished travellers.

While some scholars have claimed the architecture at Elephanta is attributable to the Kalachuri, others claim that it was built during the Rashtrakuta period. Some of the sculptures such as Nataraja and Sadashiva excel in beauty and craftsmanship even that of the Ellora sculptures. Famous sculptures at Elephanta include Ardhanarishvara and Maheshamurthy. The latter, a three faced bust of Lord Shiva, is 25 feet (8 m) tall and considered one of the finest pieces of sculpture in India. It is said that, in the world of sculpture, few works of art depicting a divinity are as balanced. Other famous rock-cut temples in the Maharashtra region are the Dhumer Lena and Dashvatara cave temples in Ellora (famous for its sculptures of Vishnu and Shivaleela) and the Jogeshvari temple near Mumbai.

In Karnataka their most famous temples are the Kashivishvanatha temple and the Jain Narayana temple at Pattadakal, a UNESCO World Heritage site. Other well-known temples are the Parameshwara temple at Konnur, Brahmadeva temple at Savadi, the Settavva, Kontigudi II, Jadaragudi and Ambigeragudi temples at Aihole, Mallikarjuna temple at Ron, Andhakeshwara temple at Huli (Hooli), Someshwara temple at Sogal, Jain temples at Lokapura, Navalinga temple at Kuknur, Kumaraswamy temple at Sandur, numerous temples at Shirival in Gulbarga, and the Trikuteshwara temple at Gadag which was later expanded by Kalyani Chalukyas. Archeological study of these temples show some have the stellar (multigonal) plan later to be used profusely by the Hoysalas at Belur and Halebidu. One of the richest traditions in Indian architecture took shape in the Deccan during this time which Adam Hardy calls Karnata dravida style as opposed to traditional Dravida style.

Language

With the ending of the Gupta Dynasty in northern India in the early 6th century, major changes began taking place in the Deccan south of the Vindyas and in the southern regions of India. These changes were not only political but also linguistic and cultural. The royal courts of peninsular India (outside of Tamilakam) interfaced between the increasing use of the local Kannada language and the expanding Sanskritic culture. Inscriptions, including those that were bilingual, demonstrate the use of Kannada as the primary administrative language in conjunction with Sanskrit. Government archives used Kannada for recording pragmatic information relating to grants of land. The local language formed the desi (popular) literature while literature in Sanskrit was more marga (formal). Educational institutions and places of higher learning (ghatikas) taught in Sanskrit, the language of the learned Brahmins, while Kannada increasingly became the speech of personal expression of devotional closeness of a worshipper to a private deity. The patronage Kannada received from rich and literate Jains eventually led to its use in thedevotional movements of later centuries.

Contemporaneous literature and inscriptions show that Kannada was not only popular in the modern Karnataka region but had spread further north into present day southern Maharashtra and to the northern Deccan by the 8th century.[180] Kavirajamarga, the work on poetics, refers to the entire region between the Kaveri River and the Godavari River as "Kannada country". Higher education in Sanskrit included the subjects of Veda, Vyakarana (grammar), Jyotisha (astronomy and
astrology), Sahitya (literature), Mimansa (Exegesis), Dharmashastra (law),Puranas (ritual), and Nyaya (logic). An examination of inscriptions from this period shows that the Kavya (classical) style of writing was popular. The awareness of the merits and defects in inscriptions by the archivists indicates that even they, though mediocre poets, had studied standard classical literature in Sanskrit. An inscription in Kannada by King Krishna III, written in a poetic Kanda metre, has been found as far away asJabalpur in modern Madhya Pradesh. Kavirajamarga, a work on poetics in Kannada by Amoghavarsha I, shows that the study of poetry was popular in the Deccan during this time. Trivikrama's Sanskrit writing, Nalachampu, is perhaps the earliest in the champu style from the Deccan.

Haryanka dynasty

Bimbisara

The Haryanka king Bimbisara was responsible for expanding the boundaries of his kingdom through matrimonial alliances and conquest. The land of Kosala fell to Magadha in this way. He is referred to as King Shrenik in Jain scriptures.

Estimates place the territory ruled by this early dynasty at 300 leagues in diameter, and encompassing 80,000 small settlements.

According to Jain scriptures

Bimbsara or King Srenika in Jainism was contemporary of Lord Mahavir. Jain scriptures described King Bimbisara as a disciple of Lord Mahavira who frequently sought his teachings. As per Jain texts, he is referred to as King Shrenika of Rajgriha (being the possessor of a large army). Bimbisara sent Jivaka to Ujjain for medical treatment of King Pradyata, the king of Avanti. He was Baldev in a previous life. Per scriptures, this soul is to become the first Tirthankara of the next cycle.

QUEEN CHELNA AND KING SHRENIK

This is a story from the time of Bhagwan Mahavir. At that time, king Chetak was the ruler of Vaishali and he had a beautiful daughter named Chelna. Once an artist called Bharat painted a picture of Chelna and showed it to king Shrenik (Bimbisar) of Magadh. Charmed by Chelna's beauty, Shrenik fell in love with her. One day Chelna came to the city of Magadh where she saw king Shrenik, and she also fell in love with him. They soon got married.

Queen Chelna was a devoted follower of Jainism, while Shrenik was influenced by the Buddhism. The king was very generous with a big heart but somehow was not happy with his queen's devotion to the Jain monks. He wanted to prove to Chelna that Jain monks were pretenders. He strongly believed that no man could follow the practice of self-restraint and non-violence to that extent, and that the equanimity shown by Jain monks was just superficial. Chelna was greatly disturbed by this.

One day king Shrenik went on a hunting trip where he saw a Jain monk, Yamadhar, engaged in deep meditation. Shrenik let his hunter dogs go after Yamadhar but the monk remained silent. On seeing the calmness and composure of the monk the dogs became quiet. king Shrenik got angry and thought that the monk had played some trick on them. So he started shooting arrows at the monk but they kept on missing him. Becoming more upset, he finally put a dead snake around Yamadhar's neck and came back to his palace.

The king narrated the whole incident to Chelna. The queen felt very sorry and took the king back to Yamadhar's meditation spot. Because of the dead snake, ants, and other insects were crawling all over the monk's body but the monk did not even stir. The couple witnessed the limits of human endurance. The queen gently removed the ants and snake from the monk's body and cleaned his wounds. She applied sandalwood paste. After sometime, Yamadhar opened his eyes and blessed both of them.

The monk did not distinguish between the king who had caused him pain, and the queen who had alleviated his pain. King Shrenik was very impressed, and convinced that Jain monks were truly beyond attachment and aversion. Thus, king Shrenik along with queen Chelna became a devoted member of the order of Bhagawan Mahavir.

According to Buddhist scriptures, he was devout follower of Buddha. He remained a devout devotee and follower of Buddha throughout his life. King Bimbisara met the Buddha for the first time prior to the Buddha's enlightenment, and later became an important disciple that featured prominently in certain Buddhist suttas. He is recorded to have attained sotapannahood, a degree of enlightenment in Buddhist teachings.

Career King Bimbisara, depicted in Burmese art, offering his kingdom to the Buddha.

Bimbisara used marriage alliances to strengthen his position. His first wife was Kosala Devi, the daughter of Mahā Kosala the king of Kosala, and a sister of Prasenjit. His bride brought him Kashi, which was then a mere village, as dowry. This marriage also ended the hostility between Magadha and Kosala and gave him a free hand in dealing with the other states. Bimbisara's second wife, Chellana, was a Lichchhavi princess from Vaishali. As per Indologist Hermann Jacobi, Mahavira (Vardhamana) was related to Queen Chellana who was daughter of King Chetaka, Mahaviras uncle. Bimbisara's third wife, Kshema, was a daughter of the chief of the Madra clan of Punjab.

Tradition tells us that Bimbisara was imprisoned by his son Ajatashatru who ordered his execution, but then he realized what he had done and tried to rescind his orders but it was too late. This is reported to have taken place around 491 BC.

Ajatashatru

In some sources, Bimbisara was imprisoned and killed by his son and successor, Ajātasattu, under whose rule the dynasty reached its largest extent. Ajātasattu was contemporary with Mahavira (599–527BCE) and Gautama Buddha (563–483 BCE). Ajātasattu fought a war against Vajji, ruled by the Lichhavis, and conquered the republic ofVaisali. Ajātasattu followed policies of conquest and expansion. He defeated his neighbors including the king of Kosala; his brothers, when at odds with him, went to Kashi, which had been given to Bimbisara as dowry. This led to a war between Magadha and Kosala. Ajātasattu occupied Kashi and captured the smaller kingdoms. Magadha under Ajātasattu became the most powerful kingdom in North India.

Udayin

The Mahavamsa states that Udayabhadra eventually succeeded his father, Ajātasattu, moving the capital to Pataliputra, which, under the later Mauryan dynasty, would become the largest city in the world. He is believed to have ruled for sixteen years.

Later rulers

The kingdom had a particularly bloody succession. Anuruddha eventually succeeded Udaybhadra through assassination, and his son Munda succeeded him in the same fashion, as did his son Nagadasaka.

Due in part to this bloody dynastic feuding, it is thought that a civil revolt led to the emergence of the Shishunaga dynasty.

MIDDLE KINGDOM OF INDIA

The Northwest

During the 2nd century BCE, the Maurya Empire became a collage of regional powers with overlapping boundaries. The whole northwest attracted a series of invaders between 200 BCE and 300 CE. The Puranas speak of many of these tribes as foreigners and impure barbarians (Mlecchas). First the Satavahana dynasty and then the Gupta Empire, both successor states to the Maurya Empire, attempt to contain the expansions of the successive before eventually crumbling internally due pressure exerted by these wars.

The invading tribes were influenced by Buddhism which continued to flourish under the patronage of both invaders and the Satavahanas and Guptas and provides a cultural bridge between the two cultures. Over time, the invaders became "Indianized" as they influenced society and philosophy across the Gangetic plains and were conversely influenced by it. This period is marked by both intellectual and artistic achievements inspired by cultural diffusion and syncretism as the new kingdoms straddle the Silk Road.

The Indo-Scythian Sakas

Main articles: Indo-Scythians and Saka

Usage of the name Saka

Modern debate about the identity of the "Saka" is due partly to ambiguous usage of the word by ancient, non-Saka authorities. According to Herodotus, the Persians gave the name "Saka" to all Scythians. However, Pliny the Elder (Gaius Plinius Secundus, AD 23–79) claims that the Persians gave the name Sakai only to the Scythian tribes "nearest to them".The Scythians to the far north of Assyria were also called the Saka suni "Saka or Scythian sons" by the Persians.The Assyrians of the time of Esarhaddon record campaigning against a people they called in the Akkadian theAshkuza or Ishhuza.

Another people, the Gimirrai, who were known to the ancient Greeks as the Cimmerians, were closely associated with the Sakas. In ancient Hebrew texts, the Ashkuz (Ashkenaz) are considered to be a direct offshoot from the Gimirri (Gomer).

The Saka were regarded by the Babylonians as synonymous with the Gimirrai; both names are used on the trilingual Behistun inscription, carved in 515 BC on the order of Darius the Great. (These people were reported to be mainly interested in settling in the kingdom of Urartu, later part of Armenia, and Shacusen in Uti Province derives its name from them.) The Behistun inscription mentions four divisions of Scythians:

Of these, the Sakā tigraxaudā were the Saka proper. The Sakā paradraya were the western Scythians or Sarmatians, the Sakā haumavargā and Sakā para Sugdam were likely Scythian tribes associated with or split off from the original Saka.

In the modern era, the archaeologist Hugo Winckler (1863–1913) was the first to associate the Sakas with the Scyths. I. Gershevitch, in The Cambridge History of Iran, states: "The Persians gave the single name Sakā both to the nomads whom they encountered between the Hunger steppe and the Caspian, and equally to those north of the Danube and Black Sea against whom Darius later campaigned; and the Greeks and Assyrians called all those who were known to them by the name Skuthai (Iškuzai). Sakā and Skuthai evidently constituted a generic name for the nomads on the northern frontiers." Conversely, the political historian B. N. Mukerjee has claimed that ancient Greek and Roman scholars believed that while "all Sakai were Scythians", "not all Scythians were Sakai". Persian sources often treat them as a single tribe called the Saka (Sakai or Sakas), but Greek and Latin texts suggest that the Scythians were composed of many sub-groups.

History

Migrations of the 2nd and 1st century BCE have left traces in Sogdia and Bactria, but they cannot firmly be attributed to the Saka, similarly with the sites of Sirkap and Taxila in ancient India. The rich graves at Tillya Tepe in Afghanistan are seen as part of a population affected by the Saka.[16]

According to Grousset, "the Saka, under pressure from the Yueh-chih, overran Sogdiana and then Bactria, there taking the place of the Greeks." This would

have been around 140 and 130 BCE. Then, "Thrust back in the south by the Yueh-chih," the Saka occupied "the Saka country, Sakastana, whence the modern Persian Seistan."

Indo-Scythians

Tadeusz Sulimirski notes that the Saka also migrated to North India. Weer Rajendra Rishi, an Indian linguist, identified linguistic affinities between Indian and Central Asian languages, which further lends credence to the possibility of historical Sakan influence in North India. According to historian Michael Mitchiner, the Abhira tribe were a Saka people cited in the Gunda inscription of the Western Satrap Rudrasimha I dated to 181 CE.

Kingdom of Khotan

Geography

The geographical position of the oasis was the main factor in its success and wealth. It is situated in one of the most arid and desolate desert climates on the earth, the Taklamakan Desert, at the far south, extending along the foothills of the Kunlun Mountains for around 40 miles.

Khotan was irrigated from the Yurung-kàsh[3] and Kara-kàsh rivers, which water the Tarim Basin. These two rivers produce vast quantities of water which made habitation possible in an otherwise arid climate. The position next to the mountain not only provided irrigation for crops but it also increased the fertility of the land as the rivers reduce the gradient and deposited their sediment, creating a more fertile soil. This therefore increased the productivity of the agricultural industry which has made Khotan famous for its cereal crops and fruits. Therefore, Khotan's lifeline was its vicinity to the Kunlun mountain range and without this Khotan would not have become one of the largest and most successful oasis cities along the Silk Roads.

Neighbors

Yarkand
Kashgar
Hanmo
Karashahr — One of the four garrisons
Kucha — One of the four garrisons
Tang-China
Tibet
Xiongnu

History

Foundation

According to legend, Kushtana, said to be a son of Ashoka, the Mauryan emperor, founded Khotan when he settled there about 224 BCE. The first inhabitants of the region appear to have been Tibetans and Indians from South Asia.

In the second century BCE a Khotanese king helped the famous Kushan emperor Kanishka to conquer the key town of Saket in the Middle kingdoms of India:

Afterwards king Vijaya Krīti, for whom a manifestation of the Ārya Mañjuśrī, the Arhat called Spyi-pri who was propagating the religion (dharma) in Kam-śeṅ [a district of Khotan] was acting as pious friend, through being inspired with faith, built the vihāra of Sru-ño. Originally, King Kanika, the king of Gu-zar [Kucha] and the Li [Khotanese] ruler, King Vijaya Krīti, and others led an army into India, and when they captured the city called So-ked [Saketa], King Vijaya Krīti obtained many relics and put them in the stūpa of Sru-ño.

According to Chapter 96A of the Book of Han, covering the period from 125 BCE to 23 CE, Khotan had 3,300 households, 19,300 individuals and 2,400 people able to bear arms.

Han rule

The town grew very quickly after local trade developed into the interconnected chain of silk routes across Eurasia. By the time of the Han conquest, the population had more than quadrupled. The Book of the Later Han, covering 6 to 189 CE, says:

The main centre of the kingdom of Yutian (Khotan) is the town of Xicheng ("Western Town", Yotkan). It is 5,300 li (c.2,204 km) from the residence of the Senior Clerk [in Lukchun], and 11,700 li (c.4,865 km) from Luoyang. It controls 32,000 households, 83,000 individuals, and more than 30,000 men able to bear arms.[10]

Khotan was conquered by the Han dynasty in 73 CE, but the Han influence on Khotan quickly diminished.[web 3]

During the Yongping period (58-76 CE), in the reign of Emperor Ming, Xiumo Ba, a Khotanese general, rebelled against Suoju (Yarkand), and made himself king of Yutian (in 60 CE). On the death of Xiumo Ba, Guangde, son of his elder brother, assumed power and then (in 61 CE) defeated Suoju (Yarkand). His kingdom became very prosperous after this. From Jingjue (Niya) northwest, as far as Shule (Kashgar), thirteen kingdoms submitted to him. Meanwhile, the king of Shanshan (the Lop Nor region, capital Charklik) had also begun to prosper. From then on, these two kingdoms were the only major ones on the Southern Route in the whole region to the east of the Congling (Pamir Mountains).

Tang dynasty

Emperor Taizong's campaign against states of the Western Regions began in 640 CE and Khotan submitted to the Tang emperor. The Four Garrisons of Anxi was established, one of them at Khotan.

The Tibetans later defeated the Chinese and took control of the Four Garrisons, and the Khotanese helped the Tibetans to conquer Aksu. Tang China later regained control in 692, but eventually lost control of the entire Western Regions after it was weakened considerably by the An Lushan Rebellion.

After the Tang dynasty, Khotan formed an alliance with the rulers of Dunhuang. The Buddhist entitites of Dunhuang and Khotan had a tight-knit partnership, with intermarriage between Dunhuang and Khotan's rulers and

Dunhuang's Mogao grottos and Buddhist temples being funded and sponsored by the Khotan royals, whose likenesses were drawn in the Mogao grottoes.

Turkic-Islamic conquest of Buddhist Khotan

in the 10th century, the Iranic Saka Buddhist Kingdom of Khotan was the only city-state that was not conquered yet by the Turkic Uyghur (Buddhist) and the Turkic Qarakhanid (Muslim) states. During the latter part of the tenth century, Khotan became engaged in a struggle against the Kara-Khanid Khanate. The Islamic attacks and conquest of the Buddhist cities east of Kashgar began with the conversion of the Karakhanid Sultan Satuq Bughra Khan to Islam in 934. Satuq Bughra Khan and later his son Musa directed endeavors to proselytize Islam among the Turks and engage in military conquests, and a long war ensued between Islamic Kashgar and Buddhist Khotan. The war was described as a Muslim Jihad (holy war) by the Japanese Professor Takao Moriyasu. Satuq Bughra Khan's nephew or grandson Ali Arslan was said to have been killed during the war with the Buddhists. Khotan briefly took Kashgar from the Kara-Khanids in 970, and according to Chinese accounts, the King of Khotan offered to send in tribute to the Chinese court a dancing elephant captured from Kashgar.

Accounts of the war between the Karakhanid and Khotan were given in Taẕkirah of the Four Sacrificed Imams, written sometime in the period from 1700-1849 in the Eastern Turkic language (modern Uyghur) in Altishahr probably based on an older oral tradition. It contains a story about four Imams from Mada'in city (possibly in modern-day Iraq) who helped the Qarakhanid leader Yusuf Qadir Khan conquered Khotan, Yarkand, and Kashgar. There were years of battles where "blood flows like the Oxus", "heads litter the battlefield like stones" until the "infidels" were defeated and driven towards Khotan by Yusuf Qadir Khan and the four Imams. The imams however were assassinated by the Buddhists prior to the last Muslim victory. Despite their foreign origins, they are viewed as local saints by the current Muslim population in the region. In 1006, the Muslim Kara-Khanid ruler Yusuf Kadir (Qadir) Khan of Kashgar conquered Khotan, ending Khotan's existence as an independent state.

The Islamic conquest of Khotan led to alarm in the east, and it has been suggested it lead to the sealing of Dunhuang's Cave 17, which contained the Dunhuang manuscripts, after its caretakers heard that Khotan's Buddhist buildings were razed by the Muslims, and the Buddhist religion had suddenly ceased to exist in Khotan.

Muslim works such as Ḥudūd al-ʿĀlam contained anti-Buddhist rhetoric and polemic against Buddhist Khotan, aimed at "dehumanizing" the Khotanese Buddhists, and the Muslims Kara-Khanids conquered Khotan just 26 years following the completion of Ḥudūd al-ʿĀlam. The Karakhanid Turkic Muslim writer Mahmud al-Kashgari recorded a short Turkic language poem about the conquest:

In Turkic:		English translation:
|kälginläyü	aqtïmïz	We came down on them like a flood,
kändlär üzä	čïqtïmïz	We went out among their cities,
furxan ävin	yïqtïmïz	We tore down the idol-temples,
burxan üzä sïčtïmïz		We shat on the Buddha's head!

Idols of "infidels" were subjected to desecration by being defecated upon by Muslims when the "infidel" country was conquered by the Muslims, according to Muslim tradition.

By the time Marco Polo visited Khotan, which was between 1271 and 1275, he reported that "the inhabitants all worship Mohamet."

Historical timeline

The first inhabitants of the region appear to have been Tibetans and Indians from adjacent India bordering the Kunlun Mountains.

The foundation of Khotan occurred when Kushtana, said to be a son of Ashoka, the Indian emperor belonging to the Maurya Empire settled there about 224 BCE.

c.84 BC: Buddhism is reportedly introduced to Khotan.

c.56: Xian, the powerful and prosperous king of Yarkent, attacked and annexed Khotan. He transferred Yulin, its king, to become the king of Ligui, and set up his younger brother, Weishi, as king of Khotan.

61: Khotan defeats Yarkand. Khotan becomes very powerful after this and 13 kingdoms submitted to Khotan, which now, with Shanshan, became the major power on the southern branch of the Silk Route.

78: Ban Chao, a Chinese General, subdues the kingdom.

105: The 'Western Regions' rebelled, and Khotan regained its independence.

127: The Khotanese king Vijaya Krīti is said to have helped the Kushan Emperor Kanishka in his conquest of Saket in India.

127: The Chinese general Ban Yong attacked and subdued Karasahr; and then Kucha, Kashgar, Khotan, Yarkand, and other kingdoms, seventeen altogether, who all came to submit to China.

129: Fangqian, the king of Khotan, killed the king of Keriya, Xing. He installed his son as the king of Keriya. Then he sent an envoy to offer tribute to Han. The Emperor pardoned the crime of the king of Khotan, ordering him to hand back the kingdom of Keriya. Fangqian refused.

131: Fangqian, the king of Khotan, sends one of his sons to serve and offer tribute at the Chinese Imperial Palace.

132: The Chinese sent the king of Kashgar, Chenpan, who with 20,000 men, attacked and defeated Khotan. He beheaded several hundred people, and released his soldiers to plunder freely. He replaced the king [of Keriya] by installing Chengguo from the family of [the previous king] Xing, and then he returned.

151: Jian, the king of Khotan, was killed by Han chief clerk Wang Jing, who was in turn killed by Khotanese. Anguo, the son of Jian, was placed on the throne.

175: Anguo, the king of Khotan, attacked Keriya, and defeated it soundly. He killed the king and many others.

399 Chinese pilgrim monk, Faxian, visits and reports on the active Buddhist community there.

632: Khotan pays homage to China, and becomes a vassal state.

644: Chinese pilgrim monk, Xuanzang, stays 7–8 months in Khotan and writes a detailed account of the kingdom.

670: Tibet invades and conquers Khotan (now known as one of the "four garrisons").

c.670-673: Khotan governed by Tibetan Mgar minister.

674: King Fudu Xiong (Vijaya Sangrāma IV), his family and followers flee to China after fighting the Tibetans. They are unable to return.

c.680 - c.692: 'Amacha Khemeg rules as regent of Khotan.

692: China under Wu Zetian reconquers the Kingdom from Tibet. Khotan is made a protectorate.

725: Yuchi Tiao (Vijaya Dharma III) is beheaded by the Chinese for conspiring with the Turks. Yuchi Fushizhan (Vijaya Sambhava II) is placed on the throne by the Chinese.

728: Yuchi Fushizhan (Vijaya Sambhava II) officially given the title "King of Khotan" by the Chinese emperor.

736: Fudu Da (Vijaya Vāhana the Great) succeeds Yuchi Fushizhan and the Chinese emperor bestows a title on his wife.

c. 740: King Yuchi Gui (Wylie: btsan bzang btsan la brtan) succeeds Fudu Da (Vijaya Vāhana) and begins persecution of Buddhists. Khotanese Buddhist monks flee to Tibet, where they are given refuge by the Chinese wife of King Mes ag tshoms. Soon after, the queen died in a smallpox epidemic and the monks had to flee to Gandhara.

740: Chinese emperor bestows a title on wife of Yuchi Gui.

746: The Prophecy of the Li Country is completed and later added to the Tibetan Tengyur.

756: Yuchi Sheng hands over the government to his younger brother, Shihu (Jabgu) Yao.

786 to 788: Yuchi Yao still ruling Khotan at the time of the Chinese Buddhist pilgrim Wukong's visit to Khotan.

969: The son of King Lishengtian (Vijaya Sambhava) named Zongchang sends a tribute mission to China.

971: A Buddhist priest (Jixiang) brings a letter from the king of Khotan to the Chinese emperor offering to send a dancing elephant which he had captured from Kashgar.

1006: Khotan held by the Muslim Yūsuf Qadr Khān, a brother or cousin of the Muslim ruler of Kāshgar and Balāsāghūn.

Between 1271 and 1275: Marco Polo visits Khotan.

Early names

The name of the kingdom in the region now called Khotan has received many forms. The local people about the third century CE wrote Khotana in Kharoṣṭhī script; and Hvatäna- in Brahmi script in the somewhat later texts, whence as the language developed came Hvamna and Hvam, so that in the latest texts they have Hvam kṣīra 'the land of Khotan'. The name became known to the west while the –t- was still unchanged, and as is frequent in early New Persian. But under different influences the local people wrote also Gaustana, when they felt the prestige of Buddhist Hybrid Sanskrit, or Kustana and Yūttina, when the prestige of the Chinese kingdom in Śacu was at its height, in the ninth century. To the Tibetans in the seventh and eight centuries the land was Li and the capital city Hu-ten, Hu-den, Hu-then and Yvu-then.

Buddhism

The kingdom was one of the major centres of Buddhism. Buddhism was introduced in the first century BCE. Up until the 11th century, the vast majority of the population was Buddhist.

The kingdom is primarily associated with the Mahayana. According to the Chinese pilgrim Faxian who passed through Khotan in the fourth century:

The country is prosperous and the people are numerous; without exception they have faith in the Dharma and they entertain one another with religious music. The community of monks numbers several tens of thousands and they belong mostly to the Mahayana.

It differed in this respect to Kucha, a Śrāvakayāna-dominated kingdom on the opposite side of the desert. Faxian's account of the city states it had fourteen large and many small viharas. Many foreign languages, including Chinese, Sanskrit, Prakrits, Apabhraṃśas andClassical Tibetan were used in cultural exchange.

Social and economic life

Despite scant information on the socio-political structures of Khotan, the shared geography of the Tarim city-states and similarities in archaeological findings throughout the Tarim Basin enable some conclusions on Khotanese life. A seventh-century Chinese pilgrim named Xuanzang described Khotan as having limited arable land but apparently particularly fertile, able to support "cereals and producing an abundance of fruits". He further commented that the city "manufactures carpets and fine-felts and silks" as well as "dark and white jade". The city's economy was chiefly based upon water from oases for irrigation and the manufacture of traded goods.

Xuanzang also praised the culture of Khotan, commenting that its people "love to study literature", and said "[m]usic is much practiced in the country, and men love song and dance." The "urbanity" of the Khotan people is also mentioned in their dress, that of 'light silks and white clothes' as opposed to more rural "wools and furs".

Silk

Khotan was the first place outside of inland China to begin cultivating silk. The legend, repeated in many sources, and illustrated in murals discovered by archaeologists, is that a Chinese princess brought silkworm eggs hidden in her hair when she was sent to marry the Khotanese king. This probably took place in the first half of the 1st century CE but is disputed by a number of scholars.

One version of the story is told by the Chinese Buddhist monk Xuanzang who describes the covert transfer of silkworms to Khotan by a Chinese princess. Xuanzang, on his return from India between 640 and 645, crossed Central Asia passing through the kingdoms of Kashgar and Khotan (Yutian in Chinese).[48]

According to Xuazang, the introduction of sericulture to Khotan occurred in the first quarter of the 5th century. The King of Khotan wanted to obtain silkworm eggs, mulberry seeds and Chinese know-how - the three crucial components of silk production. The Chinese court had strict rules against these items leaving China, to maintain the Chinese monopoly on silk manufacture. Xuanzang wrote that the King of Khotan asked for the hand of a Chinese princess in marriage as a token of his allegiance to the Chinese emperor. The request was granted, and an ambassador was sent to the Chinese court to escort the Chinese princess to Khotan. He advised the princess that she would need to bring silkworms and mulberry seeds in order to make herself robes in Khotan and to make the people prosperous. The princess concealed silkworm eggs and mulberry seeds in her headdress and smuggled them through the Chinese frontier. According to his text, silkworm eggs, mulberry trees and weaving techniques passed from Khotan to India, and from there eventually reached Europe.[49]

Built on an oasis, Khotan's mulberry groves allowed the production and export of silk and carpets, in addition to the city's other major products such as its famous nephrite jade and pottery.

Jade

Khotan, throughout and before the Silk Roads period, was a prominent trading oasis on the southern route of the Tarim Basin – the only major oasis "on the sole water course to cross the desert from the south". Aside from the geographical location of the towns of Khotan it was also important for its wide renown as a significant source of nephrite jade for export to China.

There has been a long history of trade of jade from Khotan to China. Jade pieces from the Tarim Basin have been found in Chinese archaeological sites. Chinese carvers inXinglongwa and Chahai had been carving ring-shaped pendants "from greenish jade from Khotan as early as 5000 BC". The hundreds of jade pieces found in the tomb of Fuhao from the late Shang dynasty all originated from Khotan.[52] According to the Chinese text Guanzi, the Yuezhi, described in the book as Yuzhi, or Niuzhi, supplied jade to the Chinese. It would seem, from secondary

sources, the prevalence of jade from Khotan in ancient Chinese is due to to its quality and the relative lack of such jade elsewhere.

Xuanzang also observed jade on sale in Khotan in 645 and provided a number of examples of the jade trade.

Language

The linguistic heartland of the Saka language was the Kingdom of Khotan, which had two dialects, corresponding to the major settlements atKhotan (modern Hotan) and Tumshuq (Tumxuk). The Saka heartland was gradually conquered during the Turkic expansion, beginning in the 4th century and the area was gradually "Turkified" linguistically (under the Uighurs).

Attestations of Saka show that it was an Eastern Iranian language. Both dialects contain many borrowings from the Middle Indo-Aryan Prakrit, but also share features with modern Wakhi and Pashto. The Issyk inscription, a short fragment on a silver cup found in the Issyk kurgan(modern Kazakhstan) is believed to be an early example of Saka, constituting one of very few autochthonous epigraphic traces of that language. The inscription is in a variant of the Kharoṣṭhī script. Harmatta (1999) identifies the dialect as Khotanese Saka, tentatively translating its as: "The vessel should hold wine of grapes, added cooked food, so much, to the mortal, then added cooked fresh butter on".

Indo-Scythians

Origins

The ancestors of the Indo-Scythians are thought to be Sakas (Scythian) tribes.

"One group of Indo-European speakers that makes an early appearance on the Xinjiangstage is the Saka (Ch. Sai). Saka is more a generic term than a name for a specific state or ethnic group; Saka tribes were part of a cultural continuum of early nomads across Siberia and the Central Eurasian steppe lands from Xinjiang to the Black Sea. Like the Scythians whom Herodotus describes in book four of his History (Saka is an Iranian word equivalent to the Greek Scythos, and many scholars refer to them together as Saka-Scythian), Sakas were Iranian-speaking horse nomads who deployed chariots in battle, sacrificed horses, and buried their dead in barrows or mound tombs called kurgans."

Yuezhi expansion

In the 2nd century BC, a fresh nomadic movement started among the Central Asian tribes, producing lasting effects on the history of Rome in Europe, Parthia in Western Asia, and Bactria, Kabul, and India in the east in Southern Asia.[citation needed] Recorded in the annals of the Han dynasty and otherChinese records, this great tribal movement began after the Yuezhi tribe was defeated by the Xiongnu, fleeing westwards after their defeat and creating a domino effect as they displaced other central Asian tribes in their path.

According to these ancient sources Modu Shanyu of the Xiongnu tribe of Mongolia attacked the Yuezhi and evicted them from their homeland between the Qilian Shan and Dunhuang. Leaving behind a remnant of their number, most of the population moved westwards.

Early Indian literature records military alliances between the Sakas, Kambojas, Pahlavas and Paradas. Ancient Puranic traditions mention several joint invasions of India by Scythians. The conflict between the Bahu-Sagara of India and the Haihaya-Kamboja-Saka-Pahlava-Parada is well known as the war fought by "five hordes" (pāñca-ganha). The Sakas, Yavanas, Tusharas and Kambojas also fought the Kurukshetra war under the command of Sudakshina Kamboja. The Valmiki Ramayana also attests that the Sakas, Kambojas, Pahlavas and Yavanas fought together against the Vedic, Hindu king Vishwamitra of Kanauj.

Around 175 BC, the Yuezhi tribes (possibly related to the Tocharians who lived in eastern Tarim Basin area), were defeated by theXiongnu tribes, and fled west into the Ili river area. There, they displaced the Sakas, who migrated south into Ferghana and Sogdiana. According to the Chinese historical chronicles:

"The Yuezhi attacked the king of the Sai who moved a considerable distance to the south and the Yuezhi then occupied his lands".

Sometime after 155 BC, the Yuezhi were again defeated by an alliance of the Wusun and the Xiongnu, and were forced to move south, again displacing the Scythians, who migrated south towards Bactria and present Afghanistan, and south-west closer towards Parthia.

The Sakas seem to have entered the territory of the Greco-Bactrian Kingdom around 145 BC, where they burnt to the ground the Greek city of Alexandria on the Oxus.[citation needed] The Yuezhi remained in Sogdiana on the northern bank of the Oxus, but they became suzerains of the Sakas in Bactrian territory, as described by the Chinese ambassador Zhang Qian who visited the region around 126 BC.

In Parthia, between 138–124 BC, the Sakas tribes of the Massagetae and Sacaraucae came into conflict with the Parthian Empire, winning several battles, and killing successively King Phraates II and King Artabanus I.

The Parthian king Mithridates II finally retook control of parts of Central Asia, first by defeating the Yuezhi in Sogdiana in 115 BC, and then defeating the Scythians in Parthia andSeistan around 100 BC.

After their defeat, the Yuezhi tribes migrated relatively far to the east into Bactria, which they were to control for several centuries, and from which they later conquered northern India to found the Kushan Empire.

Settlement in Sakastan

The Sakas settled in areas of eastern Iran, still called after them Sistan.[citation needed] From there, they progressively expanded into present Afghanistan and the Indian subcontinent, where they established various kingdoms, and where they are known as "Indo-Scythians".

The Arsacid emperor Mithridates II (c. 123–88/87 BCE) had scored many successes against the Scythians and added many provinces to the Parthian empire,[10] and apparently the Scythian hordes that came from Bactria were also conquered by him. A section of these people moved from Bactria to Lake Helmond in the wake of Yue-chi pressure and settled about Drangiana (Sigal), a region which later came to be called "Sakistana of the Skythian (Scythian) Sakai", towards the end of 1st century BC. The region is still known asSeistan.

Sakistan or Seistan of Drangiana may not only have been the habitat of the Saka alone but may also have contained population of thePahlavas and the Kambojas. The Rock Edicts of King Ashoka only refer to the Yavanas, Kambojas and the Gandharas in the northwest, but no mention is made of the Sakas, who immigrated in the region more than a century later. It is thus likely that the immigrant Saka populations who settled in today's Afghanistan did so among or near the Kambojas and nearby Greek cities. Numerous scholars believe that during centuries immediately preceding Christian era, there had occurred extensive social and cultural admixture among the Kambojas and Yavanas; the Sakas and Pahlavas; and the Kambojas, Sakas, and Pahlavas etc.... such that their cultures and social customs had become almost identical.

The presence of the Sakas in Sakastan in the 1st century BC is mentioned by Isidore of Charax in his "Parthian stations". He explained that they were bordered at that time by Greek cities to the east (Alexandria of the Caucasus and Alexandria of the Arachosians), and the Parthian-controlled territory of Arachosia to the south:

"Beyond is Sacastana of the Scythian Sacae, which is also Paraetacena, 63 schoeni. There are the city of Barda and the city of Min and the city of Palacenti and the city ofSigal; in that place is the royal residence of the Sacae; and nearby is the city of Alexandria (Alexandria Arachosia), and six villages." Parthian stations, 18.

Indo-Scythian kingdoms

Abhira to Surastrene

The first Indo-Scythian kingdom in the Indian subcontinent occupied the southern part of what is now Pakistan (which they accessed from southern Afghanistan), in the areas from Abiria(Sindh) to Surastrene (Saurashtra, Gujarat), from around 110 to 80 BC. They progressively further moved north into Indo-Greek territory until the conquests of Maues, c. 80 BC.

The 1st century AD Periplus of the Erythraean Sea describes the Scythian territories there:

"Beyond this region (Gedrosia), the continent making a wide curve from the east across the depths of the bays, there follows the coast district of Scythia, which lies above toward the north; the whole marshy; from which flows down the river Sinthus, the greatest of all the rivers that flow into the Erythraean Sea, bringing down an enormous volume of water (...) This river has seven mouths, very shallow and marshy, so that they are not navigable, except the one in the middle; at which by the shore, is the market-town, Barbaricum. Before it there lies a small island, and inland behind it is the metropolis of Scythia, Minnagara."

The Indo-Scythians ultimately established a kingdom in the northwest, based in Taxila, with two Great Satraps, one in Mathura in the east, and one in Surastrene (Gujarat) in the southwest.

In the southeast, the Indo-Scythians invaded the area of Ujjain, but were subsequently repelled in 57 BC by the Malwa king Vikramaditya. To commemorate the event Vikramaditya established the Vikrama era, a specific Indian calendar starting in 57 BC. More than a century later, in AD 78 the Sakas would again invade Ujjain and establish the Saka era, marking the beginning of the long-lived Saka Western Satraps kingdom.

Gandhara and Punjab

The presence of the Scythians in north-western India during the 1st century BCE was contemporary with that of the Indo-Greek Kingdomsthere, and it seems they initially recognized the power of the local Greek rulers.

Maues first conquered Gandhara and Taxila around 80 BCE, but his kingdom disintegrated after his death. In the east, the Indian kingVikrama retook Ujjain from the Indo-Scythians, celebrating his victory by the creation of the Vikrama Era (starting 58 BCE). Indo-Greek kings again ruled after Maues, and prospered, as indicated by the profusion of coins from Kings Apollodotus II and Hippostratos. Not untilAzes I, in 55 BC, did the Indo-Scythians take final control of northwestern India, with his victory over Hippostratos.

Sculpture

Several stone sculptures have been found in the Early Saka layer (Layer No4, corresponding to the period of Azes I, in which numerous coins of the latter were found) in the ruins of Sirkap, during the excavations organized by John Marshall.

Several of them are toilet trays (also called Stone palettes) roughly imitative of earlier, and finer, Hellenistic ones found in the earlier layers. Marshall comments that "we have a praiseworthy effort to copy a Hellenistic original but obviously without the appreciation of form and skill which were necessary for the task". From the same layer, several statuettes in the round are also known, in very rigid and frontal style.

Bimaran casket

Azes is connected to the Bimaran casket, one of the earliest representations of the Buddha. The casket was used for the dedication of a stupa in Bamiran, near Jalalabad in Afghanistan, and placed inside the stupa with several coins of Azes. This event may have happened during the reign of Azes (60–20 BCE), or slightly later. The Indo-Scythians are otherwise connected with Buddhism (see Mathura lion capital), and it is indeed possible they would have commended the work.

Mathura area ("Northern Satraps")

In central India, the Indo-Scythians conquered the area of Mathura over Indian kings around 60 BCE. Some of their satraps were Hagamasha and Hagana, who were in turn followed by the Saca Great Satrap Rajuvula.

The Mathura lion capital, an Indo-Scythian sandstone capital in crude style, from Mathura in Central India, and dated to the 1st century CE, describes in kharoshthi the gift of a stupa with a relic of the Buddha, by Queen Nadasi Kasa, the wife of the Indo-Scythian ruler of Mathura, Rajuvula. The capital also mentions the genealogy of several Indo-Scythian satraps of Mathura.

Rajuvula apparently eliminated the last of the Indo-Greek kings Strato II around 10 CE, and took his capital city, Sagala.

The coinage of the period, such as that of Rajuvula, tends to become very crude and barbarized in style. It is also very much debased, the silver content becoming lower and lower, in exchange for a higher proportion of bronze, an alloying technique (billon) suggesting less than wealthy finances.

The Mathura Lion Capital inscriptions attest that Mathura fell under the control of the Sakas. The inscriptions contain references toKharaosta Kamuio and Aiyasi Kamuia. Yuvaraja Kharostes (Kshatrapa) was the son of Arta as is attested by his own coins. Arta is stated to be brother of King Moga or Maues. Princess Aiyasi Kambojaka, also called Kambojika, was the chief queen of ShakaMahakshatrapa Rajuvula. Kamboja presence in Mathura is also verified from some verses of epic Mahabharata which are believed to have been composed around this period. This may suggest that Sakas and Kambojas may have jointly ruled over Mathura/Uttara Pradesh. It is revealing that Mahabharata verses only attest the Kambojas and Yavanas as the inhabitants of Mathura, but do not make any reference to the Sakas. Probably, the epic has reckoned the Sakas of Mathura among the Kambojas or else have addressed them as Yavanas, unless the Mahabharata verses refer to the previous period of invasion occupation by the Yavanas around 150 BC.

The Indo-Scythian satraps of Mathura are sometimes called the "Northern Satraps", in opposition to the "Western Satraps" ruling in Gujarat and Malwa. After Rajuvula, several successors are known to have ruled as vassals to the Kushans, such as the "Great Satrap" Kharapallana and the "Satrap" Vanaspara, who are known from an inscription discovered in Sarnath, and dated to the 3rd year of Kanishka (c. AD 130), in which they were paying allegiance to the Kushans.

Pataliputra

The text of the Yuga Purana describes an invasion of Pataliputra by the Scythians sometimes during the 1st century BC, after seven great kings had ruled in succession in Saketa following the retreat of the Yavanas. The Yuga Purana explains that the king of the Sakas killed one fourth of the population, before he was himself slain by the Kalinga king Shata and a group of Sabalas (Sabaras or Bhillas).

Kushan and Indo-Parthian conquests

After the death of Azes, the rule of the Indo-Scythians in northwestern India was shattered with the rise of the Indo-Parthian ruler Gondophares in the last years of the 1st century BC. For the following decades, a number of minor Scythian leaders maintained themselves in local strongholds on the fringes of the loosely

assembled Indo-Parthian empire, some of them paying formal allegiance to Gondophares I and his successors.

During the latter part of the 1st century AD, the Indo-Parthian overlordship was gradually replaced with that of the Kushans, one of the five tribes of the Yuezhi who had lived in Bactria for more than a century, and were now expanding into India to create a Kushan Empire. The Kushans ultimately regained northwestern India from around AD 75, and the area of Mathura from around AD 100, where they were to prosper for several centuries.[citation needed]

Western Kshatrapas legacy

Indo-Scythians continued to hold the area of Seistan until the reign of Bahram II (AD 276–293), and held several areas of India well into the 1st millennium: Kathiawar and Gujarat were under their rule until the 5th century under the designation ofWestern Kshatrapas, until they were eventually conquered by the Gupta emperor Chandragupta II (also called Vikramaditya).

The Brihat-Katha-Manjari of the Kshmendra (10/1/285-86) informs us that around AD 400 the Gupta king Vikramaditya (Chandragupta II) had unburdened the sacred earth of the Barbarians like the Shakas, Mlecchas, Kambojas, Yavanas, Tusharas, Parasikas, Hunas, etc. by annihilating these sinners completely.

The 10th century Kavyamimamsa of Raj Shekhar (Ch 17) still lists the Shakas, Tusharas, Vokanas, Hunas, Kambojas, Bahlikas, Pahlavas, Tangana, Turukshas, etc. together and states them as the tribes located in the Uttarapatha division.

Indo-Scythian coinage

Indo-Scythian coinage is generally of a high artistic quality, although it clearly deteriorates towards the disintegration of Indo-Scythian rule around AD 20 (coins of Rajuvula). A fairly high-quality but rather stereotypical coinage would continue in the Western Satraps until the 4th century.

Indo-Scythian coinage is generally quite realistic, artistically somewhere between Indo-Greek and Kushan coinage. It is often suggested Indo-Scythian coinage benefited from the help of Greek celators (Boppearachchi).

Indo-Scythian coins essentially continue the Indo-Greek tradition, by using the Greek language on the obverse and the Kharoshthilanguage on the reverse. The portrait of the king is never shown however, and is replaced by depictions of the king on horse (and sometimes on camel), or sometimes sitting cross-legged on a cushion. The reverse of their coins typically show Greek divinities.

Buddhist symbolism is present throughout Indo-Scythian coinage. In particular, they adopted the Indo-Greek practice since Menander I of showing divinities forming the vitarka mudra with their right hand (as for the mudra-forming Zeus on the coins of Maues or Azes II), or the presence of the Buddhist lion on the coins of the same two kings, or thetriratana symbol on the coins of Zeionises.

Depiction of Indo-Scythians

Besides coinage, few works of art are known to indisputably represent Indo-Scythians. Indo-Scythians rulers are usually depicted on horseback in armour, but the coins of Azilises show the king in a simple, undecorated, tunic.

Several Gandharan sculptures also show foreigner in soft tunics, sometimes wearing the typical Scythian cap. They stand in contrast to representations of Kushan men, who seem to wear thicks, rigid, tunics, and who are generally represented in a much more simplistic manner.

Buner reliefs

Indo-Scythian soldiers in military attire are sometimes represented in Buddhist friezes in the art of Gandhara (particularly in Buner reliefs). They are depicted in ample tunics with trousers, and have heavy straight sword as a weapon. They wear a pointed hood (the Scythian cap orbashlyk), which distinguishes them from the Indo-Parthians who only wore a simple fillet over their bushy hair,[25] and which is also systematically worn by Indo-Scythian rulers on their coins. With the right hand, some of them are forming the Karana mudra against evil spirits. In Gandhara, such friezes were used as decorations on the pedestals of Buddhist stupas. They are contemporary with other friezes representing people in purely Greek attire, hinting at an intermixing of Indo-Scythians (holding military power) and Indo-Greeks (confined, under Indo-Scythian rule, to civilian life).

Another relief is known where the same type of soldiers are playing musical instruments and dancing, activities which are widely represented elsewhere in Gandharan art: Indo-Scythians are typically shown as reveling devotees.

Stone palettes

Numerous stone palettes found in Gandhara are considered as good representatives of Indo-Scythian art. These palettes combine Greek and Iranian influences, and are often realized in a simple, archaic style. Stone palettes have only been found in archaeological layers corresponding to Indo-Greek, Indo-Scythian and Indo-Parthian rule, and are essentially unknown the preceding Mauryan layers or the succeeding Kushan layers.

Very often these palettes represent people in Greek dress in mythological scenes, a few in Parthian dress (head-bands over bushy hair, crossed-over jacket on a bare chest, jewelry, belt, baggy trousers), and even fewer in Indo-Scythian dress (Phrygian hat, tunic and comparatively straight trousers). A palette found in Sirkap and now in the New Delhi Museum shows a winged Indo-Scythian horseman riding winged deer, and being attacked by a lion.

The Indo-Scythians and Buddhism

The Indo-Scythians seem to have been followers of Buddhism, and many of their practices apparently continued those of the Indo-Greeks. They are known for their numerous Buddhist dedications, recorded through such epigraphic material as the Taxila copper plateinscription or the Mathura lion capital inscription.

Butkara Stupa

Excavation at the Butkara Stupa in Swat by an Italian archaeological team have yielded various Buddhist sculptures thought to belong to the Indo-Scythian period. In particular, an Indo-Corinthian capital representing a Buddhist devotee within foliage has been found which had a reliquary and coins of Azes buried at its base, securely dating the sculpture to around 20 BC. A contemporary pilaster with the image of a Buddhist devotee in Greek dress has also been found at the same spot, again suggesting a mingling of the two populations. Various reliefs at the same location show Indo-Scythians with their characteristic tunics and pointed hoods within a Buddhist context, and side-by-side with reliefs of standing Buddhas.

Gandharan sculptures

Other reliefs have been found, which show Indo-Scythian men with their characteristic pointed cap pushing a cart on which is reclining the Greek god Dionysos with his consort Ariadne.[citation needed]

Mathura lion capital

The Mathura lion capital, which associates many of the Indo-Scythian rulers from Maues to Rajuvula, mentions a dedication of a relic of the Buddha in a stupa. It also bears centrally the Buddhist symbol of the triratana, and is also filled with mentions of the bhagavat Buddha Sakyamuni, and characteristically Buddhist phrases such as:

"sarvabudhana puya dhamasa puya saghasa puya"

"Revere all the Buddhas, revere the dharma, revere the sangha"

(Mathura lion capital, inscription O1/O2)

Indo-Scythians in Western sources

The presence of Scythian territory in the area of Pakistan, and especially around the mouth of the Indus near modern-day Karachi is mentioned extensively in Western maps and travel descriptions of the period. The Ptolemy world map, as well as the Periplus of the Erythraean Sea mention prominently Scythia in the Indus area, as well as Roman Tabula Peutingeriana. The Periplus states thatMinnagara was the capital of Scythia, and that Parthian king were fighting for it during the 1st century AD. It also distinguishes Scythia withAriaca further east (centred in Gujarat and Malwa), over which ruled the Western Satrap king Nahapana.

Indo-Scythians in Indian literature

The Indo-Scythians were named "Shaka" in India, an extension on the name Saka used by the Persians to designate Scythians. From the time of the Mahabharata wars (400–150 BC roughly[citation needed]) Shakas receive numerous mentions in texts like the Puranas, the Manusmriti, the Ramayana, the Mahabharata, the Mahabhasiya of Patanjali, the Brhat Samhita of Vraha Mihira, the Kavyamimamsa, the Brihat-Katha-Manjari, the Katha-Saritsagara and several other

old texts. They are described as part of an amalgam of other war-like tribes from the northwest.

Sai-Wang Scythian hordes of Chipin or Kipin

A section of the Central Asian Scythians (under Sai-Wang) is said to have taken southerly direction and after passing through the Pamirs it entered the Chipin or Kipin after crossing the Hasuna-tu (Hanging Pass) located above the valley of Kanda in Swat country. Chipin has been identified by Pelliot, Bagchi, Raychaudhury and some others with Kashmir while other scholars identify it with Kapisha (Kafirstan). The Sai-Wang had established his kingdom in Kipin. S. Konow interprets the Sai-Wang as Saka Murunda of Indian literature, Murunda being equal to Wang i.e. king, master or lord,[38] but Bagchi who takes the word Wang in the sense of the king of the Scythians but he distinguishes the Sai Sakas from the Murunda Sakas. There are reasons to believe that Sai Scythians were Kamboja Scythians and therefore Sai-Wang belonged to the Scythianised Kambojas (i.e. Parama-Kambojas) of the Transoxiana region and came back to settle among his own stock after being evicted from his ancestral land located in Scythia or Shakadvipa. King Moga or Mauescould have belonged to this group of Scythians who had migrated from the Sai country (Central Asia) to Chipin. The Mathura Lion Capital inscriptions attest that the members of the family of King Moga had last name Kamuia or Kamuio (q.v.) which Khroshthi term has been identified by scholars with Sanskrit Kamboja or Kambojaka. Thus, Sai-Wang and his migrant hordes which came to settle in Kabolvalley in Kapisha may indeed have been from the transoxian Parama Kambojas living in Shakadvipa or Scythian land.

Many scholars think the Kambojas were a Royal Clan of the Sakas or Scythians. This also seems to be confirmed fromMathura Lion Capital Inscriptions of Mahaksatrapa Rajuvula and the Rock Edicts V and XIII of King Aśoka.

Establishment of Mlechcha Kingdoms in Northern India

The mixed Scythian hordes that migrated to Drangiana and surrounding regions, later spread further into north and south-west India via the lower Indus valley. Their migration spread into Sovira, Gujarat, Rajasthan and northern India, including kingdoms in the Indian mainland.

There are important references to the warring Mleccha hordes of the Sakas, Yavanas, Kambojas and Pahlavas in the Bala Kanda of theValmiki Ramayana also.

H. C. Raychadhury glimpses in these verses the struggles between the Hindus and the invading hordes of Mlechcha barbarians from thenorthwest. The time frame for these struggles is the 2nd century BC onwards. Raychadhury fixes the date of the present version of theValmiki Ramayana around or after the 2nd century AD.

This picture presented by the Ramayana probably refers to the political scenario that emerged when the mixed hordes descended fromSakasthan and advanced into the lower Indus valley via Bolan Pass and beyond into the Indian mainland. It refers to the hordes' struggle to seize political control of Sovira, Gujarat, Rajasthan, Punjab, Malwa, Maharashtra and further areas of eastern, central and southern India.[citation needed]

Mahabharata too furnishes a veiled hint about the invasion of the mixed hordes from the northwest. Vanaparava by Mahabharata contains verses in the form of prophecydeploring that ".....the Mlechha (barbaric) kings of the Shakas, Yavanas, Kambojas, Bahlikas, etc. shall rule the earth (i.e. India) un-righteously in Kaliyuga..".

According to H. C. Ray Chaudhury, this is too clear a statement to be ignored or explained away.

Mahabharata's epic reference apparently alludes to the chaotic politics which followed the collapse of the Mauryan and Shunga dynasties in northern India and the area's subsequent occupation by foreign hordes of the Saka, Yavana, Kamboja, Pahlavas, Bahlika, Shudra and Rishika tribes from the northwest.

Evidence about joint invasions

The Scythian groups that invaded India and set up various kingdoms, included besides the Sakas other allied tribes, such as the Medii, Xanthii, Massagetae. These peoples were all absorbed into the community of Kshatriyas of mainstream Indian society.

The Shakas were formerly a people of trans-Hemodos region—the Shakadvipa of the Puranas or the Scythia of the classical writings. Isidor of Charax (beginning of 1st century AD) attests them in Sakastana (modern Seistan). 1st century AD Periplus of the Erythraean Sea (c. AD 70–80) also attests a Scythian district in lower Indus with Minnagra as its capital. Ptolemy (c. AD 140) also attests Indo-Scythia in south-western India which comprised Patalene the Surastrene (Saurashtra) territories.

The 2nd century BC Scythian invasion of India, was in all probability carried out jointly by the Sakas, Pahlavas, Kambojas, Paradas, Rishikas and other allied tribes from thenorthwest. As a result, groups of these people who had originally lived in the northwest before the Christian era, were also found to have lived in southwest India in post-Christian times. All these groups of north-western peoples apparently entered Indian mainland following the Scythian invasion of India.

Main Indo-Scythian rulers

Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa and Eastern Pakistan

Maues, c. 85–60 BC
Vonones, c .75–65 BC
Spalahores, c 75–65 BC, satrap and brother of King Vonones, and probably the later King Spalirises.
Spalirises, c. 60–57 BC, king and brother of King Vonones.
Spalagadames c. 50 BC, satrap, and son of Spalahores.
Azilises, before 60 BC
Azes I, c. 60–20 BC
Zeionises, c. 10 BC – AD 10
Kharahostes, c. 10 BC – AD 10
Hajatria
Kshaharatas (Punjab, Pakistan and beyond)[edit]
Liaka Kusuluka, satrap of Chuksa

Kusulaka Patika, satrap of Chuksa and son of Liaka Kusulaka
Bhumaka
Nahapana (founder of the Western Satraps)
Aprācas (Bajaur, Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan)[edit]
Main article: Apraca
Vijayamitra (12 BC - AD 15), wife Rukhana
Indravasu (c. AD 20), wife Vasumitra
Vispavarman, wife Śiśirena
Indravarman, wife Uttara
Aspa (AD 15–45) or Aspavarma (AD 15 - 45)
Sasan
Pāratas (Balochistan, Pakistan)
Yolamira, son of Bagareva (c. 125–150)
Bagamira, son of Yolamira (c. 150)
Arjuna, a second son of Yolamira (c. 150–160)
Hvaramira, a third son of Yolamira (c. 160–175)
Mirahvara, son of Hvaramira (c. 175–185)
Miratakhma, another son of Hvaramira (c. 185–200)
Kozana, son of Bagavharna (and perhaps grandson of Bagamira?) (c. 200–220)
Bhimarjuna, son of Yolatakhma (and perhaps grandson of Arjuna?) (c. 220–235)
Koziya, son of Kozana (c. 235–265)
Datarvharna, son of Datayola I (possible grandson of Bhimarjuna) (c. 265–280)
Datayola II, son of Datarvharna (c. 280–300)
"Northern Satraps" (Mathura area)
Hagamasha (satrap, 1st century BC)
Hagana (satrap, 1st century BC)
Rajuvula, c. AD 10 (Great Satrap)
Sodasa, son of Rajuvula
"Great Satrap" Kharapallana (c. AD 130)
"Satrap" Vanaspara (c. AD 130)

Minor local rulers

Bhadayasa
Mamvadi
Arsakes

Western Satraps

Nahapana (119–124)
Chastana (c. 120), son of Ghsamotika
Jayadaman, son of Chastana
Rudradaman I (c. 130–150), son of Jayadaman
Damajadasri I (170–175)
Jivadaman (175 died 199)
Rudrasimha I (175–188 died 197)
Isvaradatta (188–191)
Rudrasimha I (restored) (191–197)
Jivadaman (restored) (197–199)
Rudrasena I (200–222)
Samghadaman (222–223)
Damasena (223–232)
Damajadasri II (232–239)
Viradaman (234–238)
Yasodaman I (239)
Vijayasena (239–250)

Damajadasri III (251–255)
Rudrasena II (255–277)
Visvasimha (277–282)
Bhratadarman (282–295)
Visvasena (293–304)
Rudrasimha II, son of Lord (Svami)
Jivadaman (304–348)
Yasodaman II (317–332)
Rudradaman II (332–348)
Rudrasena III (348–380)
Simhasena (380– ?)
Rudrasena IV (382–388)
Rudrasimha III (388–395)

"Degraded Kshatriyas" from the northwest

The Manusmriti, written about 200, groups the Shakas with the Yavanas, Kambojas, Paradas, Pahlavas, Kiratas and the Daradas, etc., and addresses them all as "degraded warriors" or Kshatriyas" (X/43-44). Anushasanaparva of the Mahabharata also views the Shakas, Kambojas, Yavanas etc... in the same light. Patanjali in his Mahabhashyaregards the Shakas and Yavanas as pure Shudras (II.4.10). The Vartika of the Katyayana informs us that the kings of the Shakas and the Yavanas, like those of the Kambojas, may also be addressed by their respective tribal names. The Mahabharata also associates the Shakas with the Yavanas, Gandharas, Kambojas, Pahlavas, Tusharas, Sabaras, Barbaras, etc. and addresses them all as the Barbaric tribes of Uttarapatha. In another verse, the same epic groups the Shakas and Kambojas and Khashas and addresses them as the tribes from Udichya i.e. north division (5/169/20). Also, the Kishkindha Kanda of the Ramayana locates the Shakas, Kambojas, Yavanas and Paradas in the extreme north-west beyond the Himavat (i.e. Hindukush) (43/12).

Military actions

Military alliance with Chandragupta (c. 320 BC)

The Buddhist drama Mudrarakshas by Visakhadutta and the Jaina works Parisishtaparvan refer to Chandragupta's alliance with Himalayan king Parvataka.

This Himalayan alliance gave Chandragupta a powerful composite army made up of the frontier martial tribes of the Shakas, Kambojas, Yavanas, Parasikas, Bahlikas etc. which he utilised to defeat the Nanda rulers of Magadha, and thus establishing his Mauryan Empire in northern India (See: Mudrarakshas, II).

Invasion of India by Eastern Iranian tribes (Scythians) (c. 180 BC)

The Vanaparva of the Mahabharata contains verses in the form of prophecy that the kings of the Sakas, Yavanas, Kambojas, Bahlikas, etc. shall rule unrighteously in Kaliyuga(MBH 3/188/34-36).

This reference apparently alludes to the precarious political scenario following the collapse of Mauryan and Shunga dynasties in northern India and its occupation by foreign hordes of the Shakas, Yavanas, Kambojas, and Pahlavas.

Extinction

The Brihat-Katha-Manjari of the Kshemendra (10/1/285-86) relates that around AD 400, the Gupta king Vikramaditya (Chandragupta II) had "unburdened the sacred earth of thebarbarians" like the Shakas, Mlecchas, Kambojas, Yavanas, Tusharas, Parasikas, Hunas, etc., by annihilating these "sinners" completely.

The 10th century Kavyamimamsa of Raj Shekhar still lists the Sakas, Tusharas, Vokanas, Hunas, Kambojas, Bahlikas, Pahlavas, Tangana, Turukshas, etc. together, and states they were the tribes located in the Uttarapatha division.

Descendants of the Indo-Scythians

Tadeusz Sulimirski notes that the Sacae also invaded parts of Northern India. Weer Rajendra Rishi, an Indian linguist has identified linguistic affinities between Indian and Central Asian languages, which further lends credence to the possibility of historical Sacae influence in Northern India.

The Indo-Greeks Background

Preliminary Greek presence in South Asia

In 326 BC, Alexander the Great conquered the northwestern part of the Indian subcontinent as far as the Hyphasis River, and established satrapies and founded several settlements, including Bucephala; he turned south when his troops refused to go further east.[9] The Indian satrapies of the Punjab were left to the rule of Porus and Taxiles, who were confirmed again at the Treaty of Triparadisus in 321 BC, and remaining Greek troops in these satrapies were left under the command of general Eudemus. After 321 BC Eudemus toppled Taxiles, until he left India in 316 BC. Another general also ruled over the Greek colonies of the Indus: Peithon, son of Agenor, until his departure for Babylon in 316 BC.

In 305 BC, Seleucus I led an army to the Indus, where he encountered Chandragupta. The confrontation ended with a peace treaty, and "an intermarriage agreement" (Epigamia, Greek: Ἐπιγαμία), meaning either a dynastic marriage or an agreement for intermarriage between Indians and Greeks. Accordingly, Seleucus ceded to Chandragupta his northwestern territories, possibly as far as Arachosia and received 500 war elephants (which played a key role in the victory of Seleucus at the Battle of Ipsus):

The Indians occupy in part some of the countries situated along the Indus, which formerly belonged to the Persians: Alexander deprived the Ariani of them, and established there settlements of his own. But Seleucus Nicator gave them toSandrocottus in consequence of a marriage contract, and received in return five hundred elephants.

— Strabo 15.2.1(9)

Also several Greeks, such as the historian Megasthenes, followed by Deimachus and Dionysius, were sent to reside at theMauryan court. Presents continued to be exchanged between the two rulers. The intensity of these contacts is testified by the existence of a dedicated Mauryan state department for Greek (Yavana) and Persian foreigners, or the remains of Hellenistic pottery that can be found throughout northern India.

On these occasions, Greek populations apparently remained in the northwest of the Indian subcontinent under Mauryan rule. Chandragupta's grandson Ashoka, who had converted to the Buddhist faith declared in the Edicts of Ashoka, set in stone, some of them written in Greek, that Greek populations within his realm also had converted to Buddhism:

Here in the king's domain among the Greeks, the Kambojas, the Nabhakas, the Nabhapamkits, the Bhojas, the Pitinikas, theAndhras and the Palidas, everywhere people are following Beloved-of-the-Gods' instructions in Dharma.

— Rock Edict Nb13 (S. Dhammika).

In his edicts, Ashoka mentions that he had sent Buddhist emissaries to Greek rulers as far as the Mediterranean, and that he developed herbal medicine in their territories, for the welfare of humans and animals

The Greeks in India even seem to have played an active role in the propagation of Buddhism, as some of the emissaries of Ashoka such as Dharmaraksita, or the teacher Mahadharmaraksita, are described in Pali sources as leading Greek ("Yona", i.e., Ionian) Buddhist monks, active in Buddhist proselytism (the Mahavamsa, XII). It is also thought that Greeks contributed to the sculptural work of thePillars of Ashoka, and more generally to the blossoming of Mauryan art.

Again in 206 BC, the Seleucid emperor Antiochus led an army to the Kabul valley, where he received war elephants and presents from the local king Sophagasenus:

He (Antiochus) crossed the Caucasus1 and descended into India; renewed his friendship with Sophagasenus the king of the Indians; received more elephants, until he had a hundred and fifty altogether; and having once more provisioned his troops, set out again personally with his army: leaving Androsthenes of Cyzicus the duty of taking home the treasure which this king had agreed to hand over to him.
1 That is the Caucasus Indicus or Paropamisus: mod. Hindú Kúsh.

— Polybius, Histories 11.39

Greek rule in Bactria

Main article: Greco-Bactrian Kingdom

Alexander had also established several colonies in neighbouring Bactria, such as Alexandria on the Oxus (modern Ai-Khanoum) andAlexandria of the Caucasus (medieval Kapisa, modern Bagram). After Alexander's death in 323 BC, Bactria came under the control ofSeleucus I Nicator, who founded the Seleucid Empire. The Greco-Bactrian Kingdom was founded when Diodotus I, the satrap of Bactria (and probably the surrounding provinces) seceded from the Seleucid Empire around 250 BC. The preserved ancient sources (see below) are somewhat

contradictory and the exact date of Bactrian independence has not been settled. Somewhat simplified, there is a high chronology (c. 255 BC) and a low chronology (c. 246 BC) for Diodotos' secession. The high chronology has the advantage of explaining why the Seleucid king Antiochus II issued very few coins in Bactria, as Diodotos would have become independent there early in Antiochus' reign. On the other hand, the low chronology, from the mid-240s BC, has the advantage of connecting the secession of Diodotus I with the Third Syrian War, a catastrophic conflict for the Seleucid Empire.

Diodotus, the governor of the thousand cities of Bactria, defected and proclaimed himself king; all the other people of the Orient followed his example and seceded from the Macedonians.

— (Justin, XLI,4)

The new kingdom, highly urbanized and considered as one of the richest of the Orient (opulentissimum illud mille urbium Bactrianum imperium "The extremely prosperous Bactrian empire of the thousand cities" Justin, XLI,1), was to further grow in power and engage into territorial expansion to the east and the west:

The Greeks who caused Bactria to revolt grew so powerful on account of the fertility of the country that they became masters, not only of Ariana, but also of India, as Apollodorus of Artemita says: and more tribes were subdued by them than by Alexander... Their cities were Bactra (also called Zariaspa, through which flows a river bearing the same name and emptying into the Oxus), and Darapsa, and several others. Among these was Eucratidia, which was named after its ruler.

— (Strabo, XI.XI.I)

When the ruler of neighbouring Parthia, the former satrap and self-proclaimed king Andragoras, was eliminated by Arsaces, the rise of theParthian Empire cut off the Greco-Bactrians from direct contact with the Greek world. Overland trade continued at a reduced rate, while sea trade between Greek Egypt and Bactria developed.

Diodotus was succeeded by his son Diodotus II, who allied himself with the Parthian Arsaces in his fight against Seleucus II:

Soon after, relieved by the death of Diodotus, Arsaces made peace and concluded an alliance with his son, also by the name of Diodotus; some time later he fought against Seleucos who came to punish the rebels, and he prevailed: the Parthians celebrated this day as the one that marked the beginning of their freedom

— (Justin, XLI,4)

Euthydemus, a Magnesian Greek according to Polybius and possibly satrap of Sogdiana, overthrew Diodotus II around 230 BC and started his own dynasty. Euthydemus's control extended to Sogdiana, going beyond the city of Alexandria Eschate founded by Alexander the Great in Ferghana:

"And they also held Sogdiana, situated above Bactriana towards the east between the Oxus River, which forms the boundary between the Bactrians and the Sogdians, and the Iaxartes River. And the Iaxartes forms also the boundary between the Sogdians and the nomads.

— Strabo XI.11.2

Euthydemus was attacked by the Seleucid ruler Antiochus III around 210 BC. Although he commanded 10,000 horsemen, Euthydemus initially lost a battle on the Arius and had to retreat. He then successfully resisted a three-year siege in the fortified city of Bactra(modern Balkh), before Antiochus finally decided to recognize the new ruler, and to offer one of his daughters to Euthydemus's sonDemetrius around 206 BC. Classical accounts also relate that Euthydemus negotiated peace with Antiochus III by suggesting that he deserved credit for overthrowing the original rebel Diodotus, and that he was protecting Central Asia from nomadic invasions thanks to his defensive efforts:

...for if he did not yield to this demand, neither of them would be safe: seeing that great hordes of Nomads were close at hand, who were a danger to both; and that if they admitted them into the country, it would certainly be utterly barbarised.

— (Polybius, 11.34)

Following the departure of the Seleucid army, the Bactrian kingdom seems to have expanded. In the west, areas in north-eastern Iran may have been absorbed, possibly as far as into Parthia, whose ruler had been defeated by Antiochus the Great. These territories possibly are identical with the Bactrian satrapies of Tapuria and Traxiane.

To the north, Euthydemus also ruled Sogdiana and Ferghana, and there are indications that from Alexandria Eschate the Greco-Bactrians may have led expeditions as far asKashgar and Ürümqi in Chinese Turkestan, leading to the first known contacts between China and the West around 220 BC. The Greek historian Strabo too writes that:

they extended their empire even as far as the Seres (Chinese) and the Phryni

— (Strabo, XI.XI.I)

Several statuettes and representations of Greek soldiers have been found north of the Tien Shan, on the doorstep to China, and are today on display in the Xinjiang museum atUrumqi (Boardman).

Greek influences on Chinese art have also been suggested (Hirth, Rostovtzeff). Designs with rosette flowers, geometric lines, and glass inlays, suggestive of Hellenistic influences, can be found on some early Han dynasty bronze mirrors.

Numismatics also suggest that some technology exchanges may have occurred on these occasions: the Greco-Bactrians were the first in the world to issue cupro-nickel (75/25 ratio) coins, an alloy technology only known by the Chinese at the time under the name "White copper" (some weapons from the Warring States period were in copper-nickel alloy). The practice of exporting Chinese metals, in particular iron, for trade is attested around that period. Kings Euthydemus, Euthydemus II, Agathocles and Pantaleon made these coin issues around 170 BC and it has alternatively been suggested that a nickeliferous copper ore was the source from mines at Anarak. Copper-nickel would not be used again in coinage until the 19th century.

The presence of Chinese people in the Indian subcontinent from ancient times is also suggested by the accounts of the "Ciñas" in the Mahabharata and the Manu Smriti.

The Han Dynasty explorer and ambassador Zhang Qian visited Bactria in 126 BC, and reported the presence of Chinese products in the Bactrian markets:

"When I was in Bactria (Daxia)", Zhang Qian reported, "I saw bamboo canes from Qiong and cloth made in the province of Shu (territories of southwestern China). When I asked the people how they had gotten such articles, they replied, "Our merchants go buy them in the markets of Shendu (India)."

— (Shiji 123, Sima Qian, trans. Burton Watson)

Upon his return, Zhang Qian informed the Chinese emperor Han Wudi of the level of sophistication of the urban civilizations of Ferghana, Bactria and Parthia, who became interested in developing commercial relationship them:

The Son of Heaven on hearing all this reasoned thus: Ferghana (Dayuan) and the possessions of Bactria (Daxia) and Parthia (Anxi) are large countries, full of rare things, with a population living in fixed abodes and given to occupations somewhat identical with those of the Chinese people, and placing great value on the rich produce of China

— (Hanshu, Former Han History)

A number of Chinese envoys were then sent to Central Asia, triggering the development of the Silk Road from the end of the 2nd century BC.

The Indian emperor Chandragupta, founder of the Mauryan dynasty, had re-conquered northwestern India upon the death of Alexander the Great around 322 BC. However, contacts were kept with his Greek neighbours in the Seleucid Empire, a dynastic alliance or the recognition of intermarriage between Greeks and Indians were established (described as an agreement on Epigamia in Ancient sources), and several Greeks, such as the historian Megasthenes, resided at the Mauryan court. Subsequently, each Mauryan emperor had a Greek ambassador at his court.

Chandragupta's grandson Ashoka converted to the Buddhist faith and became a great proselytizer in the line of the traditional Pali canon of Theravada Buddhism, directing his efforts towards the Indian and the Hellenistic worlds from around 250 BC. According to the Edicts of Ashoka, set in stone, some of them written in Greek, he sent Buddhist emissaries to the Greek lands in Asia and as far as the Mediterranean. The edicts name each of the rulers of the Hellenistic world at the time.

The conquest by Dharma has been won here, on the borders, and even six hundred yojanas (4,000 miles) away, where the Greek king Antiochos rules, beyond there where the four kings named Ptolemy, Antigonos, Magas and Alexander rule, likewise in the south among the Cholas, the Pandyas, and as far as Tamraparni.

— (Edicts of Ashoka, 13th Rock Edict, S. Dhammika)

Some of the Greek populations that had remained in northwestern India apparently converted to Buddhism:

Here in the king's domain among the Greeks, the Kambojas, the Nabhakas, the Nabhapamkits, the Bhojas, the Pitinikas, the Andhras and the Palidas, everywhere people are following Beloved-of-the-Gods' instructions in Dharma.

— (Edicts of Ashoka, 13th Rock Edict, S. Dhammika)

Furthermore, according to Pali sources, some of Ashoka's emissaries were Greek Buddhist monks, indicating close religious exchanges between the two cultures:

When the thera (elder) Moggaliputta, the illuminator of the religion of the Conqueror (Ashoka), had brought the (third) council to an end… he sent forth theras, one here and one there: …and to Aparantaka (the "Western countries" corresponding to Gujarat and Sindh) he sent the Greek (Yona) named Dhammarakkhita... and the thera Maharakkhita he sent into the country of the Yona.

— (Mahavamsa XII)

Greco-Bactrians probably received these Buddhist emissaries (At least Maharakkhita, lit. "The Great Saved One", who was "sent to the country of the Yona") and somehow tolerated the Buddhist faith, although little proof remains. In the 2nd century AD, the Christian dogmatist Clement of Alexandria recognized the existence of Buddhist Sramanasamong the Bactrians ("Bactrians" meaning "Oriental Greeks" in that period), and even their influence on Greek thought:

Thus philosophy, a thing of the highest utility, flourished in antiquity among the barbarians, shedding its light over the nations. And afterwards it came to Greece. First in its ranks were the prophets of the Egyptians; and the Chaldeans among the Assyrians; and the Druids among the Gauls; and the Sramanas among the Bactrians("Σαρμαναίοι Βάκτρων"); and the philosophers of the Celts; and the Magi of the Persians, who foretold the Saviour's birth, and came into the land of Judea guided by a star. The Indian gymnosophists are also in the number, and the other barbarian philosophers. And of these there are two classes, some of them called Sramanas, and others Brahmins.

— Clement of Alexandria, "The Stromata, or Miscellanies" Book I, Chapter XV

Rise of the Shungas (185 BC)

In India, the Maurya Dynasty was overthrown around 185 BC when Pushyamitra Shunga, the commander-in-chief of Mauryan Imperial forces and a Brahmin, assassinated the last of the Mauryan emperors Brihadratha. Pushyamitra Shunga then ascended the throne and established the Shunga Empire, which extended its control as far west as the Punjab.

Buddhist sources, such as the Ashokavadana, mention that Pushyamitra was hostile towards Buddhists and allegedly persecuted the Buddhist faith. A large number of Buddhist monasteries (viharas) were allegedly converted to Hindu temples, in such places as Nalanda, Bodhgaya, Sarnath or Mathura. While it is established by secular sources thatHinduism and Buddhism were in competition during this time, with the Shungas preferring the former to the latter, historians such as Etienne Lamotte[53] and Romila Thapar[54]argue that Buddhist accounts of persecution of Buddhists by Shungas are largely exaggerated.

History of the Indo-Greek kingdom

Nature and quality of the sources

Some narrative history has survived for most of the Hellenistic world, at least of the kings and the wars; this is lacking for India. The main Greco-Roman source on

the Indo-Greeks is Justin, who wrote an anthology drawn from the Roman historian Pompeius Trogus, who in turn wrote, from Greek sources, at the time of Augustus Caesar.[56] Justin tells the parts of Trogus' history he finds particularly interesting at some length; he connects them by short and simplified summaries of the rest of the material. In the process he has left 85% to 90% of Trogus out; and his summaries are held together by phrases like "meanwhile" (eodem tempore) and "thereafter" (deinde), which he uses very loosely. Where Justin covers periods for which there are other and better sources, he has occasionally made provable mistakes. As Develin, the recent annotator of Justin, and Tarn both point out, Justin is not trying to write history in our sense of the word; he is collecting instructive moral anecdotes.[57] Justin does find the customs and growth of the Parthians, which were covered in Trogus' 41st book, quite interesting, and discusses them at length; in the process, he mentions four of the kings of Bactria and one Greek king of India.

In addition to these dozen sentences, the geographer Strabo mentions India a few times in the course of his long dispute with Eratosthenes about the shape of Eurasia. Most of these are purely geographical claims, but he does mention that Eratosthenes' sources say that some of the Greek kings conquered further than Alexander; Strabo does not believe them on this, but modern historians do; nor does he believe that Menander and Demetrius son of Euthydemus conquered more tribes than Alexander[59] There is half a story about Menander in one of the books of Polybiuswhich has not come down to us intact.

There are Indian literary sources, ranging from the Milinda Panha, a dialogue between a Buddhist sage Nagasena and King Menander I, which includes some incidental information on Menander's biography and the geography and institutions of his kingdom, down to a sentence about Menander (presumably the same Menander) and his attack on Pataliputra which happens to have survived as a standard example in grammar texts; none is a narrative history. Names in these sources are consistently Indianized, and there is some dispute whether, for example,Dharmamitra represents "Demetrius" or is an Indian prince with that name. There was also a Chinese expedition to Bactria by Chang-k'ien under the Emperor Wu of Han, recorded in the Records of the Grand Historian and Book of the Former Han, with additional evidence in the Book of the Later Han; the identification of places and peoples behind transcriptions into Chinese is difficult, and several alternate interpretations have been proposed.

There is also significant archaeological evidence, including some epigraphic evidence, for the Indo-Greek kings, such as the mention of the "Yavana" embassy of king Antialcidason the Heliodorus pillar in Vidisha, primarily in Indic languages, which has the same problems with names as the Indic literary evidence. But the chief archaeological evidence is the coins.

There are coin finds of several dozen Indo-Greek rulers in India; exactly how many is complicated to determine, because the Greeks did not number their kings, and the eastern Greeks did not date their coins. For example, there are a substantial number of coin finds for a King Demetrius, but authors have postulated one, two, or three Demetriuses, and the same coins have been identified by different enquirers as describing Demetrius I, Demetrius II, or Demetrius III. The following deductions have been made from coins, in addition to mere existence:

Kings who left many coins reigned long and prosperously.

Hoards which contain many coins of the same king come from his realm.

Kings who use the same iconography are friendly, and may well be from the same family,

If a king overstrikes another king's coins, this is an important evidence to show that the overstriker reigned after the overstruck. Overstrikes may indicate that the two kings were enemies.

Indo-Greek coins, like other Hellenistic coins, have monograms in addition to their inscriptions. These are generally held to indicate a mint official; therefore, if two kings issue coins with the same monogram, they reigned in the same area, and if not immediately following one another, have no long interval between them.

All of these arguments are arguments of probability, and have exceptions; one of Menander's coins was found in Wales.

The exact time and progression of the Bactrian expansion into India is difficult to ascertain, but ancient authors name Demetrius, Apollodotus, and Menander as conquerors.

Demetrius

Demetrius I was the son of Euthydemus I of Bactria; there is an inscription from his father's reign already officially hailing him as victorious. He also has one of the few absolute dates in Indo-Greek history: after his father held off Antiochus III for two years, 208–6 BC, the peace treaty included the offer of a marriage between Demetrius and Antiochus' daughter. Coins of Demetrius I have been found in Arachosiaand in the Kabul Valley; the latter would be the first entry of the Greeks into India, as they defined it. There is also literary evidence for a campaign eastward against the Seres and the Phryni; but the order and dating of these conquests is uncertain. Demetrius I seems to have conquered the Kabul valley, Arachosia and perhaps Gandhara; he struck no Indian coins, so either his conquests did not penetrate that far into India or he died before he could consolidate them. On his coins, Demetrius I always carries the elephant-helmet worn by Alexander, which seems to be a token of his Indian conquests. Bopearachchi believes that Demetrius received the title of "King of India" following his victories south of the Hindu Kush. He was also given, though perhaps only posthumously, the title ανικητος("Anicetos", lit. Invincible) a cult title of Heracles, which Alexander had assumed; the later Indo-Greek kings Lysias, Philoxenus, and Artemidorus also took it. Finally, Demetrius may have been the founder of a newly discovered Greek Era, starting in 186/5 BC.

After Demetrius

After the death of Demetrius, the Bactrian kings Pantaleon and Agathocles struck the first bilingual coins with Indian inscriptions found as far east as Taxila so in their time (c. 185–170 BC) the Bactrian kingdom seems to have included Gandhara. Several Bactrian kings followed after Demetrius' death, and it seems likely that the civil wars between them made it possible for Apollodotus I (from c. 180/175 BC) to make himself independent as the first proper Indo-Greek king (who did not rule from Bactria). Large numbers of his coins have been found in India, and he seems to have reigned in Gandhara as well as western Punjab. Apollodotus I was succeeded by or ruled alongside Antimachus II, likely the son of the Bactrian king Antimachus I.

Menander

The next important Indo-Greek king was Menander (from c. 165/155 BC) whose has been described as the greatest of the Indo-Greek Kings, his coins are frequently found even in eastern Punjab. Menander seems to have begun a second wave of conquests, and since he already ruled in India, it seems likely that the easternmost conquests were made by him. Thus from 161 B.C. onwards Menander was the ruler of Punjab until his death in 130 B.C. Menander made Sagala his capital after conquering the Punjab region he subsequently travelled across northern India and visited the Maurayan capital of Patna. Any plans of conquering the capital were put aside as Eucratides Iking of the Greco-Bactrian Kingdom began warring with the Indo-Greeks in the north western frontier.

According to Apollodorus of Artemita, quoted by Strabo, the Indo-Greek territory for a while included the Indian coastal provinces of Sindh and possibly Gujarat. With archaeological methods, the Indo-Greek territory can however only be confirmed from the Kabul Valley to the eastern Punjab, so Greek presence outside was probably short-lived or less significant.

Some sources also claim that the Indo-Greeks may have reached the Shunga capital Pataliputra in northeastern India. However, the nature of this expedition is a matter of controversy. One theory is that Indo-Greeks were invited to join a raid led by local Indian kings down the Ganges river. The other is that it was a campaign likely made by Menander. Irrespective it appears that Pataliputra, if at all captured, was not held for long as the expedition was forced to retreat, probably due to wars in their own territories. Menander's reign saw the end of the Indo-Greek expansion.

The first conquests

Greek presence in Arachosia, where Greek populations had been living since before the acquisition of the territory by Chandragupta fromSeleucus, is mentioned by Isidore of Charax. He describes Greek cities there, one of them called Demetrias, probably in honour of the conqueror Demetrius.

Apollodotus I (and Menander I) were mentioned by Pompejus Trogus as important Indo-Greek kings. It is theorized that Greek advances temporarily went as far as the Shunga capital Pataliputra (today Patna) in eastern India. Senior considers that these conquests can only refer to Menander: Against this, John Mitchener considers that the Greeks probably raided the Indian capital of Pataliputraduring the time of Demetrius, though Mitchener's analysis is not based on numismatic evidence.

Of the eastern parts of India, then, there have become known to us all those parts which lie this side of the Hypanis, and also any parts beyond the Hypanis of which an account has been added by those who, after Alexander, advanced beyond the Hypanis, to the Ganges and Pataliputra.

— Strabo, 15-1-27

The seriousness of the attack is in some doubt: Menander may merely have joined a raid led by Indian Kings down the Ganges, as Indo-Greek presence has not been confirmed this far east.

To the south, the Greeks may have occupied the areas of the Sindh and Gujarat, including the strategic harbour of Barygaza (Bharuch), conquests also attested by coins dating from the Indo-Greek

ruler Apollodotus I and by several ancient writers (Strabo 11; Periplus of the Erythraean Sea, Chap. 41/47)

The Greeks... took possession, not only of Patalene, but also, on the rest of the coast, of what is called the kingdom of Saraostus and Sigerdis.

— Strabo 11.11.1

Narain however dismisses the account of the Periplus as "just a sailor's story", and holds that coin finds are not necessarily indicators of occupation. Coin hoards suggest that in Central India, the area of Malwa may also have been conquered.

Various Indian records describe Yavana attacks on Mathura, Panchala, Saketa, and Pataliputra. The term Yavana is thought to be a transliteration of "Ionians" and is known to have designated Hellenistic Greeks (starting with the Edicts of Ashoka, where Ashoka writes about "the Yavana king Antiochus"), but may have sometimes referred to other foreigners as well after the 1st century AD.

Patanjali, a grammarian and commentator on Pāṇini around 150 BC, describes in the Mahābhāsya, the invasion in two examples using the imperfect tense of Sanskrit, denoting a recent event:

"Arunad Yavanah Sāketam" ("The Yavanas (Greeks) were besieging Saketa")

"Arunad Yavano Madhyamikām" ("The Yavanas were besieging Madhyamika" (the "Middle country")).

Also the Brahmanical text of the Yuga Purana, which describes Indian historical events in the form of a prophecy, but is thought to be likely historical, relates the attack of the Indo-Greeks on the capital Pataliputra, a magnificent fortified city with 570 towers and 64 gates according to Megasthenes, and describes the ultimate destruction of the city's walls:[105]

Then, after having approached Saketa together with the Panchalas and the Mathuras, the Yavanas, valiant in battle, will reach Kusumadhvaja ("The town of the flower-standard", Pataliputra). Then, once Puspapura (another name of Pataliputra) has been reached and its celebrated mud-walls cast down, all the realm will be in disorder.

— Yuga Purana, Paragraph 47–48, quoted in Mitchener, The Yuga Purana, 2002 edition

Earlier authors such as Tarn have suggested that the raid on Pataliputra was made by Demetrius. According to Mitchener, the Hathigumpha inscription indicates the presence of the Greeks led by a "Demetrius" in eastern India (Magadha) during the 1st century BC, although this interpretation was previously disputed by Narain. But while this inscription may be interpreted as an indication that Demetrius I was the king who made conquests in Punjab, it is still true that he never issued any Indian coins, and the restoration of his name in Kharosthi on the Hathigumpha inscription: Di-Mi-Ta, has been doubted.[109] The "Di" is a reconstruction, and it may be noted that the name of another Indo-Greek king, Amyntas, is spelt A-Mi-Ta in Kharosthi and may fit in.

Therefore, Menander remains the likeliest candidate for any advance east of Punjab.

Consolidation

The important Bactrian king Eucratides seems to have attacked the Indo-Greek kingdom during the mid 2nd century BC. A Demetrius, called "King of the Indians", seems to have confronted Eucratides in a four-month siege, reported by Justin, but he ultimately lost.

In any case, Eucratides seems to have occupied territory as far as the Indus, between ca. 170 BC and 150 BC. His advances were ultimately checked by the Indo-Greek kingMenander I,

Menander is considered to have been probably the most successful Indo-Greek king, and the conqueror of the largest territory. The finds of his coins are the most numerous and the most widespread of all the Indo-Greek kings. Menander is also remembered in Buddhist literature, where he is called Milinda, and is described in the Milinda Panha as a convert to Buddhism: he became an arhat whose relics were enshrined in a manner reminiscent of the Buddha. He also introduced a new coin type, with AthenaAlkidemos ("Protector of the people") on the reverse, which was adopted by most of his successors in the East.

Fall of Bactria and death of Menander

From the mid-2nd century BC, the Scythians and then the Yuezhi, following a long migration from the border of China, started to invade Bactria from the north. Around 130 BC the last Greco-Bactrian king Heliocles was probably killed during the invasion and the Greco-Bactrian kingdom proper ceased to exist. The Parthians also probably played a role in the downfall of the Bactrian kingdom.

The Indo-Greek states, shielded by the Hindu Kush range, were saved from the invasions, but the civil wars which had weakened the Greeks continued. Menander I died around the same time, and even though the king himself seems to have been popular among his subjects, his dynasty was at least partially dethroned (see discussion under Menander I). Probable members of the dynasty of Menander include the ruling queen Agathokleia, her son Strato I, and Nicias, though it is uncertain whether they ruled directly after Menander. Other kings emerged, usually in the western part of the Indo-Greek realm, such as Zoilos I, Lysias, Antialcidas and Philoxenos. These rulers may have been relatives of either the Eucratid or the Euthydemid dynasties. The names of later kings were often new (members of Hellenistic dynasties usually inherited family names) but old reverses and titles were frequently repeated by the later rulers.

While all Indo-Greek kings after Apollodotus I mainly issued bilingual (Greek and Kharoshti) coins for circulation in their own territories, several of them also struck rare Greek coins which have been found in Bactria. The later kings probably struck these coins as some kind of payment to the Scythian or Yuezhi tribes who now ruled there, though if as tribute or payment for mercenaries remains unknown. For some decades after the Bactrian invasion, relationships seem to have been peaceful between the Indo-Greeks and these relatively hellenised nomad tribes.

There are however no historical recordings of events in the Indo-Greek kingdom after Menander's death around 130 BC, since the Indo-Greeks had now become very isolated from the rest of the Graeco-Roman world. The later history of

the Indo-Greek states, which lasted to around the shift BC/AD, is reconstructed almost entirely from archaeological and numismatical analyses.

Later history

Throughout the 1st century BC, the Indo-Greeks progressively lost ground to the Indians in the east, and the Scythians, the Yuezhi, and the Parthians in the West. About 20 Indo-Greek kings are known during this period, down to the last known Indo-Greek ruler, a king named Strato II, who ruled in the Punjab region until around 55 BC. Other sources, however, place the end of Strato II's reign as late as 10 AD – see below in the list of coins.

Loss of Eastern territories (circa 100 BC)

The Indo-Greeks may have ruled as far as the area of Mathura until the 1st century BC: the Maghera inscription, from a village near Mathura, records the dedication of a well "in the one hundred and sixteenth year of the reign of the Yavanas", which could be as late as 70 BC.[126] Soon however Indian kings recovered the area of Mathura and south-eastern Punjab(modern day Southern Haryana), west of the Yamuna River, and started to mint their own coins. The Arjunayanas (area of Mathura) and Yaudheyas mention military victories on their coins ("Victory of the Arjunayanas", "Victory of the Yaudheyas"). During the 1st century BC, the Trigartas, Audumbaras and finally the Kunindas also started to mint their own coins, usually in a style highly reminiscent of Indo-Greek coinage.

The Western king Philoxenus briefly occupied the whole remaining Greek territory from the Paropamisadae to Western Punjab between 100 to 95 BC, after what the territories fragmented again. The western kings regained their territory as far west as Arachosia, and eastern kings continued to rule on and off until the beginning of our era.

Scythian invasions (80 BC-20 AD)

Around 80 BC, an Indo-Scythian king named Maues, possibly a general in the service of the Indo-Greeks, ruled for a few years in northwestern India before the Indo-Greeks again took control. He seems to have been married to an Indo-Greek princess. King Hippostratus (65–55 BC) seems to have been one of the most successful subsequent Indo-Greek kings until he lost to the Indo-Scythian Azes I, who established an Indo-Scythian dynasty. Various coins seem to suggest that some sort of alliance may have taken place between the Indo-Greeks and the Scythians.

Although the Indo-Scythians clearly ruled militarily and politically, they remained surprisingly respectful of Greek and Indian cultures. Their coins were minted in Greek mints, continued using proper Greek and Kharoshthi legends, and incorporated depictions of Greek deities, particularly Zeus. The Mathura lion capital inscription attests that they adopted the Buddhist faith, as do the depictions of deities forming the vitarka mudra on their coins. Greek communities, far from being exterminated, probably persisted under Indo-Scythian rule. There is a possibility that a fusion, rather than a confrontation, occurred between the Greeks and the Indo-Scythians: in a recently published coin, Artemidorus presents himself as "son of Maues", and the Buner reliefs show Indo-Greeks and Indo-Scythians reveling in a Buddhist context.

The Indo-Greeks continued to rule a territory in the eastern Punjab, until the kingdom of the last Indo-Greek king Strato was taken over by the Indo-Scythian ruler Rajuvula around 10 AD.

Western Yuezhi or Saka expansion (70 BC-)

Around eight "western" Indo-Greek kings are known; most of them are distinguished by their issues of Attic coins for circulation in the neighbouring region.

One of the last important kings in the Paropamisadae was Hermaeus, who ruled until around 80 BC; soon after his death the Yuezhi orSakas took over his areas from neighbouring Bactria. When Hermaeus is depicted on his coins riding a horse, he is equipped with the recurve bow and bow-case of the steppes and RC Senior believes him to be of partly nomad origin. The later king Hippostratus may however also have held territories in the Paropamisadae.

After the death of Hermaeus, the Yuezhi or Saka nomads became the new rulers of the Paropamisadae, and minted vast quantities of posthumous issues of Hermaeus up to around 40 AD, when they blend with the coinage of the Kushan king Kujula Kadphises.[139] The first documented Yuezhi prince, Sapadbizes, ruled around 20 BC, and minted in Greek and in the same style as the western Indo-Greek kings, probably depending on Greek mints and celators.

The last known mention of an Indo-Greek ruler is suggested by an inscription on a signet ring of the 1st century AD in the name of a king Theodamas, from the Bajaur area ofGandhara, in modern Pakistan. No coins of him are known, but the signet bears in kharoshthi script the inscription "Su Theodamasa", "Su" being explained as the Greek transliteration of the ubiquitous Kushan royal title "Shau" ("Shah", "King").

Ideology

Buddhism flourished under the Indo-Greek kings, and their rule, especially that of Menander, has been remembered as benevolent. It has been suggested, although direct evidence is lacking, that their invasion of India was intended to show their support for the Mauryan empire which may have had a long history of marital alliances, exchange of presents, demonstrations of friendship, exchange of ambassadors and religious missions with the Greeks. The historian Diodorus even wrote that the king of Pataliputra had "great love for the Greeks".

The Greek expansion into Indian territory may have been intended to protect Greek populations in India, and to protect the Buddhist faith from the religious persecutions of the Shungas. The city of Sirkap founded by Demetrius combines Greek and Indian influences without signs of segregation between the two cultures.

The first Greek coins to be minted in India, those of Menander I and Apollodotus I bear the mention "Saviour king", a title with high value in the Greek world which indicated an important deflective victory. For instance, Ptolemy I had beenSoter (saviour) because he had helped save Rhodes from Demetrius the Besieger, and Antiochus I because he had saved Asia Minorfrom the Gauls. The title was also inscribed in Pali as ("Tratarasa") on the reverse of their coins. Menander and Apollodotus may indeed have been saviours to the Greek populations residing in India, and to some of the Indians as well.

Also, most of the coins of the Greek kings in India were bilingual, written in Greek on the front and in Pali on the back (in the Kharosthiscript, derived from Aramaic, rather than the more eastern Brahmi, which was used only once on coins of Agathocles of Bactria), a tremendous concession to another culture never before made in the Hellenic world. From

the reign of Apollodotus II, around 80 BC, Kharosthi letters started to be used as mintmarks on coins in combination with Greek monograms and mintmarks, suggesting the participation of local technicians to the minting process. Incidentally, these bilingual coins of the Indo-Greeks were the key in thedecipherment of the Kharoshthi script by James Prinsep (1799–1840). Kharoshthi became extinct around the 3rd century AD.

In Indian literature, the Indo-Greeks are described as Yavanas (in Sanskrit), or Yonas (in Pali) both thought to be transliterations of "Ionians". In the Harivamsa the "Yavana" Indo-Greeks are qualified, together with the Sakas, Kambojas, Pahlavas and Paradas as Kshatriya-pungava i.e. foremost among the Warrior caste, or Kshatriyas. The Majjhima Nikaya explains that in the lands of the Yavanas and Kambojas, in contrast with the numerous Indian castes, there were only two classes of people, Aryas and Dasas (masters and slaves).

Religion

In addition to the worship of the Classical pantheon of the Greek deities found on their coins (Zeus, Herakles, Athena, Apollo...), the Indo-Greeks were involved with local faiths, particularly with Buddhism, but also with Hinduism and Zoroastrianism.

After the Greco-Bactrians militarily occupied parts of northern India from around 180 BC, numerous instances of interaction between Greeks and Buddhism are recorded. Menander I, the "Saviour king", seems to have converted to Buddhism, and is described as a great benefactor of the religion, on a par with Ashoka or the future Kushan emperor Kanishka. The wheel he represented on some of his coins was probably Buddhist, and he is famous for his dialogues with the Buddhist monk Nagasena, transmitted to us in the Milinda Panha, which explain that he became a Buddhist arhat:

And afterwards, taking delight in the wisdom of the Elder, he (Menander) handed over his kingdom to his son, and abandoning the household life for the house-less state, grew great in insight, and himself attained to Arahatship!

— The Questions of King Milinda, Translation by T. W. Rhys Davids.

Another Indian text, the Stupavadana of Ksemendra, mentions in the form of a prophecy that Menander will build a stupa in Pataliputra.

Plutarch also presents Menander as an example of benevolent rule, and explains that upon his death, the honour of sharing his remains was claimed by the various cities under his rule, and they were enshrined in "monuments", in a parallel with the historic Buddha:

But when one Menander, who had reigned graciously over the Bactrians, died afterwards in the camp, the cities indeed by common consent celebrated his funerals; but coming to a contest about his relics, they were difficultly at last brought to this agreement, that his ashes being distributed, everyone should carry away an equal share, and they should all erect monuments to him.

— Plutarch, "Political Precepts" Praec. reip. ger. 28, 6).

The Butkara stupa was "monumentalized" by the addition of Hellenistic architectural decorations during Indo-Greek rule in the 2nd century BC.

In general, the art of the Indo-Greeks is poorly documented, and few works of art (apart from their coins and a few stone palettes) are directly attributed to them. The coinage of the Indo-Greeks however is generally considered as some of the most artistically brilliant of Antiquity. The Hellenistic heritage (Ai-Khanoum) and artistic proficiency of the Indo-Greek world would suggest a rich sculptural tradition as well, but traditionally very few sculptural remains have been attributed to them. On the contrary, most Gandharan Hellenistic works of art are usually attributed to the direct successors of the Indo-Greeks in India in 1st century AD, such as the nomadic Indo-Scythians, the Indo-Parthians and, in an already decadent state, the Kushans In general, Gandharan sculpture cannot be dated exactly, leaving the exact chronology open to interpretation.

The possibility of a direct connection between the Indo-Greeks and Greco-Buddhist art has been reaffirmed recently as the dating of the rule of Indo-Greek kings has been extended to the first decades of the 1st century AD, with the reign of Strato II in the Punjab. Also, Foucher, Tarn, and more recently, Boardman, Bussagli and McEvilley have taken the view that some of the most purely Hellenistic works of northwestern India and Afghanistan, may actually be wrongly attributed to later centuries, and instead belong to a period one or two centuries earlier, to the time of the Indo-Greeks in the 2nd–1st century BC:

This is particularly the case of some purely Hellenistic works in Hadda, Afghanistan, an area which "might indeed be the cradle of incipient Buddhist sculpture in Indo-Greek style". Referring to one of the Buddha triads in Hadda, in which the Buddha is sided by very Classical depictions of Herakles/Vajrapaniand Tyche/Hariti, Boardman explains that both figures "might at first (and even second) glance, pass as, say, from Asia Minor or Syria of the first or second century BC (...) these are essentially Greek figures, executed by artists fully conversant with far more than the externals of the Classical style".

Alternatively, it has been suggested that these works of art may have been executed by itinerant Greek artists during the time of maritime contacts with the West from the 1st to the 3rd century AD.

The Greco-Buddhist art of Gandhara, beyond the omnipresence of Greek style and stylistic elements which might be simply considered as an enduring artistic tradition, offers numerous depictions of people in Greek Classical realistic style, attitudes and fashion (clothes such as thechiton and the himation, similar in form and style to the 2nd century BC Greco-Bactrian statues of Ai-Khanoum, hairstyle), holding contraptions which are characteristic of Greek culture (amphoras, "kantaros" Greek drinking cups), in situations which can range from festive (such asBacchanalian scenes) to Buddhist-devotional.

Uncertainties in dating make it unclear whether these works of art actually depict Greeks of the period of Indo-Greek rule up to the 1st century BC, or remaining Greek communities under the rule of the Indo-Parthians orKushans in the 1st and 2nd century AD. Benjamin Rowland thinks that the Indo-Greeks, rather than the Indo-Scythians or the Kushans, may have been the models for the Bodhisattva statues of Gandhara.

Economy

Very little is known about the economy of the Indo-Greeks, although it seems to have been rather vibrant. The abundance of their coins would tend to suggest large mining operations, particularly in the mountainous area of the Hindu-Kush, and an important monetary economy. The Indo-Greek did strike bilingual coins both in the Greek "round" standard and in the Indian "square" standard, suggesting that monetary circulation extended to all parts of society. The adoption of Indo-Greek monetary conventions by neighbouring kingdoms, such as theKunindas to the east and the Satavahanas to the south, would also suggest that Indo-Greek coins were used extensively for cross-border trade.

Tribute payments

It would also seem that some of the coins emitted by the Indo-Greek kings, particularly those in the monolingual Attic standard, may have been used to pay some form of tribute to the Yuezhi tribes north of the Hindu-Kush. This is indicated by the coins finds of the Qunduzhoard in northern Afghanistan, which have yielded quantities of Indo-Greek coins in the Hellenistic standard (Greek weights, Greek language), although none of the kings represented in the hoard are known to have ruled so far north. Conversely, none of these coins have ever been found south of the Hindu-Kush.

Trade with China

The Indo-Greek kings in Southern Asia issued the first known cupro-nickel coins, with Euthydemus II, dating from 180 to 170 BC, and his younger brothers Pantaleon and Agathocles around 170 BC. As only China was able to produce cupro-nickel at that time, and as the alloy ratios are exclusively similar, it has been suggested that the metal was the result of exchanges between China and Bactria.

An indirect testimony by the Chinese explorer Zhang Qian, who visited Bactria around 128 BC, suggests that intense trade with Southern China was going through northern India. Zhang Qian explains that he found Chinese products in the Bactrian markets, and that they were transiting through northwestern India, which he incidentally describes as a civilization similar to that of Bactria:

"When I was in Bactria", Zhang Qian reported, "I saw bamboo canes from Qiong and cloth (silk?) made in the province of Shu. When I asked the people how they had gotten such articles, they replied: "Our merchants go buy them in the markets of Shendu (northwestern India). Shendu, they told me, lies several thousand lisoutheast of Bactria. The people cultivate land, and live much like the people of Bactria".

— Sima Qian, "Records of the Great Historian", trans. Burton Watson, p. 236.

Indian Ocean trade

Maritime relations across the Indian ocean started in the 3rd century BC, and further developed during the time of the Indo-Greeks together with their territorial expansion along the western coast of India. The first contacts started when the Ptolemies constructed the Red Sea ports of Myos Hormos and Berenike, with

destination the Indus delta, theKathiawar peninsula or Muziris. Around 130 BC, Eudoxus of Cyzicus is reported (Strabo, Geog. II.3.4)[185] to have made a successful voyage to India and returned with a cargo of perfumes and gemstones. By the time Indo-Greek rule was ending, up to 120 ships were setting sail every year from Myos Hormos to India (Strabo Geog. II.5.12).

Armed forces

The coins of the Indo-Greeks provide rich clues on their uniforms and weapons. Typical Hellenistic uniforms are depicted, with helmets being either round in the Greco-Bactrian style, or the flat kausia of the Macedonians (coins of Apollodotus I).

Military technology

Their weapons were spears, swords, longbow (on the coins of Agathokleia) and arrows. Interestingly, around 130 BC, the Central Asian recurve bow of the steppes with its gorytos box started to appear for the first time on the coins of Zoilos I, suggesting strong interactions (and apparently an alliance) with nomadic peoples, either the Yuezhi or the Scythians. The recurve bow becomes a standard feature of Indo-Greek horsemen by 90 BC, as seen on some of the coins of Hermaeus.

Generally, Indo-Greek kings are often represented riding horses, as early as the reign of Antimachus II around 160 BC. The equestrian tradition probably goes back to the Greco-Bactrians, who are said by Polybius to have faced a Seleucid invasion in 210 BC with 10,000 horsemen. Although war elephants are never represented on coins, a harness plate (phalera) dated to the 3–2nd century BC, today in the Hermitage Museum, depicts a helmetted Greek combatant on an Indian war elephant.

The Milinda Panha, in the questions of Nagasena to king Menander, provides a rare glimpse of the military methods of the period:

-(Nagasena) Has it ever happened to you, O king, that rival kings rose up against you as enemies and opponents?
-(Menander) Yes, certainly.
-Then you set to work, I suppose, to have moats dug, and ramparts thrown up, and watch towers erected, and strongholds built, and stores of food collected?
-Not at all. All that had been prepared beforehand.
-Or you had yourself trained in the management of war elephants, and in horsemanship, and in the use of the war chariot, and in archery and fencing?
-Not at all. I had learnt all that before.
-But why?
-With the object of warding off future danger.

— (Milinda Panha, Book III, Chap 7)

The Milinda Panha also describes the structure of Menander's army:

Now one day Milinda the king proceeded forth out of the city to pass in review the innumerable host of his mighty army in its fourfold array (of elephants, cavalry, bowmen, and soldiers on foot).

— (Milinda Panha, Book I)

Size of Indo-Greek armies

Eucratides (171–145 BC) is said to have vanquished 60,000 Indo-Greeks, before being himself defeated by Menander.

The armed forces of the Indo-Greeks engaged in important battles with local Indian forces. The ruler ofKalinga, Kharavela, claims in the Hathigumpha inscription that he led a "large army" in the direction of Demetrius' own "army" and "transports", and that he induced him to retreat from Pataliputra to Mathura. The Greek ambassador Megasthenes took special note of the military strength of Kalinga in his Indica in the middle of the 3rd century BC:

The royal city of the Calingae (Kalinga) is called Parthalis. Over their king 60,000 foot-soldiers, 1,000 horsemen, 700 elephants keep watch and ward in "procinct of war."

— Megasthenes fragm. LVI. in Plin. Hist. Nat. VI. 21. 8–23. 11.

An account by the Roman writer Justin gives another hint of the size of Indo-Greek armies, which, in the case of the conflict between the Greco-Bactrian Eucratides and the Indo-Greek Demetrius II, he numbers at 60,000 (although they allegedly lost to 300 Greco-Bactrians):

Eucratides led many wars with great courage, and, while weakened by them, was put under siege by Demetrius, king of the Indians. He made numerous sorties, and managed to vanquish 60,000 enemies with 300 soldiers, and thus liberated after four months, he put India under his rule

— Justin, XLI,6

These are considerable numbers, as large armies during the Hellenistic period typically numbered between 20,000 to 30,000.

The Indo-Greeks were later confronted by the nomadic tribes from Central Asia (Yuezhi and Scythians). According to Zhang Qian, the Yuezhi represented a considerable force of between 100,000 and 200,000 mounted archer warriors,[193] with customs identical to those of the Xiongnu.

Legacy of the Indo-Greeks

From the 1st century AD, the Greek communities of central Asia and northwestern India lived under the control of the Kushan branch of the Yuezhi, apart from a short-lived invasion of the Indo-Parthian Kingdom. The Kushans founded the Kushan Empire, which was to prosper for several centuries. In the south, the Greeks were under the rule of the Western Kshatrapas. The Kalash tribe of the Chitral Valley claim to be descendants of the Indo-Greeks.

It is unclear how much longer the Greeks managed to maintain a distinct presence in the Indian sub-continent. The legacy of the Indo-Greeks was felt however for several centuries, from the usage of the Greek language and calendrical methods, to the influences on the numismatics of the Indian subcontinent, traceable down to the period of the Gupta Empire in the 4th century.

The Indo-Greeks may also have had some influence on the religious plane as well, especially in relation to the developing Mahayana Buddhism. Mahayana Buddhism has been described as "the form of Buddhism which (regardless of how Hinduized its later forms became) seems to have originated in the Greco-Buddhist communities of India, through a conflation of the Greek Democritean–Sophistic–Skeptical tradition with the rudimentary and unformalized empirical and skeptical elements already present in early Buddhism".

List of the Indo-Greek kings and their territories

Today 36 Indo-Greek kings are known. Several of them are also recorded in Western and Indian historical sources, but the majority are known through numismatic evidence only. The exact chronology and sequencing of their rule is still a matter of scholarly inquiry, with adjustments regular being made with new analysis and coin finds (overstrikes of one king over another's coins being the most critical element in establishing chronological sequences).

The system used here is adapted from Osmund Bopearachchi, supplemented by the views of R C Senior and occasionally other authorities.

The Yavanas

Old World usage

This usage was shared by many of the countries east of Greece, from the Mediterranean to Sindh:

Egyptians used the word j-w-n(-n)-'.

Assyrians used the word Iawanu.

Persians used the word Yauna.

Babylonians used the word Yaman and Yamanaya.[3]

Indians used the word Yavana in the Mahabharata and other historic texts.

It appears in the later Indian texts such as the Mahavamsa and other historic texts as Yona

In Ancient Hebrew writings the word was Yāvān (and still is, in modern Israeli Hebrew: יוון)

In modern Turkish, Persian, and Arabic language it is Yūnān, derived from the same Old Persian word for designating the Greeks, namely "Yauna" (literally 'Ionians', as they were the first of the Greeks the Persians had firstly the most extensive encounters with)

Ancient Indian references[edit]

In Sanskrit sources, the usage of the words "Yona", "Yauna", "Yonaka", "Yavana" or "Javana" etc. appears repeatedly, and particularly in relation to the Greek kingdoms which neighbored or sometimes occupied the Punjab region over a period of several centuries from the 4th century BCE to the first century CE, such as the Seleucid Empire, the Greco-Bactrian Kingdom and the Indo-Greek Kingdom.[citation needed] The Yavanas are mentioned in detail in Sangam literature epics such as Paṭṭiṉappālai, describing their brisk trade with the Early Cholas in the Sangam period.

After Alexander the Great's invasion, the Greek settlements had existed in eastern parts of Achaemenid Empire, northwest of India, as neighbors to the Kambojas. The references to the Yonas in the early Buddhist texts may be related to the same.

Role in Buddhism

Edicts of Ashoka (250 BC)

Some of the better-known examples are those of the Edicts of Ashoka (c. 250 BCE), in which the Buddhist emperor Ashoka refers to the Greek populations under his rule. Rock Edicts V and XIII mention the Yonas (or the Greeks) along with the Kambojas and Gandharas as a subject people forming a frontier region of his empire and attest that he sent envoys to the Greek rulers in the West as far as the Mediterranean, faultlessly naming them one by one. In the Gandhari original of Rock XIII, the Greek kings to the West are associated unambiguously with the term "Yona": Antiochus is referred as "Amtiyoko nama Yonaraja" (lit. "The Greek king by the name of Antiochus"), beyond whom live the four other kings: "param ca tena Atiyokena cature 4 rajani Turamaye nama Amtikini nama Maka nama Alikasudaro nama" (lit. "And beyond Antiochus, four kings by the name of Ptolemy, the name of Antigonos, the name of Magas, the name Alexander").

In Buddhist Texts

Other Buddhist texts such as the Dipavamsa and the 1861 Sasana Vamsa reveal that after the Third Buddhist council, the elder (thera) Mahárakkhita was sent to the Yona country and he preached Dharma among the Yonas and the Kambojas, and that at the same time the Yona elder monk (thera) Dharmaraksita was sent to the country of Aparantaka in Western India also. Ashoka's Rock Edict XIII also pairs the Yonas with the Kambojas (Yonakambojesu) and conveys that brahmans and śramaṇas are found everywhere in his empire except in the lands of the Yonas and the Kambojas.

Mahavamsa

The Mahavamsa or "Great Chronicle" of Sri Lanka refers to the thera Mahārakkhita being sent to preach to the Yona country, and also to the Yona thera Dhammarakkhita, who was sent to Aparanta ("the Western Ends"). It also mentions that Pandukabhaya of Anuradhapura set aside a part of his capital city of Anuradhapura for the Yonas.

Another Yona thera, Mahādhammarakkhita, is mentioned as having come from Alexandria on the Caucasus in the country of the Yonas, to be present at the building of theRuwanwelisaya.

Milindapanha

Another example is that of the Milinda Panha (Chapter I), where "Yonaka" is used to refer to the great Indo-Greek king Menander (160–135 BC), and to the guard of "five hundred Greeks" that constantly accompanies him.

Invasion of India

The Vanaparava of Mahabharata contains prophecies that "Mleccha kings of the Shakas, Yavanas, Kambojas, Bahlikas etc. shall rule the earth (i.e India) un-righteously in Kaliyuga ...". This reference apparently alludes to chaotic political scenario following the collapse of the Maurya and Shunga Empires in northern India and its subsequent occupation by foreign hordes such as of the Yonas, Kambojas, Sakas and the Pahlavas.

There are important references to the warring Mleccha hordes of the Shakas, Yavanas, Kambojas, the Pahlavas and others in the Bala Kanda of Valmiki'sRamayana.

Indologists like Dr H. C. Raychadhury, Dr B. C. Law, Dr Satya Shrava and others see in these verses the clear glimpses of the struggles of the Hindus with the mixed invading hordes of the barbaric Sakas, Yavanas, Kambojas, Pahlavas etc. from north-west. The time frame for these struggles is 2nd century BCE downwards.

The other Indian records prophecies the 180 BCE Yona attacks on Saket, Panchala, Mathura and Pataliputra, probably against the Shunga Empire, and possibly in defense of Buddhism: "After having conquered Saketa, the country of the Panchala and the Mathuras, the Yavanas, wicked and valiant, will reach Kusumadhvaja ("The town of the flower-standard", Pataliputra). The thick mud-fortifications at Pataliputra being reached, all the provinces will be in disorder, without doubt. Ultimately, a great battle will follow, with tree-like engines (siege engines)." "The Yavanas (Greeks) will command, the Kings will disappear. (But ultimately) the Yavanas, intoxicated with fighting, will not stay in Madhadesa (the Middle Country); there will be undoubtedly a civil war among them, arising in their own country , there will be a terrible and ferocious war." The "Anushasanaparava" of theMahabharata affirms that the country of Majjhimadesa was invaded the Yavanas and the Kambojas who were later utterly defeated. The Yona invasion of Majjhimadesa ("middle country, midlands") was jointly carried out by the Yonas and the Kambojas. Majjhimadesa here means the middle of Greater India which then included Afghanistan, Pakistan and large parts of Central Asia.

Other references

On the 110 BCE Heliodorus pillar in Vidisha in Central India, the Indo-Greek king Antialcidas, who had sent an ambassador to the court of the Shunga emperor Bhagabhadra, was also qualified as "Yona".

The Mahavamsa also attests Yona settlement in Anuradhapura in ancient Sri Lanka, probably contributing to trade between East and West.

Buddhist texts like Sumangala Vilasini class the language of the Yavanas with the Milakkhabhasa i.e. impure language.

Roman traders in Tamilakkam were also considered Yavanas.

The Yonas and other northwestern invaders in Indian literature[edit]

The Yavanas or Yonas are frequently found listed with the Kambojas, Sakas, Pahlavas and other northwestern tribes in numerous ancient Indian texts.

The Mahabharata groups the Yavanas with the Kambojas and the Chinas and calls them "Mlechchas" (Barbarians). In the Shanti Parva section, the Yavanas are grouped with the Kambojas, Kiratas, Sakas, and the Pahlavas etc. and are spoken of as living the life of Dasyus(slaves). In another chapter of the same Parva, the Yaunas, Kambojas, Gandharas etc. are spoken of as equal to the "Svapakas" and the "Grddhras".

Udyogaparva of Mahabharata says that the composite army of the Kambojas, Yavanas and Sakas had participated in the Mahabharata war under the supreme command of Kamboja king Sudakshina. The epic numerously applauds this composite army as being very fierce and wrathful.

Balakanda of Ramayana also groups the Yavanas with the Kambojas, Sakas, Pahlavas etc. and refers to them as the military allies ofsage Vishistha against Vedic king Vishwamitra. The Kishkindha Kanda of Ramayana locates the Sakas, Kambojas, Yavanas and Paradas in the extreme north-west beyond the Himavat (i.e. Hindukush).

The Buddhist drama Mudrarakshasa by Visakhadutta as well as the Jaina works Parisishtaparvan refer to Chandragupta's alliance with Himalayan king Parvataka. This Himalayan alliance gave Chandragupta a powerful composite army made up of the frontier martial tribes of the Shakas, Kambojas, Yavanas, Parasikas, Bahlikas etc. which he may have utilised to aid defeat the Greek successors of Alexander the Great and the Nanda rulers of Magadha, and thus establishing his Mauryan Empire in northern India.

Manusmriti lists the Yavanas with the Kambojas, Sakas, Pahlavas, Paradas etc. and regards them as degraded Kshatriyas (Hindu caste). Anushasanaparva of Mahabharata also views the Yavanas, Kambojas, Shakas etc. in the same light. Patanjali's Mahabhashya) regards the Yavanas and Sakas as Anirvasita (pure) Shudras. Gautama-Dharmasutra regards the Yavanas or Greeks as having sprung from Shudra females and Kshatriya males.

The Assalayana Sutta of Majjhima Nikaya attests that in Yona and Kamboja nations, there were only two classes of people...Aryas and Dasas...the masters and slaves, and that the Arya could become Dasa and vice versa. The Vishnu Purana also indicates that the "Chaturvarna" or four class social system was absent in the lands of Kiratas in the East, and the Yavanas and Kambojas etc. in the West.

Numerous Puranic literature groups the Yavanas with the Sakas, Kambojas, Pahlavas and Paradas and refers to the peculiar hair styles of these people which were different from those of the Hindus. Ganapatha on Pāṇini attests that it was a practice among the Yavanas and the Kambojas to wear short-cropped hair (Kamboja-mundah Yavana-mundah).

Vartika of Katayayana informs us that the kings of the Shakas and the Yavanas, like those of the Kambojas, may also be addressed by their respective tribal names.

Brihatkathamanjari of Kshmendra informs us that king Vikramaditya had unburdened the sacred earth of the Barbarians like the Shakas, Kambojas, Yavanas, Tusharas, Parasikas, Hunas etc. by annihilating these sinners completely.

The Brahmanda Purana refers to the horses born in Yavana country.

The Mahaniddesa speaks of Yona and Parama Yona, probably referring to Arachosia as the Yona and Bactria as the Parama Yona.

Later meanings

The terms "Yona", "Yonaka" or "Yavana" literally referred to the Greeks, however "mlechas" was also used probably due to their barbaric behaviour as invaders. Indian languages did not base a distinction on religion early on but after the arrival of Islam to the subcontinent, the term Yavana was used along with Turuka, Turuska, Tajik, and Arab more than Mussalaman or Muslim for invaders professing Islam as their religion.

The Chams of the Champa Kingdom referred to Vietnam (Dai Viet) as "Yavana".

The Cambodian word "Yuon" (yuôn) is an ethnic slur for Vietnamese, derived from the Indian word for Greek, "Yavana". It can also be spelled as "Youn".

Contemporary usage

The word Yona, or one of its derivatives, is still used by some languages to designate contemporary Greece, such as in Arabic , in Hebrew (יוון), in Turkish ("Yunanistan"), in modern Aramaic , or the Pashto, Hindi, Urdu, Malay and Indonesian languages ("Yunani").

The Indo-Parthians

Gondophares I and his successors

Gondophares I originally seems to have been a ruler of Seistan in what is today eastern Iran, probably a vassal or relative of theApracarajas. Around 20–10 BCE, he made conquests in the former Indo-Scythian kingdom, perhaps after the death of the important ruler Azes. Gondophares became the ruler of areas comprising Arachosia, Seistan, Sindh, Punjab, and the Kabulvalley, but it does not seem as though he held territory beyond eastern Punjab. Gondophares called himself "King of Kings", aParthian title that in his case correctly reflects that the Indo-Parthian empire was only a loose framework: a number of smaller dynasts certainly maintained their positions during the Indo-Parthian period, likely in exchange for their recognition of Gondophares and his successors. These smaller dynasts included the Apracarajas themselves, and Indo-Scythian satraps such as Zeionises and Rajuvula, as well as anonymous Scythians who struck imitations of Azes coins. The Ksaharatas also held sway in Gujerat, perhaps just outside Gondophares' dominions.

After the death of Gondophares I, the empire started to fragment. The name or title Gondophares was adapted by Sarpedones, who become Gondophares II and was possibly son of the first Gondophares. Even though he claimed to be the main ruler, Sarpedones' rule was shaky and he issued a fragmented coinage in Sind, eastern Punjab and Arachosia in southern Afghanistan. The most important successor was Abdagases, Gondophares' nephew, who ruled in Punjab and possibly in the homeland of Seistan. After a short reign, Sarpedones seems to have been succeeded by Orthagnes, who becameGondophares III Gadana. Orthagnes ruled mostly in Seistan and Arachosia, with Abdagases further east, during the first decades AD, and was briefly succeeded by his son Ubouzanes Coin. After 20 AD, a king named Sases, a nephew of the Apracaraja ruler Aspavarma, took over Abdagases' territories and became Gondophares IV Sases. According to Senior, this is the Gondophares referred to in the Takht-i-Bahi inscription.

There were other minor kings: Sanabares was an ephemeral usurper in Seistan, who called himself Great King of Kings, and there was also a second Abdagases Coin, a ruler named Agata in Sind, another ruler called Satavastres Coin, and an anonymous prince who claimed to be brother of the king Arsaces, in that case an actual member of the ruling dynasty in Parthia.

But the Indo-Parthians never regained the position of Gondophares I, and from the middle of the 1st century AD the Kushans under Kujula Kadphises began absorbing the northern Indian part of the kingdom. The last king Pacores (perhaps before 100 AD) only ruled in Seistan and Kandahar.

Archaeology and sources

The city of Taxila is thought to have been a capital of the Indo-Parthians. Large strata were excavated by Sir John Marshall with a quantity of Parthian-style artifacts. The nearby temple of Jandial is usually interpreted as a Zoroastrian fire temple from the period of the Indo-Parthians.

Some ancient writing describe the presence of the Indo-Parthians in the area, such as the story of Saint Thomas the Apostle, who was recruited as a carpenter to serve at the court of king "Gudnaphar" (thought to be Gondophares) in India. The Acts of Thomas describes in chapter 17 Thomas' visit to king Gudnaphar in northern India; chapters 2 and 3 depict him as embarking on a sea voyage to India, thus connecting Thomas to the west coast of India.

As Senior points out, this Gudnaphar has usually been identified with the first Gondophares, who has thus been dated after the advent of Christianity, but there is no evidence for this assumption, and Senior's research shows that Gondophares I could be dated even before 1 AD. If the account is even historical, Saint Thomas may have encountered one of the later kings who bore the same title.

The Greek philosopher Apollonius of Tyana is related by Philostratus in Life of Apollonius Tyana to have visited India, and specifically the city of Taxila around 46 CE. He describes constructions of the Greek type, probably referring toSirkap, and explains that the Indo-Parthian king of Taxila, named Phraotes, received a Greek education at the court of his father and spoke Greek fluently:

"Tell me, O King, how you acquired such a command of the Greek tongue, and whence you derived all your philosophical attainments in this place?"

"My father, after a Greek education, brought me to the sages at an age somewhat too early perhaps, for I was only twelve at the time, but they brought me up like their own son; for any that they admit knowing the Greek tongue they are especially fond of, because they consider that in virtue of the similarity of his disposition he already belongs to themselves."

The Periplus of the Erythraean Sea is a surviving 1st century guide to the routes commonly being used for navigating the Arabian Sea. It describes the presence of Parthian kings fighting with each other in the area of Sindh, a region traditionally known at that time as "Scythia" due to the previous rule of the Indo-Scythians there:

"This river (Indus) has seven mouths, very shallow and marshy, so that they are not navigable, except the one in the middle; at which by the shore, is the market-town, Barbaricum. Before it there lies a small island, and inland behind it is the metropolis of Scythia, Minnagara; it is subject to Parthian princes who are constantly driving each other out." Periplus of the Erythraean Sea, Chap 38

An inscription from Takht-i-Bahi near Hada[disambiguation needed] bears two dates, one in the regnal year 26 of the Maharaja Guduvhara (again thought to be a Gondophares), and the year 103 of an unknown era.

Religion of the Indo-Parthians

To the contrary of the Indo-Greeks or Indo-Scythians, there are no explicit records of Indo-Parthian rulers supporting Buddhism, such as religious dedications, inscriptions, or even legendary accounts. Also, although Indo-Parthian coins generally closely follow Greek numismatics, they never display the Buddhist triratna symbol (apart from the laterSases), nor do they ever use depictions of the elephant or the bull, possible religious symbols which were profusely used by their predecessors. They are thought to have retained Zoroastrianism, being of Iranian extraction themselves. This Iranian mythological system was inherited from them by the later Kushans who ruled from the Peshawar-Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa region of Pakistan.

Representation of Indo-Parthian devotees

On their coins and in the art of Gandhara, Indo-Parthians are depicted with short crossover jackets and large baggy trousers, possibly supplemented by chap-like over-trousers. Their jackets are adorned with rows of decorative rings or medals. Their hair is usually bushy and contained with a headband, a practise largely adopted by the Parthians from the 1st century CE.

Individuals in Indo-Parthian attire are sometimes shown as actors in Buddhist devotional scenes. It is usually considered that most of the excavations that were done at Sirkapnear Taxila by John Marshall relate to Indo-Parthian layers, although more recent scholarship sometimes relates them to the Indo-Greeks instead. These archaeological researches provided a quantity of Hellenistic artifacts combined with elements of Buddhist worship (stupas). Some other temples, such as nearby Jandial may have been used as a Zoroastrian fire temple.

Buddhist sculptures

The statues found at Sirkap in the late Scythian to Parthian level (level 2, 1–60 CE) suggest an already developed state of Gandharan art at the time or even

before Parthian rule. A multiplicity of statues, ranging from Hellenistic gods, to various Gandharan lay devotees, are combined with what are thought as some of the early representations of the Buddha and Bodhisattvas. Today, it is still unclear when the Greco-Buddhist art of Gandhara exactly emerged, but the findings in Sirkap do indicate that this art was already highly developed before the advent of the Kushans.

Stone palettes

Numerous stone palettes found in Gandhara are considered as good representatives of Indo-Parthian art. These palettes combine Greek and Persian influences, together with a frontality in representations which is considered as characteristic of Parthian art. Such palettes have only been found in archaeological layers corresponding to Indo-Greek, Indo-Scythian and Indo-Parthian rule, and are essentially unknown the preceding Mauryan layers or the succeeding Kushan layers.[15]

Very often these palettes represent people in Greek dress in mythological scenes, but a few of them represent people in Parthian dress (head-bands over bushy hair, crossed-over jacket on a bare chest, jewelry, belt, baggy trousers). A palette from the Naprstek Museum in Prague shows an Indo-Parthian king seated crossed-legged on a large sofa, surrounded by two attendants also in Parthian dress. They are shown drinking and serving wine.

Silk Road transmission of Buddhism

Some pocket of Parthian rule remained in the East, even after the takeover by the Sassanids in 226. From the 2nd century several Central-Asian Buddhist missionaries became in the Chinese capital cities of Loyang and sometimes Nanjing, where they particularly distinguished themselves by their translation work. The first known translators of Buddhist texts into Chinese are actually Parthian missionaries, distinguished in Chinese by their Parthian surname "An", for "Anshi", "country of the Arsacids".

An Shih Kao, was a Parthian prince, who made the first known translations of Hinayana Buddhist texts into Chinese (148–170).

An Hsuan, was a Parthian merchant who became a monk in China 181 AD.

Tan-ti (c. 254), a Parthian monk.

An Fajin (281–306), a monk of Parthian origins.

South Indian legacy

There are some claims based on historical, anthropological, and linguistic evidence indicating that the Southern Indian states of the Pallavas was originally founded by theParthians,[citation needed] either from Iran or from the territories of the Indo-Parthians in northwestern India,[citation needed] also called Pahlavas in Indian literature. These Pahlavas of Indo-Iranian descent would have migrated Southward and first settled in Krishna river valley of present-day coastal Andhra Pradesh.[citation needed] This region is called Palnaduor Pallavanadu even today. Pallavas later extended their sway up to Northern Tamil region and established a flourishing empire.

Main Indo-Parthian rulers

Gondophares I (c. 20 BC – first years AD) Coin

Gondophares II Sarpedones (first years AD – c. 20 AD)Coin

Abdagases I (first years AD – mid-1st century AD) Coin

Gondophares III Gadana, previously Orthagnes (c. 20 AD – 30 AD)

Gondophares IV Sases, previously Sases, (mid-1st century AD)

Pacores (late 1st century AD) Coin

The Pahlavas

Literary references

In Puranic texts

Pahlavas are referenced in various Puranic texts like Vayu Purana, Brahmanda Purana, Markendeya Purana, Matsya Purana, Vamana Purana etc.

Kirfel's list of Uttarapatha countries of the Bhuvanakosha locates the Pahlavas along with the Tusharas, Chinas, Angalaukikas, Barbaras, Kambojas, Daradas, Bahlikas and other countries of the Udichya division of ancient India. e.g.:

ete desha udichyastu

Kambojashchaiva Dardashchaiva Barbarashcha Angaukikah ||

Chinashchaiva Tusharashcha Pahlavadhayata narah ||.

The Vayu Purana, Brahamanda Purana and several other Puranas mention the Pahlavas with the tribes of Uttarapatha or north-west. The 6th century CE text Markendeya Purana lists the Pahlavas, Kambojas, Daradas, Bahlikas, Barbaras, Tusharas, Daradas, Paradas, Chinas, Lampakas etc. as the countries of Udichya division i.e. Uttarapatha, but 58th chapter of the Markendeya Purana also refers to yet other settlements of the Pahlavas and the Kambojas and locates them both specifically in the south-west of India as neighbors to the Sindhu, Sauvira and Anarta (north Saurashtra) countries. Further the 6th century Brhatsamhita of Varaha Mihira also locates the Pahlavas and Kambojakingdoms in south-west India i.e. around Gujarat/Saurashtra.

Puranas like Vayu also state that the Udichyas including the Pahlavas, Paradas, Gandharas, Sakas, Yavanas, Tusharas, Kambojas, Khasas, Lampakas, Madhyadesis, Vindhyas, Aprantas, Dakshinatyas, Dravidas, Pulindas, Simhalas etc. would be proceeded against and annihilated by Kalki in Kaliyuga. And they are

stated to have been annihilated by king Pramiti at the end of Kali age as per Puranic evidence.

According to Vayu Purana and Matsya Purana, river Chakshu (Oxus or Amu Darya) flowed through the countries of Pahlavas, Tusharas, Lampakas, Paradas and the Sakasetc.

Pānca Ganahas or Five Hordes

Puranas associate the Pahlavas with the Kambojas, Sakas, Yavanas and Paradas and brands them together as Panca-ganah (fiver-hordes). These five hordes were military allies of the Haihaya or Taljunga Kshatriyas of Yadava line and were chiefly responsible for dethroning king Bahu of Kosala. Later, king Sagara, son of king Bahu, was able to defeat the Haihayas or Taljungas together with these five-hordes. According to Puranic accounts, king Sagara had divested the Paradas and other members of the well-known Pānca-gana (i.e. the Sakas, Yavanas, Kambojas and Pahlavas) of their Kshatriyahood and turned them into the Mlechchas. Before their defeat at the hands of king Sagara, these five-hordes were called Kshatriya-pungava (i.e. foremost among the Kshatriyas).

In the Ramayana

The Balakanda of the Ramayana groups the Pahlavas with the Sakas, Kambojas, Yavanas, Mlechhas and the Kiratas and refers to them as military allies of sage Vasishthaagainst Vedic king Vishwamitra.

The Kiskindha Kanda of Ramayana associates the Pahlavas with the Yavanas, Shakas, Kambojas, Paradas (Varadas), Rishikas and
the Uttarakurus etc. and locates them all in the trans-Himalayan territories i.e. in the Sakadvipa.

In the Mahabharata

In the Uttarapatha

Mahabharata attests that Pandava-putra Nakula had defeated the Pahlavas in the course of his western expedition. The kings of Pahlava were also present at the Rajasuyasacrifice of king Yudhishtra.

The Mahabharata also associates the Pahlavas with the Sakas, Yavanas, Gandharas, Kambojas, Tusharas, Sabaras, Barbaras, etc. and addresses them all as the barbaric tribes of Uttarapatha.

In the Udyoga-Parva

But the Udyoga-Parva of Mahabharata groups the Pahlavas with the Sakas, Paradas and the Kambojas-Rishikas and locates them all in/around Anupa region in western India.

Mahabharata[10] reads: These kings of the Shakas, Pahlavas and Daradas (i.e. the Paradas) and the Kamboja Rshikas, these are in the western riverine (Anupa) area.

This epic reference implies that sections of the Pahlavas, Sakas, Paradas, Kambojas were also located in western India near Saurashtra/Maharashtra.

In Kurukshetra War

The Pahlavas along with the Sakas, Kiratas, Yavanas etc. joined Saradwat's son Kripacharya, the high-souled and mighty bowman, and took up their positions at the northern point of the army.

In the Manusmriti

Manusmriti states that the Pahlavas and several other tribes like the Sakas, Yavanas, Kambojas, Paradas, Daradas, Khasas, etc. were originally noble Kshatriyas, but later, due to their non-observance of valorous Kshatriya codes and neglect of chivalry, they had gradually sunken to the status of Mlechchas.

In the Mudrarakshas Drama

The Buddhist drama Mudrarakshas by Visakhadutta and the Jaina works Parisishtaparvan refer to Chandragupta's alliance with Himalayan king Parvatka. This Himalayan alliance gave Chandragupta a powerful composite army made up of the frontier martial tribes of the Shakas, Kambojas, Yavanas, Parasikas (Pahlavas), Bahlikas etc. (predominantly an Iranian army) which he utilised to defeat the Greek successors of Alexander and the Nanda rulers of Magadha, and thus establishing his Mauryan Empire in northern India.

In the Brihat-Katha-Manjari

The Brihat-Katha-Manjari of the Kshmendra relates that around 400, the Gupta king Vikramaditya (Chandragupta II) had "unburdened the sacred earth of the barbarians" like the Shakas, Mlecchas, Kambojas, Yavanas, Tusharas, Parasikas, Hunas, etc. by annihilating these "unrighteous people" completely.

In the Kavyamimamsa

The 10th century Kavyamimamsa of Pt Raj Shekhar still lists the Sakas, Tusharas, Vokanas, Hunas, Kambojas, Bahlikas, Pahlavas, Tangana, Turukshas, etc. together and states them as the tribes located in the Uttarapatha division.

The Western Satraps

History

First expansion: Kshaharata dynasty (1st century CE)

The Western Satraps are thought to have started with the rather short-lived Kshaharata dynasty (also called Chaharada,Khaharata or Khakharata depending on sources). The term Kshaharata is also known from the 6 CE Taxila copper plateinscription, in which it qualifies the Indo-Scythian ruler Liaka Kusulaka. The Nasik inscription of the 19th year of Sri Pulamavi also mentions the Khakharatavasa, or Kshaharata race.

The earliest Kshaharata for whom there is evidence is Abhiraka, whose rare coins are known. He was succeeded by Bhumaka, father of Nahapana, who only used on his coins the title of Satrap, and not that of Raja or Raño (king). Bhumaka was the father of the great ruler Nahapana, according to one of the latter's coins. His coins bear Buddhist symbols, such as the eight-spoked wheel (dharmachakra), or the lion seated on a capital, a representation of a pillar of Ashoka.

Nahapana succeeded to him, and became a very powerful ruler. He occupied portions of the Satavahana empire in western and central India. Nahapana held sway over Malwa, Southern Gujarat, and Northern Konkan, from Broach to Sopara and the Nasik andPoona districts. His son-in-law, the Saka Ushavadata (married to his daughter Dakshamitra), is known from inscriptions in Nasikand Karle to have been viceroy of Nahapana, ruling over the southern part of his territory.

Nahapana is mentioned in the Periplus of the Erythraean Sea under the name Nambanus, as ruler of the area around Barigaza:

41. "Beyond the gulf of Baraca is that of Barygaza and the coast of the country of Ariaca, which is the beginning of the Kingdom of Nambanus and of all India. That part of it lying inland and adjoining Scythia is called Abiria, but the coast is called Syrastrene. It is a fertile country, yielding wheat and rice and sesame oil and clarified butter, cotton and the Indian cloths made therefrom, of the coarser sorts. Very many cattle are pastured there, and the men are of great stature and black in color. The metropolis of this country is Minnagara, from which much cotton cloth is brought down to Barygaza."

Under the Western Satraps, Barigaza was one of the main centers of Roman trade with India. The Periplus describes the many goods exchanged:

49. There are imported into this market-town (Barigaza), wine, Italian preferred, also Laodicean and Arabian; copper, tin, and lead; coral and topaz; thin clothing and inferior sorts of all kinds; bright-colored girdles a cubit wide; storax, sweet clover, flint glass, realgar, antimony, gold and silver coin, on which there is a profit when exchanged for the money of the country; and ointment, but not very costly and not much. And for the King there are brought into those places very costly vessels of silver, singing boys, beautiful maidens for the harem, fine wines, thin clothing of the finest weaves, and the choicest ointments. There are exported from these placesspikenard, costus, bdellium, ivory, agate and carnelian, lycium, cotton cloth of all kinds, silk cloth, mallow cloth, yarn, long pepper and such other things as are brought here from the various market-towns. Those bound for this market-town from Egypt make the voyage favorably about the month of July, that is Epiphi."

Goods were also brought down in quantity from Ujjain, the capital of the Western Satraps:

48. Inland from this place and to the east, is the city called Ozene, formerly a royal capital; from this place are brought down all things needed for the welfare of the country about Barygaza, and many things for our trade : agate and carnelian, Indian muslins and mallow cloth, and much ordinary cloth.

Some ships were also fitted out from Barigaza, to export goods westward across the Indian ocean:

"Ships are also customarily fitted out from the places across this sea, from Ariaca and Barygaza, bringing to these far-side market-towns the products of their own places; wheat, rice, clarified butter, sesame oil, cotton cloth, (the monache and the sagmatogene), and girdles, and honey from the reed called sacchari. Some make the voyage especially to these market-towns, and others exchange their cargoes while sailing along the coast."

Nahapana also established the silver coinage of the Kshatrapas.

Nahapana and Ushavadata were ultimately defeated by the powerful Satavahana king Gautamiputra Satakarni. Gautramiputra drove the Sakas from Malwa and Western Maharashtra, forcing Nahapana west to Gujarat. Gautamiputra restruck many of Nahapana's coins.

Kardamaka dynasty, family of Castana (1st–4th century)

A new dynasty, called the Bhadramukhas or Kardamaka dynasty, was established by the "Satrap" Castana. The date of Castana is not certain, but many believe his reign started in the year 78 CE, thus making him the founder of the Saka era. This is consistent with the fact that his descendants (who we know used the Saka era on their coins and inscriptions) would use the date of their founder as their era. Castana was satrap of Ujjain during that period. A statue found in Mathura together with statues of the Kushan kingKanishka and Vima Taktu, and bearing the name "Shastana" is often attributed to Castana himself, and suggests Castana may have been a feudatory of the Kushans. Conversely, the Rabatak inscription also claims Kushan dominion over Western Satrap territory (by mentioning Kushan control over the capital Ujjain), during the reign ofKanishka (c. 127–150 CE).

Territory under Chastana

The territory of the Western Satraps at the time of Chastana is described extensively by the geographer Ptolemy in his "Geographia", where he qualifies them as "Indo-Scythians". He describes this territory as starting from Patalene in the West, to Ujjain in the east ("Ozena-Regia Tiastani", "Ozene, capital of king Chastana"), and beyondBarigaza in the south.

Moreover the region which is next to the western part of India, is called Indoscythia. A part of this region around the (Indus) river mouth is Patalena, above which isAbiria. That which is about the mouth of the Indus and the Canthicolpus bay is called Syrastrena. In the island formed by this river are the cities Pantala,Barbaria. The Larica region of Indoscythia is located eastward from the swamp near the sea, in which on the west of the Namadus river is the interior city ofBarygaza emporium. On the east side of the river Ozena-Regia Tiastani Minnagara".

— Ptolemy Geographia, Book Seven, Chapter I

Victory against the Satavahanas: Rudradaman

Around 130 CE, Rudradaman I, grandson of Chastana, took the title "Mahakshatrapa" ("Great Satrap"), and defended his kingdom from the Satavahanas. The conflict between Rudradaman and Satavahanas became so gruelling, that in order to contain the conflict, a matrimonial relationship was concluded by giving Rudradaman's daughter to the Satavahana king Vashishtiputra Satakarni.

The Satavahanas and the Western Satraps remained at war however, and Rudradaman I defeated the Satavahanas twice in these conflicts, only sparing the life of Vashishtiputra Satakarni due to their family alliance:

"Rudradaman who obtained good report because he, in spite of having twice in fair fight completely defeated Satakarni, the lord of Dakshinapatha, on account of the nearness of their connection did not destroy him."

— Junagadh rock inscription

Rudradaman regained all the previous territories held by Nahapana, except for the southern areas of Poona and Nasik:

"Rudradaman who is the lord of the whole of eastern and western Akaravanti (Akara: East Malwa and Avanti: West Malwa), the Anupa country, Anarta,Surashtra, Svabhra (northern Gujarat), Maru (Marwar), Kachchha (Cutch), Sindhu-Sauvira (Sindh and Multan districts), Kukura (Eastern Rajputana), Aparanta("Western Border" – Northern Konkan), Nishada (an aboriginal tribe, Malwa and parts of Central India) and other territories gained by his own valour, the towns, marts and rural parts of which are never troubled by robbers, snakes, wild beasts, diseases and the like, where all subjects are attached to him, (and) where through his might the objects of [religion], wealth and pleasure [are duly attained]".

— Junagadh rock inscription. Geographical interpretations in parenthesis from Rapson.

Recently discovered pillar inscriptions describe the presence of a Western Satrap named Rupiamma in the Bhandara district of the area of Vidarbha, in the extreme northeastern area of Maharashtra, where he erected the pillars.

Rudradarman is known for his sponsoring of the arts. He is known to have written poetry in the purest of Sanskrit, and made it his court language. His name is forever attached to the inscription by Sudharshini lake.

He had at his court a Greek writer named Yavanesvara ("Lord of the Greeks"), who translated from Greek to Sanskrit the Yavanajataka ("Saying of the Greeks"), an astrological treatise and India's earliest Sanskrit work in horoscopy.

Defeat against the Satavahanas: Yajna Sri Satakarni

The south Indian ruler Yajna Sri Satakarni of the Satavahana dynasty defeated the Western Satraps in the late 2nd century CE, which led to a decline in the power of the ruling dynasty.

Rudrasena II (256–278)

The Kshatrapa dynasty seems to have reached a high level of prosperity under the rule of Rudrasena II (256–278), 19th ruler of Kshatrapa.

The last Kshatrapa ruler of the Chastana family was Visvasena (Vishwasen), brother and successor to Bhartrdaman and son of Rudrasena II. A new family took over, started by the rule of Rudrasimha II, son of Lord (Svami) Jivadaman.

Defeat by the Guptas (c. 400)

A new family took control under Rudrasimha III. A fragment from the Natya-darpana mentions that the Gupta king Ramagupta, the elder brother of Chandragupta II, decided to expand his kingdom by attacking the Western Satraps in Gujarat.

The campaign soon took a turn for the worse and the Gupta army was trapped. The Saka king, Rudrasimha III, demanded that Ramagupta hand over his wife Dhruvadevi in exchange for peace. To avoid the ignominy the Guptas decide to send Madhavasena, a courtesan and a beloved of Chandragupta, disguised as the queen. However, Chandragupta changes the plan and himself goes to the Saka King disguised as the queen. He then kills Rudrasimha and later his own brother, Ramagupta. Dhruvadevi is then married to Chandragupta.

The Western Satraps were eventually conquered by emperor Chandragupta II. This brought an end to the rule of the Sakas on the subcontinent.

Coinage

The Kshatrapas have a very rich and interesting coinage. It was based on the coinage of the earlier Indo-Greek Kings, with Greek or pseudo-Greek legend and stylized profiles of royal busts on the obverse. The reverse of the coins however is original and typically depict a thunderbolt and an arrow, and later, a chaitya or three-arched hill and river symbol with a crescent and the sun, within a legend in Brahmi. These coins are very informative, since they record the name of the King, of his father, and the date of issue, and have helped clarify the early history of India.

Regnal dates

From the reign of Rudrasimha I, the date of minting of each coin, reckoned in the Saka era, is usually written on the obverse behind the king's head in Brahmi numerals, allowing for a quite precise datation of the rule of each king. This is a rather uncommon case in Indian numismatics. Some, such as the numismat R.C Senior considered that these dates might correspond to the much earlier Azes era instead.

Also the father of each king is systematically mentioned in the reverse legends, which allows to reconstruct the regnal succession.

Languages

Kharoshthi, a script in use in more northern territories (area of Gandhara), is employed together with the Brahmi script and the Greek script on the first coins of the Western Satraps, but is finally abandoned from the time of Chastana. From that time, only the Brahmi script would remain, together with the pseudo-Greek script on the facing, to write the Prakrit language employed by the Western satraps. Occasionally, the legends are in Sanskrit instead.

The coins of Nahapana bears the Greek script legend "PANNIΩ IAHAPATAC NAHAΠANAC", transliteration of the Prakrit "Raño Kshaharatasa Nahapanasa": "In the reign of Kshaharata Nahapana". The coins of Castana also have a readable legend "PANNIΩ IATPAΠAC CIASTANCA", transliteration of the Prakrit "Raño Kshatrapasa Castana": "In the reign of the Satrap Castana". After these two rulers, the legend in Greek script becomes denaturated, and seems to lose all signification, only retaining an esthetic value. By the 4th century, the coins of Rudrasimha

II exhibit the following type of meaningless legend in corrupted Greek script: "...ΛΙΟΛVICIVIIIΛ...".

Influences

The coins of the Kshatrapas were also very influential and imitated by neighbouring or later dynasties, such as the Satavahanas, and the Guptas. Silver coins of the Gupta kingsChandragupta II and his son Kumaragupta I adopted the Western Satrap design (itself derived from the Indo-Greeks) with bust of the ruler and pseudo-Greek inscription on the obverse, and a royal eagle (Garuda, the dynastic symbol of the Guptas) replacing the chaitya hill with star and crescent on the reverse.[20]

The Western Satrap coin design was also adopted by the subsequent dynasty of the Traikutakas (388–456).

Possible vassalage to the Kushans

It is still unclear whether the Western Satraps were independent rulers or vassals of the Kushans. The continued use of the word "Satrap" on their coin would suggest a recognized subjection to a higher ruler, possibly the Kushan emperor.

Also, a statue of Chastana was found in Mathura at the Temple of Mat together with the famous statues of Vima Kadphises and Kanishka. This also would suggest at least alliance and friendship, if not vassalage. Finally Kanishka claims in the Rabatak inscription that his power extends to Ujjain, the classical capital of the Western Satrap realm. This combined with the presence of the Chastana statue side-by-side with Kanishka would also suggest Kushan alliance with the Western Satraps.

Finally, "Northern" Indo-Scythian satraps who ruled in the area of Mathura, the "Great Satrap" Kharapallana and the "Satrap" Vanaspara, are known from an inscription inSarnath to have been feudatories of the Kushans.

Generally the orientation taken by modern scholarship is that the Western Satraps were vassals of the Kushan, at least in the early period until Rudradaman I conquered theYaudheyas who are usually thought themselves as Kushan vassals. The question is not considered as perfectly settled.

Main rulers of Kshaharata dynasty

Yapirajaya
Hospises
Higaraka
Abhiraka (Aubhirakes)
Bhumaka (?–119)
Nahapana (119–124)
Bhadramukhas or Kardamaka dynasty[edit]
Family of Chastana:
Chastana (c. 78-130), son of Zamotika
Jayadaman, son of Chastana

Rudradaman I (c. 130–150), son of Jayadaman
Damajadasri I (170–175)
Jivadaman (175, d. 199)
Rudrasimha I (175–188, d. 197)
Isvaradatta (188–191)
Rudrasimha I (restored) (191–197)
Jivadaman (restored) (197–199)
Rudrasena I (200–222)
Samghadaman (222–223)
Damasena (223–232)
Damajadasri II (232–239) with
Viradaman (234–238)
Yasodaman I (239)
Vijayasena (239–250)
Damajadasri III (251–255)
Rudrasena II (255–277)
Visvasimha (277–282)
Bhartrdaman (282–295)
Visvasena (293–304)
Family of Rudrasimha II:
Rudrasimha II, son of Lord (Svami) Jivadaman (304–348) with
Yasodaman II (317–332)
Rudradaman II (332–348)
Rudrasena III (348–380)
Simhasena (380–384(5?)
Rudrasena IV (382–388)
Rudrasimha III (388–395)

The Kushans

Origins

Chinese sources describe the Guishuang (貴霜), i.e. the Kushans, as one of the five aristocratic tribes of the Yuezhi (月氏), with some people claiming they were a loose confederation of Indo-European peoples,[26] though many scholars are still unconvinced that they originally spoke an Indo-European language.

For well over a century, however, there have been many arguments about the ethnic and linguistic origins of the Da Yuezhi (大月氏), Kushans (貴霜), and the Tochari, and still there is little consensus.

The Yuezhi had been living in the arid grasslands of eastern Central Asia's Tarim Basin, in modern-day Xinjiang, China, possibly speaking varieties of the Tocharian languages, until they were driven west by the Xiongnu in 176–160 BCE. The five tribes constituting the Yuezhi are known in Chinese history as Xiūmì (休密), Guìshuāng (貴霜), Shuāngmǐ (雙靡), Xìdùn (肹頓), andDūmì (都密).

The Yuezhi reached the Hellenic kingdom of Greco-Bactria (in northern Afghanistan and Uzbekistan) around 135 BC. The displaced Greek dynasties

resettled to the southeast in areas of the Hindu Kush and the Indus basin (in present-day Afghanistan and Pakistan), occupying the western part of the Indo-Greek Kingdom.

Early Kushans

Some traces remain of the presence of the Kushans in the area of Bactria andSogdiana. Archaeological structures are known in Takht-I-Sangin, Surkh Kotal (a monumental temple), and in the palace of Khalchayan. Various sculptures and friezes are known, representing horse-riding archers,[28] and significantly men with artificially deformed skulls, such as the Kushan prince of Khalchayan[29] (a practice well attested in nomadic Central Asia). The Chinese first referred to these people as the Yuezhi and said they established the Kushan Empire, although the relationship between the Yuezhi and the Kushans is still unclear. On the ruins of ancient Hellenistic cities such as Ai-Khanoum, the Kushans are known to have built fortresses. The earliest documented ruler, and the first one to proclaim himself as a Kushan ruler, was Heraios. He calls himself a "tyrant" on his coins, and also exhibits skull deformation. He may have been an ally of the Greeks, and he shared the same style of coinage. Heraios may have been the father of the first Kushan emperor Kujula Kadphises.

Ban Gu's Book of Han tells us the Kushans (Kuei-shuang) divided up Bactria in 128 BC. Fan Ye's Book of the Later Han "relates how the chief of the Kushans, Ch'iu-shiu-ch'ueh (the Kujula Kadphises of coins), founded by means of the submission of the other Yueh-chih clans the Kushan Empire, known to the Greeks and Romans under the name of Empire of the Indo-Scythians."

The Chinese Hou Hanshu chronicles gives an account of the formation of the Kushan empire based on a report made by the Chinese general Ban Yong to the Chinese Emperor c. 125 AD:

More than a hundred years later [than the conquest of Bactria by the Da Yuezhi], the prince [xihou] of Guishuang (Badakhshan) established himself as king, and his dynasty was called that of the Guishuang (Kushan) King. He invaded Anxi (Indo-Parthia), and took the Gaofu (Kabul) region. He also defeated the whole of the kingdoms of Puda (Paktiya) and Jibin (Kapisha and Gandhara). Qiujiuque (Kujula Kadphises) was more than eighty years old when he died. His son, Yangaozhen [probably Vema Tahk (tu) or, possibly, his brother Sadaṣkaṇa], became king in his place. He defeated Tianzhu [North-western India] and installed Generals to supervise and lead it. The Yuezhi then became extremely rich. All the kingdoms call [their king] the Guishuang [Kushan] king, but the Han call them by their original name, Da Yuezhi.|Hou Hanshu

Diverse cultural influences

In the 1st century BCE, the Guishuang (Ch: 貴霜) gained prominence over the other Yuezhi tribes, and welded them into a tight confederation underyabgu (Commander) Kujula Kadphises. The name Guishuang was adopted in the West and modified into Kushan to designate the confederation, although the Chinese continued to call them Yuezhi.

Gradually wresting control of the area from the Scythian tribes, the Kushans expanded south into the region traditionally known as Gandhara (an area primarily in Pakistan's Pothowar and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa region but going in an arc to

include the Kabul valley and part of Qandahar in Afghanistan)[citation needed] and established twin capitals near present-day Kabul and Peshawar then known as Kapisa and Pushklavati respectively.

The Kushans adopted elements of the Hellenistic culture of Bactria. They adopted the Greek alphabet to suit their own language (with the additional development of the letter Þ "sh", as in "Kushan") and soon began minting coinage on the Greek model. On their coins they used Greek language legends combined with Pali legends (in the Kharoshthi script), until the first few years of the reign of Kanishka. After that date,[vague][when?][dubious – discuss] they used Kushan language legends (in an adapted Greek script), combined with legends in Greek (Greek script) and legends in Prakrit (Kharoshthi script).

The Kushans are believed to have been predominantly Zoroastrian.[citation needed] However, from the time of Vima Takto, many Kushans started adopting aspects of Buddhist culture. Like the Egyptians, they absorbed the strong remnants of the Greek Culture of the Hellenistic Kingdoms, becoming at least partly Hellenised. The great Kushan emperor Vima Kadphises may have embraced Saivism, as surmised by coins minted during the period. The following Kushan emperors represented a wide variety of faiths including Zoroastrianism, Buddhism, and possibly Saivism (a sect of Hinduism).

The rule of the Kushans linked the seagoing trade of the Indian Ocean with the commerce of the Silk Road through the long-civilized Indus Valley. At the height of the dynasty, the Kushans loosely ruled a territory that extended to the Aral Sea through present-day Uzbekistan, Afghanistan, and Pakistan into northern India.

The loose unity and comparative peace of such a vast expanse encouraged long-distance trade, brought Chinese silks to Rome, and created strings of flourishing urban centers.

Territorial expansion

Rosenfield notes that archaeological evidence of a Kushan rule of long duration is present in an area stretching from Surkh Kotal, Begram, the summer capital of the Kushans, Peshawar, the capital under Kanishka I, Taxila, and Mathura, the winter capital of the Kushans.

Other areas of probable rule include Khwarezm Kausambi (excavations of Allahabad University), Sanchi and Sarnath (inscriptions with names and dates of Kushan kings), Malwa and Maharashtra, Odisha (imitation of Kushan coins, and large Kushan hoards).

Kushan invasions in the 1st century CE had been given as an explanation for the migration of Indians from the Indian Subcontinent toward Southeast Asia according to proponents of a Greater India theory by 20th-century Indian nationalists. However, there is no evidence to support this hypothesis.

The recently discovered Rabatak inscription confirms the account of the Hou Hanshu, Weilüe, and inscriptions dated early in the Kanishka era (incept probably 127 CE), that large Kushan dominions expanded into the heartland of northern India in the early 2nd century CE. The lines 4 to 7 of the inscription[36] describe the cities which were under the rule of Kanishka, among which six names are identifiable: Ujjain, Kundina, Saketa, Kausambi, Pataliputra, and Champa (although the text is not clear whether Champa was a possession of Kanishka or just beyond

it). Northward, in the 2nd century AD, the Kushans under Kanishka made various forays into the Tarim Basin, seemingly the original ground of their ancestors the Yuezhi, where they had various contacts with the Chinese. Both archaeological findings and literary evidence suggest Kushan rule, inKashgar, Yarkand and Khotan. The Kushan state was bounded to the south by the Pārata state of Balochistan, western Pakistan, Afghanistan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan,Turkmenistan. Tu rkmenistan was known for the kushan Buddhist city of Merv. As late as the 3rd century AD, decorated coins of Huvishka were dedicated at Bodh Gayatogether with other gold offerings under the "Enlightenment Throne" of the Buddha, suggesting direct Kushan influence in the area during that period.

Kushan Afrighids

The Afrighids were a native Chorasmian (i.g. Iranian) dynasty which ruled over the kingdom of Khwarezm (according to Al-Biruni) from 305 until 995. Sometimes, it was under Sasanian control. Khwarezmian (Khwarazmian, Khorezmian, Chorasmian) is an extinct East Iranian language closely related to Sogdian. The language was spoken in the area of Khwarezm (Chorasmia), centered in the lower Amu Darya south of the Aral Sea (the northern part of the modern Republic of Uzbekistan, and the adjacent areas ofTurkmenistan) and Kazakhstan).

Our knowledge of Khwarezmian is limited to its Middle Iranian stage and, as with Sogdian, little is known of its ancient form.

From the writings of the great Khwarezmian scholars, Al-Biruni and Zamakhshari, we know that the language was in use at least until the 13th century, when it was gradually replaced by Persian and Turkic languages for the most part, as well as several dialects with Kushan religion.

Main Kushan rulers

Kujula Kadphises (c. 30 – c. 80)

...the prince [elavoor] of Guishuang, named thilac [Kujula Kadphises], attacked and exterminated the four other xihou. He established himself as king, and his dynasty was called that of the Guishuang [Kushan] King. He invaded Anxi [Indo-Parthia], and took the Gaofu [Kabul] region. He also defeated the whole of the kingdoms of Puda [Paktiya] and Jibin [Kapisha and Gandhara]. Qiujiuque [Kujula Kadphises] was more than eighty years old when he died."

These conquests probably took place sometime between 45 and 60, and laid the basis for the Kushan Empire which was rapidly expanded by his descendants.

Kujula issued an extensive series of coins and fathered at least two sons, Sadaṣkaṇa (who is known from only two inscriptions, especially the Rabatak inscription, and apparently never ruled), and seemingly Vima Takto.

Kujula Kadphises was the great grandfather of Kanishka.

Vima Taktu or Sadashkana (c. 80 – c. 95)

Vima Takto (Ancient Chinese: 閻膏珍 Yangaozhen) is mentioned in the Rabatak inscription (another son, Sadashkana, is mentioned in an inscription of Senavarman, the King of Odi). He was the predecessor of Vima Kadphises, and

Kanishka I. He expanded the Kushan Empire into the northwest of the South Asia. The Hou Hanshu says:

"His son, Yangaozhen [probably Vema Tahk (tu) or, possibly, his brother Sadaṣkaṇa], became king in his place. He defeated Tianzhu [North-western India] and installed Generals to supervise and lead it. The Yuezhi then became extremely rich. All the kingdoms call [their king] the Guishuang [Kushan] king, but the Han call them by their original name, Da Yuezhi."

— Hou Hanshu

Vima Kadphises (c. 95 – c. 127)

Vima Kadphises (Kushan language: Οοημο Καδφισης) was a Kushan emperor from around 90–100 CE, the son of Sadashkana and the grandson of Kujula Kadphises, and the father of Kanishka I, as detailed by the Rabatak inscription.

Vima Kadphises added to the Kushan territory by his conquests in Afghanistan and north-west Pakistan. He issued an extensive series of coins and inscriptions. He issued gold coins in addition to the existing copper and silver coinage.

Kanishka I (c. 127 – c. 140)

The rule of Kanishka the Great, fifth Kushan king, who flourished for about 13 years from c. 127. Upon his accession, Kanishka ruled a huge territory (virtually all of northern India), south to Ujjain and Kundina and east beyond Pataliputra, according to the Rabatak inscription:

In the year one, it has been proclaimed unto India, unto the whole realm of the governing class, including Koonadeano (Kaundiny, Kundina) and the city of Ozeno (Ozene, Ujjain) and the city of Zageda (Saketa) and the city of Kozambo (Kausambi) and the city of Palabotro (Pataliputra) and so long unto (i.e. as far as) the city of Ziri-tambo (Sri-Champa).

— Rabatak inscription, Lines 4–6

His territory was administered from two capitals: Purushapura (now Peshawar in northwestern Pakistan) and Mathura, in northern India. He is also credited (along with Raja Dab) for building the massive, ancient Fort at Bathinda (Qila Mubarak), in the modern city of Bathinda, Indian Punjab.

The Kushans also had a summer capital in Bagram (then known as Kapisa), where the "Begram Treasure", comprising works of art from Greece to China, has been found. According to the Rabatak inscription, Kanishka was the son of Vima Kadphises, the grandson of Sadashkana, and the great-grandson of Kujula Kadphises. Kanishka's era is now generally accepted to have begun in 127 on the basis of Harry Falk's ground-breaking research. Kanishka's era was used as a calendar reference by the Kushans for about a century, until the decline of the Kushan realm.

Vāsishka (c. 140 – c. 160)

Vāsishka was a Kushan emperor who seems to have a 20-year reign following Kanishka. His rule is recorded as far south as Sanchi (nearVidisa), where several inscriptions in his name have been found, dated to the year 22 (The Sanchi inscription of "Vaksushana" – i. e. Vasishka Kushana) and year 28 (The Sanchi inscription of Vasaska – i. e. Vasishka) of the Kanishka era.

Huvishka (c. 160 – c. 190)

Huvishka (Kushan: Οοηþκι, "Ooishki") was a Kushan emperor from about 20 years after the death of Kanishka (assumed on the best evidence available to be in 140) until the succession of Vasudeva I about thirty years later. His rule was a period of retrenchment and consolidation for the Empire. In particular he devoted time and effort early in his reign to the exertion of greater control over the city of Mathura.

Vasudeva I (c. 190 – c. 230)

Vasudeva I (Kushan: Βαζοδηο "Bazodeo", Chinese: 波調 "Bodiao") was the last of the "Great Kushans." Named inscriptions dating from year 64 to 98 of Kanishka's era suggest his reign extended from at least 191 to 225 AD. He was the last great Kushan emperor, and the end of his rule coincides with the invasion of the Sasanians as far as northwestern India, and the establishment of the Indo-Sasanians or Kushanshahs in what is nowadays Afghanistan, Pakistan and northwestern India from around 240 AD.

Kushan deities

The Kushan religious pantheon is extremely varied, as revealed by their coins that were made in gold, silver, and copper. These coins contained more than thirty different gods, belonging mainly to their own Iranic, Greek, and Indo-Aryan worlds as well. Kushan coins had images of Kushan Kings, Buddha, and figures from the Indo-Aryan and Iranian pantheons. Greek deities, with Greek names are represented on early coins. During Kanishka's reign, the language of the coinage changes to Bactrian (though it remained in Greek script for all kings). After Huvishka, only two divinities appear on the coins: Ardoxsho and Oesho (see details below).

The Iranic entities depicted on coinage include:

Αρδοχþο (ardoxsho, Ashi Vanghuhi)

Αþαειχþο (ashaeixsho, Asha Vahishta)

Αθþο (athsho, Atar)

Φαρρο (pharro, Khwarenah)

Λροοασπο (lrooaspa, Drvaspa)

Μαναοβαγο, (manaobago, Vohu Manah)

Μαο (mao, Mah)

Μιθρο, Μιιρο, Μιορο, Μιυρο (mithro and variants, Mithra)

Μοζδοοανο (mozdooano, Mazda *vana "Mazda the victorious?")

Ναvα, Ναvαια, Ναvαβαο (variations of pan-Asiatic nana, Sogdian nny, Nana)

Οαδο (oado Vata)

Οαχβο (oaxsho, "Oxus")

Οορομοζδο (ooromozdo, Ahura Mazda)

Οραλαγvο (orlagno, Verethragna)

Τιερο (tiero, Tir)

Representation of entities from Greek mythology and Hellenistic syncretism are:

Ηλιος (Helios), Ηφαηστος (Hephaistos), Σαληvη (Selene), Αvημος (Anemos). Further, the coins of Huvishka also portray the demi-god erakilo Heracles, and the Egyptian godsarapo Sarapis

The Indic entities represented on coinage include:

Βοδδο (boddo, Buddha)

Μετραγο Βοδδο (metrago boddo, bodhisattava Maitreya)

Μαασηvο (maaseno, Mahasena)

Σκανδο κομαρο (skando komaro, Skanda Kumara)

βακαμανο Βοδδο (shakamano boddho, Shakyamuni Buddha)

Additionally,

Οηβο (oesho), long considered to represent Indic Shiva, but also identified as Avestan Vayu conflated with Shiva.

Two copper coins of Huvishka bear a 'Ganesa' legend, but instead of depicting the typical theriomorphic figure of Ganesha, have a figure of an archer holding a full-length bow with string inwards and an arrow. This is typically a depiction of Rudra, but in the case of these two coins is generally assumed to represent Shiva.

Kushans and Buddhism

The Kushans inherited the Greco-Buddhist traditions of the Indo-Greek Kingdom they replaced, and their patronage of Buddhist institutions allowed them to grow as a commercial power.[59] Between the mid-1st century and the mid-3rd century, Buddhism, patronized by the Kushans, extended to China and other Asian countries through the Silk Road.

Kanishka is renowned in Buddhist tradition for having convened a great Buddhist council in Kashmir. Along with his predecessor in the region the Indo-Greek

king Menander I (Milinda) and the Indian emperors Ashoka and Harsha Vardhana, Kanishka is considered by Buddhism as one of its greatest benefactors.

During the 1st century AD, Buddhist books were being produced and carried by monks, and their trader patrons. Also, monasteries were being established along these land routes that went from China and other parts of Asia. With the development of Buddhist books, it caused a new written language called Gandhara. Gandhara consists of eastern Afghanistan and northern Pakistan. Scholars are said to have found many Buddhist scrolls that contained the Gandhari language.

The reign of Huvishka corresponds to the first known epigraphic evidence of the Buddha Amitabha, on the bottom part of a 2nd-century statue which has been found in Govindo-Nagar, and now at the Mathura Museum. The statue is dated to "the 28th year of the reign of Huvishka", and dedicated to "Amitabha Buddha" by a family of merchants. There is also some evidence that Huvishka himself was a follower of Mahāyāna Buddhism. A Sanskrit manuscript fragment in the Schøyen Collection describes Huvishka as one who has "set forth in the Mahāyāna."

Kushan art

The art and culture of Gandhara, at the crossroads of the Kushan hegemony, continued the traditions of Greco-Buddhist art and are the best known expressions of Kushan influences to Westerners. Several direct depictions of Kushans are known from Gandhara, where they are represented with a tunic, belt and trousers and play the role of devotees to the Buddha, as well as the Bodhisattva and future Buddha Maitreya.

During the Kushan Empire, many images of Gandhara share a strong resemblance to the features of Greek, Syrian, Persian and Indian figures. These Western-looking stylistic signatures often include heavy drapery and curly hair, representing a composite (the Greeks, for example, often possessed curly hair).

In the iconography, they are never associated however with the very Hellenistic "Standing Buddha" statues, which might therefore correspond to an earlier historical period.

Contacts with Rome

Several Roman sources describe the visit of ambassadors from the Kings of Bactria and India during the 2nd century, probably referring to the Kushans.

Historia Augusta, speaking of Emperor Hadrian (117–138) tells:

Reges Bactrianorum legatos ad eum, amicitiae petendae causa, supplices miserunt

"The kings of the Bactrians sent supplicant ambassadors to him, to seek his friendship."

Also in 138, according to Aurelius Victor (Epitome, XV, 4), and Appian (Praef., 7), Antoninus Pius, successor to Hadrian, received some Indian, Bactrian Hyrcanian ambassadors.

"Precious things from Da Qin [the Roman Empire] can be found there [in Tianzhu or Northwestern India], as well as fine cotton cloths, fine wool carpets, perfumes of all sorts, sugar candy, pepper, ginger, and black salt."

— Hou Hanshu

The summer capital of the Kushan in Begram has yielded a considerable amount of goods imported from the Roman Empire, in particular, various types of glassware.

Contacts with China

During the 1st and 2nd century, the Kushan Empire expanded militarily to the north and occupied parts of the Tarim Basin, their original grounds, putting them at the center of the profitable Central Asian commerce with the Roman Empire. They are related to have collaborated militarily with the Chinese against nomadic incursion, particularly when they collaborated with the Han Dynasty general Ban Chao against the Sogdians in 84, when the latter were trying to support a revolt by the king of Kashgar. Around 85, they also assisted the Chinese general in an attack on Turpan, east of the Tarim Basin.

In recognition for their support to the Chinese, the Kushans requested a Han princess, but were denied, even after they had sent presents to the Chinese court. In retaliation, they marched on Ban Chao in 86 with a force of 70,000, but were defeated by a smaller Chinese force. The Yuezhi retreated and paid tribute to the Chinese Empire during the reign of the Chinese emperor Han He (89–106).

Later, around 116, the Kushans under Kanishka established a kingdom centered on Kashgar, also taking control of Khotan and Yarkand, which were Chinese dependencies in the Tarim Basin, modern Xinjiang. They introduced the Brahmi script, the Indian Prakrit language for administration, and expanded the influence ofGreco-Buddhist art which developed into Serindian art.

The Kushans are again recorded to have sent presents to the Chinese court in 158–159 during the reign of the Chinese emperor Han Huan.

Following these interactions, cultural exchanges further increased, and Kushan Buddhist missionaries, such as Lokaksema, became active in the Chinese capital cities of Loyang and sometimes Nanjing, where they particularly distinguished themselves by their translation work. They were the first recorded promoters of Hinayana and Mahayana scriptures in China, greatly contributing to the Silk Road transmission of Buddhism.

Decline

After the death of Vasudeva I in 225, the Kushan empire split into western and eastern halves. The Western Kushans (in Afghanistan) were soon subjugated by the Persian Sasanian Empire and lost Bactria and other territories. In 248 they were defeated again by the Persians, who deposed the Western dynasty and replaced them with Persian vassals known as the Kushanshas (or Indo-Sasanians).

The Eastern Kushan kingdom was based in the Punjab. Around 270 their territories on the Gangetic plain became independent under local dynasties such as the Yaudheyas. Then in the mid-4th century they were subjugated by the Gupta Empire under Samudragupta.

In 360 a Kushan vassal named Kidara overthrew the old Kushan dynasty and established the Kidarite Kingdom. The Kushan style of Kidarite coins indicates they

considered themselves Kushans. The Kidarite seem to have been rather prosperous, although on a smaller scale than their Kushan predecessors.

These remnants of the Kushan empire were ultimately wiped out in the 5th century by the invasions of the Hephthalites, and the rise of the Gupta empire.

Main Kushan rulers

Heraios (c. 1 – 30), first Kushan ruler, generally Kushan ruling period is disputed

Kujula Kadphises (c. 30 – c. 80)

Vima Takto, (c. 80 – c. 95) alias Soter Megas or "Great Saviour."

Vima Kadphises (c. 95 – c. 127) the first great Kushan emperor

Kanishka the Great (127 – c. 140)

Vāsishka (c. 140 – c. 160)

Huvishka (c. 160 – c. 190)

Vasudeva I (c. 190 – to at least 230), the last of the great Kushan emperors

Kanishka II (c. 230 – 240)

Vashishka (c. 240 – 250)

Kanishka III (c. 250 – 275)

Vasudeva II (c. 275 – 310)

Vasudeva III reported son of Vasudeva III, a King, uncertain.

Vasudeva IV reported possible child of Vasudeva III, ruling in Kandahar, uncertain.

Vasudeva of Kabul reported possible child of Vasudeva IV, ruling in Kabul, uncertain.

Chhu (c. 310? – 325?)

Shaka I (c. 325 – 345)

Kipunada (c. 345 – 375)

The Indo-Sasanians

History

The Sassanids, shortly after victory over the Parthians, extended their dominion into Bactriaduring the reign of Ardashir I around 230 CE, then further to the eastern parts of their empire in western Pakistan during the reign of his son Shapur I (240–270). Thus the Kushans lost their western territory (including Bactria and Gandhara) to the rule of Sassanid nobles namedKushanshahs or "Kings of the Kushans".

Around 325, Shapur II was directly in charge of the southern part of the territory, while in the north the Kushanshahs maintained their rule until the rise of the Kidarites.

The decline of the Kushans and their defeat by the Sassanids led to the rise of an indigenous Indian dynasty, the Guptas, in the 4th century. In 410, the Hephthalites orIndo-Hephthalites conquered Bactria and Gandhara, thus temporarily replacing the Indo-Sassanids.

Second Indo-Sassanid period

The Hephthalites dominated the area until they were defeated in 565 AD by an alliance between the Gokturks and Sassanids, and some Indo-Sassanid authority was re-established. The Kushano-Hephthalites were able to set up rival states in Kapisa, Bamiyan, and Kabul. The 2nd Indo-Sassanid period ended with the collapse of Sassanids to the Rashidun Caliphate in the mid 7th century.Sind remained independent until the Arab invasions of India in the early 8th century. The Kushano-Hephthalites or Turkshahis were replaced by the Shahi in the mid 8th century.

Religious influences

The prophet Mani (210–276), founder of Manichaeism, followed the Sassanids' expansion to the east, which exposed him to the thriving Buddhist culture of Gandhara. He is said to have visited Bamiyan, where several religious painting are attributed to him, and is believed to have lived and taught for some time. He is also related to have sailed to the Indus valley area of Pakistan in 240 or 241, and to have converted a Buddhist King, the Turan Shah of India.

On that occasion, various Buddhist influences seem to have permeated Manichaeism: "Buddhist influences were significant in the formation of Mani's religious thought. The transmigration of souls became a Manichaean belief, and the quadripartite structure of the Manichaean community, divided between male and female monks (the 'elect') and lay follower (the 'hearers') who supported them, appears to be based on that of the Buddhist sangha" (Richard Foltz, Religions of the Silk Road, New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010).

Artistic influences

The Indo-Sassanids traded goods such as silverware and textiles depicting the Sassanid emperors engaged in hunting or administering justice. The example of Sassanid art was influential on Kushan art, and this influence remained active for several centuries in the northwest Indian subcontinent.

Coinage

The Indo-Sassanids created an extensive coinage with legend in Brahmi, Pahlavi or Bactrian, sometimes inspired from Kushan coinage, and sometimes more clearly Sassanid.

The obverse of the coin usually depicts the ruler with elaborate headdress and on the reverse either a zoroastrian fire altar.

Main Indo-Sassanid rulers

Ardashir I, Sassanid king and "Kushanshah" (c. 230 – 250)

Peroz I, "Kushanshah" (c. 250 – 265)

Hormizd I, "Kushanshah" (c. 265 – 295)

Hormizd II, "Kushanshah" (c. 295 – 300)

Peroz II, "Kushanshah" (c. 300 – 325)

Shapur II Sassanid king and "Sakanshah" (c. 325)

Varhran I, Varhran II, Varhran III "Kushanshahs" (c. 325 – 350; lasted until the Hephthalites invasion)

Peroz III "Kushanshah" (c. 350 – 360; in Gandhara)

The Hephthalite Hunas

History

The Hunas initiated a coinage inspired from Sassanian designs.

According to Litvinsky, the initial Huna or Alxon raids on Gandhara took place in the late 5th and early 6th century AD, upon the death of the Gupta ruler, Skandagupta (455–470), presumably led by the Tegin Khingila. M. Chakravary, based on Chinese and Persian histories believes that the Hunas conquered Gandhara from the Ki-to-lo (Kidarites) in c. 475 AD. Gandhara had been occupied by various Kidarite principalities from the early 4th century AD, but it is still a subject of debate as to whether rule was transferred from the Kidarites directly to the Hephthalites. It is known that the Huns invaded Gandhara and the Punjab from the Kabul valley after vanquishing the Kidarite principalities.

The Hunas are mentioned in the Tibetan chronicle Dpag-bsam-ljon-bzah (The Excellent Kalpa-Vrksa), along people like the Yavanas, Kambojas, Tukharas, Khaqsas, Daradas etc.

Religion

The Hunas were fervent worshippers of the Vedic Sun God and Shiva.

Sung Yun and Hui Sheng, who visited the chief of the Hephthalite nomads at his summer residence in Badakshan and later in Gandhara, observed that they had no belief in the Buddhist law and served a large number of divinities."

The Rais

Origins

B. D. Mirchandani says "Our knowledge of the Rai dynasty, which is not a great deal, is derived entirely from three Muslim chronicles of Sind." The history of the Rai and Brahman dynasties is almost entirely dependent on the Muslim chronicles, especially theChachnama and Shahnama.

Their rise to power in the time period of shifting political scene with the wane of the Sassanid influence in the wake of the Hepthalite(White Hun/Huna) invasions, and with the rulers issuing silver coins bearing their likeness by the 7th century.

The Chachnama describes the extant of Rai Sahiras' domain:

The limits of his dominions extended on the east to the boundary of Kashmir, on the west to Makran, on the south to the coast of the sea and Debal, and on the north to the mountains of Kurdan and Kíkánán. He had appointed four Governors (Maliks) in his kingdom: one at Brahminabad; and the fort of Nerun and Debal, Luhánah, Lákhah. Sammah and the river were left under his management. Another at the town of Siwis-tán; and Ladhia, Chingán, the skirts of the hills of Rojhán up to the boundary of Makrán, were given into his charge. The third at the fort of Iskandah; and Báhíah, Stwárah, Jajhór, and the supplementary territories of Dhanód were given in his possession; and the fourth at the town of Multan; and the towns of Sikkah, Karnd, Ishthar and Kíh up to the boundary of Kashmir were en¬trusted to him. The king himself had his headquarters in the city of Aror, retaining Kurdán, Kíkánán, and Bar-hamas directly under his sway.

Demise

According to the Chachnama, the last Rai emperor, Rai Sahasi II, died through illness without any issue. By that time Chach was in complete control of the affairs of the kingdom. However, when Rai Sahasi II was near to death, Suhanadi explained to Chach that the kingdom would pass to other relatives of the dying king in absence of any direct heir to the kingdom. Consequently, they kept secret the news of the king's death until claimants to the throne were killed through conspiracy. Following this, Chach declared himself ruler and later married Suhandi. This ended the Rai Dynasty and began the dynasty of Chach.

Six months after death of Rai Sahasi his brother, Rana Maharath of Chittor, challenged Chach in combat, claiming to be rightful ruler of the Rai Dynasty. Chachnama states that Maharath was killed as the two engaged in a duel, in which it was forbidden to mount a horse or any other animal. During the duel Chach mounted a horse in order to kill his rival.

Rulers

Andre Wink reports on the possibility of the corruption of the Sanskrit names and renders them as related in parenthesis in the following chronology of the Rai rulers of Sindh:

Rai Diwa ji (Devaditya), a powerful chief who forged alliances and extended his rule east of Makran and west of Kashmir, south to the port of Karachi and north toKandahar[citation needed]

Rai Sahiras (Shri Harsha)

Rai Sahasi (Sinhasena)

Rai Sahiras II, died battling the King of Nimroz

Rai Sahasi II, the last of the line

The Gandharan Kambojas

Main articles: Gandhara and Kambojas

Name

The name Gāndhāra, though recorded in Avestan as Vaēkərəta, is not recorded in Vedic Sanskrit. It occurs later in the Classical Sanskrit of the epics. However, the Gandhari people are a tribe mentioned in the Rigveda, the Atharvaveda, and later texts. One proposed origin of the name is from the Sanskrit word gandha, meaning perfume and "referring to the spices and aromatic herbs which they [the inhabitants traded and with which they anointed themselves." Some authors have connected the modern nameKandahar to Gandhara.

A Persian form of the name, Gandara, is mentioned by Herodotus in the context of the story of the Greek explorer Scylax of Caryanda, who sailed down the Indus River beginning at the city of Caspatyrus in Gandara (Κασπάτυρος, πόλις Γανδαρική). Herodotus records that those Iranic tribes who were adjacent to the city of Caspatyrus and the district of Pactyïce had customs similar to the Bactrians, and are the most warlike amongst them. These also are the people who obtain gold from the ant-hills of the adjoining desert. On the identity of Caspatyrus, there have been two opinions, one equating it with Kabul, the other with the name of Kashmir (Kasyapa pur, condensed to Kaspapur as found in Hecataeus).

Geography

The Gandhāri people were settled since the Vedic times on the banks of Kabul River (river Kubhā or Kabol) down to its confluence with theIndus.[citation needed] Later Gandhāra included parts of northwest Punjab. Gandhara was located on the northern trunk road (Uttarapatha) and was a centre of international commercial activities.

The boundaries of Gandhara varied throughout history. Sometimes the Peshawar valley and Taxila were collectively referred to as Gandhara and sometimes the Swat valley (Sanskrit: Suvāstu) was also included. The heart of Gandhara, however, was always the Peshawar valley. The kingdom was ruled from capitals

at Kapisa (Bagram), Pushkalavati (Charsadda), Taxila, Puruṣapura (Peshawar) and in its final days fromUdabhandapura (Hund) on the River Indus.

History

Evidence of Stone Age human inhabitants of Gandhara, including stone tools and burnt bones, was discovered at Sanghao near Mardan in area caves. The artifacts are approximately 15,000 years old. More recent excavations point to 30,000 years before present.

The region shows an influx of southern Central Asian culture in the Bronze Age with the Gandhara grave culture, and the nucleus of Vedic civilisation. This culture flourished from 1500 to 500 BC. Its evidence has been discovered in the hilly regions of Swat and Dir, and even at Taxila.

The name of the Gandhāris is attested in the Rigveda (RV 1.126.7[10]) and in ancient inscriptions dating back to Achaemenid Persia. The Behistun inscription listing the 23 territories of King Darius I (519 BC) includes Gandāra along with Bactria and Sattagydia (Θataguš). In the book "Histories" by Herodotus, Gandhara is named as a source of tax collections for King Darius. The Gandhāris, along with the Balhika (Bactrians), Mūjavants,Angas, and the Magadhas, are also mentioned in the Atharvaveda (AV 5.22.14), as distant people. Gandharas are included in the Uttarapathadivision of Puranic and Buddhistic traditions. The Aitareya Brahmana refers to king Naganajit of Gandhara who was a contemporary of Janaka, king of Videha.

Epic and Puranic traditions

Gandhara had played an important role in the epic of Ramayana and Mahabharata. Ambhi Kumar was a direct descendant of Bharata (of Ramayana) and Shakuni (of Mahabharata). It is said that Lord Rama consolidated the rule of the Kosala Kingdom over the whole of the Indian peninsula. His brothers and sons ruled most of the Janapadas (16 states) at that time.

In Mahabharata, the princess named Gandhari was married to Hastinapur's blind king Dhritrashtra and was mother of Duryodhana and other Kauravas. The prince of Gandhara Shakuni was against this wedding but accepted it, fearing an invasion from Hastinapur. In the aftermath, Shakuni influences the Kaurava prince Duryodhana and plays a central role in the great war of Kurukshetra that eliminated the entire Kuru family, including Bhishma and a hundred Kaurava brothers. According to Puranic traditions, this country (Janapada) was founded by Gandhāra, son of Aruddha, a descendant of Yayāti. The princes of this country are said to have come from the line of Druhyu, who was a king of the Druhyu tribe of the Rigvedic period. According to Vayu Purana (II.36.107), the Gandharas were destroyed by Pramiti, aka Kalika, at the end of Kaliyuga.

Gandhāra is also thought to be the location of the mythical Lake Dhanakosha, the birthplace of Padmasambhava, the founder of Tibetan Buddhism. The bKa' brgyud (Kagyu) sect of Tibetan Buddhism identifies the lake with the Andan Dheri stupa, located near the tiny village of Uchh near Chakdara in the lower Swat Valley. A spring was said to flow from the base of the stupa to form the lake. Archaeologists have found the stupa but no spring or lake can be identified.

Pushkalavati and Prayag

The primary cities of Gandhara were Puruṣapura (now Peshawar), Takṣaśilā (or Taxila) and Pushkalavati. The latter remained the capital of Gandhara down to the 2nd century AD, when the capital was moved to Peshawar. An important Buddhist shrine helped to make the city a centre of pilgrimage until the 7th century. Pushkalavati in the PeshawarValley is situated at the confluence of the Swat and Kabul rivers, where three different branches of the River Kabul meet. That specific place is still called Prang (from Prayāga) and considered sacred and where local people still bring their dead for burial. Similar geographical characteristics are found at site of Prang in Kashmir and at the confluence of the Ganges and Yamuna, where the sacred city of Prayag is situated, west of Benares. There are some legends in which the two rivers are said to be joined here by the underground Sarasvati River, forming a triveṇī, a confluence of three rivers. However, rigvedic texts and modern research suggest that the path of the sarasvati river was very different. Sarasvati ended in the ocean at Kachchh in modern Gujrat and not at at prayag.

Taxila

References in ancient texts

Scattered references in later works indicated that Taxila may have dated back to at least the 8th century BCE. Archaeological excavations later showed that the city may have grown significantly during the Achaemenid Empire of the 6th century BCE. Owing to its strategic location, Taxila has changed hands many times over the centuries from Iranian, to Indo-Greek and lastly Indian rule, with many empires vying for its control. It had an Indo-Iranian society encompassing different religions.

Historically, Takṣaśilā lay at the crossroads of three major ancient trade routes. In 516 BC, Darius embarked on a campaign to Central Asia, Ariana and Bactria and then marched into Afghanistan to Hindush in modern Pakistan. Darius I spent the winter of 516-515 BCE in Gandhara, preparing to conquer the Indus Valley. Darius conquered the Indus in 515 BCE. He controlled the Indus Valley from Gandhara to modern Karachi and appointed the Greek Scylax of Caryanda to explore the Indian Ocean from the mouth of the Indus to the Suez. Darius then marched through the Bolan Pass and returned through Arachosia and Drangiana back to Persia.

Taxila is in western Punjab, and was an important city during Alexander's campaign in ancient India.

Statue of a Hellenistic couple excavated in Taxila.

Legend has it that Takṣaśilā derived its name from Takṣa, who was the son of Bharata, the brother of the Hindu deity Rama.

When the men of Alexander the Great came to Taxila in India in the fourth century BC they found a university there the like of which had not been seen in Greece, a university which taught the three Vedas and the eighteen accomplishments and was still existing when the Chinese pilgrim Fa-Hsien went there about AD 400.

Takṣa's kingdom was called Takṣa Khanda and its capital that he founded was named Takṣaśilā.

According to another theory propounded by Damodar Dharmananda Kosambi, Takṣaśilā is related to Takṣaka, Sanskrit for "carpenter", and is an alternative name for the Nāga, a non-Indo-Iranian people of ancient India. In the great Hindu epic, the Mahābhārata, the Kuru Kingdom's heir, Parikṣit (grandson of the Arjuna) was enthroned at Takṣaśilā. Traditionally, it is believed that the Mahabharata was first recited at Takṣaśilā by Vaisampayana, student of Vyasa at the behest of the seer Vyasa himself, at the Snake Sacrifice.

Taxila is also described in some detail in the Buddhist Jataka tales. The Jataka literature mentions it as the capital of the kingdom of Gandhara and as a great centre of learning. The Chinese monk Faxian, writing of his visit to Taxila in 405, mentions the kingdom of Takshasila, meaning "the Severed Head". He says that this name was derived from an event in the life of Buddha because this is the place "where he gave his head to a man". Xuanzang, another Chinese monk, visited Taxila in 630 and in 643. It appears to have already been overrun by the Huns and been in ruins by his time. Taxila is called Taxiala in Ptolemy's Geography. In the Historia Trium Regum (History of the Three Kings) composed by John of Hildesheim around 1375, the city is called Egrisilla.

Political history

The northern road — the later Grand Trunk or GT Road — the royal road which connected Gandhara in the west to the kingdom ofMagadha and its capital Pāṭaliputra in the Ganges valley in eastern India. This trade route was described by the Greek writerMegasthenes as the "Royal Highway".

The north-western route through Bactria, Kāpiśa, and Puṣkalāvatī. This route connected Taxila with the western Asia.

The Indus route from Kashmir and Central Asia, via Śri nagara, Mansehra, and the Haripur valley[28] across the Khunjerab Pass to theSilk Road in the north to the Indian Ocean in the south. The Khunjerab passes between Kashmir and Xinjiang—the current Karakoram highway—and was traversed in antiquity.

There are carbon dates c. 2550-2288 BCE for the earliest settlement at Taxila (in the Hathial area), with ties to the nearby Sarai Khola, an earlier site.[29] Also, some early Indus period culture and relics.

Pottery shards were found in this area. Pottery dated c. 900 BCE shows ties between Taxila and Charsadda (ancient Pushkalavati), also in the kingdom of Gandhara.

c. 518 BCE, or perhaps earlier – Darius the Great already part Takṣaśilā to the Achaemenid Empire. Taxila, as the capital of Gandhara satrapy, was evidently under Achaemenian rule for more than a century.

486 - 465 BC Xerxes I or in Hebrew Ahasuerus ruled this part of Takṣaśilā and was part of the easternmost regions of the Achaemenid Empire.

Buddhist literature, especially the Jatakas, mentions Taxila as the capital of the kingdom of Gandhara.

326 BCE – Alexander the Great receives submission of ruler of Taxila, Omphis (Āmbhi). Greek historians accompanying Alexander described Taxila as "wealthy, prosperous, and well governed."

Shapur I of the Sassanid Empire during the 3rd century CE, which is later recorded in the 6th century CE in the form of "Avagānā" by the Indian astronomer Varāha Mihira in his Brihat-samhita. It was used to refer to a common legendary ancestor known as Afghana, propagated to be grandson of King Saul of Israel.

321–317 BCE - Chandragupta Maurya, founder of the Mauryan empire, makes himself master of northern and north-western India, including Panjab. Chandragupta Maurya's advisor Kautilya (also known as Chanakya) was a teacher at Takṣaśilā. Under Chandragupta, Taxila became a provincial capital.

During the reign of Chandragupta's grandson Aśoka, Takṣaśilā became a great Buddhist centre of learning. Nonetheless, Takṣaśilā was briefly the centre of a minor local rebellion, subdued only a few years after its onset. Ashoka encouraged trade by building roads, most notably a highway of more than 1,600 kilometers (1,000 miles) linking his capital Pataliputra with Taxila.

185 BCE – The last Maurya emperor, Bṛhadratha, is assassinated by his general, Pushyamitra Shunga, during a parade of his troops.

2nd century BCE - After three generations of Maurya rule, Taxila was annexed by the Indo-Greek kingdom of Bactria. Indo-Greeks build new capital, Sirkap, on the opposite bank of the river from Takṣaśilā.[35] During this new period of Bactrian Greek rule, several dynasties (like Antialcidas) likely ruled from the city as their capital. During lulls in Greek rule, the city managed profitably on its own, to independently control several local trade guilds, who also minted most of the city's autonomous coinage.

c. 90 BCE – The Indo-Scythian (Sakas) chief Maues overthrows the last Greek king of Takṣaśilā.

c. 20 BCE – Gondophares, founder of the Indo-Parthian Kingdom, conquers Takṣaśilā and makes it his capital.

c. 46 AD – According to early Christian legend, Thomas the Apostle visits king Gondophares IV.

Neo-Pythagorean sage Apollonius of Tyana visits Taxila. His biographer described Taxila as a fortified city that was laid out on a symmetrical plan and compared it in size toNineveh.

76 – The date of and inscription found at Taxila of "Great King, King of Kings, Son of God, the Kushana". Taxila was taken from the Parthians by the Kushans under Kujula Kadphises. The great Kushan ruler Kanishka later founded "Sirsukh", the third city on the site.

4th century CE: the Sasanian king Shapur II seems to have conquered Taxila, as evidenced by the numerous Sasanian copper coins found there.[citation needed]

c. 460–470 CE – The Hephthalites (the Huns) sweep over Gandhāra and Punjab; and cause wholesale destruction of the Buddhist monasteries and stupas at Takṣaśilā, which never again recovers.

1863–64 and 1872–73 - Excavations begun by Alexander Cunningham identified a local site known as Saraikhala (or Sarai Khola) with ancient Taxila. Prior to that, the location of the ancient city of Taxila, known from literary texts, was uncertain.

Ancient centre of learning

Takshashila became a noted centre of learning (including the religious teachings of Hinduism) at least several centuries BCE, and continued to attract students from around the old world until the destruction of the city in the 5th century. At its height, it has been suggested that Takshashila exerted a sort of "intellectual suzerainty" over other centres of learning in India., and its primary concern was not with elementary, but higher education. Generally, a student entered Takshashila at the age of sixteen. The Vedas, the ancient and the most revered Hindu scriptures, and the Eighteen Silpas or Arts, which included skills such as archery, hunting, and elephant lore, were taught, in addition to its law school, medical school, and school of military science. Students came to Takshashila from far-off places such as Kashi, Kosala and Magadha, in spite of the long and arduous journey they had to undergo, on account of the excellence of the learned teachers there, all recognized as authorities on their respective subjects.

Notable students and teachers

Takshashila had great influence on the Hindu culture and the Sanskrit language. It is perhaps best known because of its association with Chanakya, also known as Kautilya, the strategist who guided Chandragupta Maurya and assisted in the founding of the Mauryan empire. The Arthashastra (Sanskrit for The knowledge of Economics) of Chanakya, is said to have been composed in Takshashila itself. The Ayurvedic healer Charaka also studied at Taxila. He also started teaching at Taxila in the later period. The ancient grammarian Pāṇini, who codified the rules that would define Classical Sanskrit, has also been part of the community at Takshashila.

The institution is significant in Buddhist tradition since it is believed[citation needed] that the Mahāyāna branch of Buddhism took shape there. Jivaka, the court physician of the Magadha emperor Bimbisara who once cured the Buddha, and the enlightened ruler of Kosala, Prasenajit, are some important personalities mentioned in Pali texts who studied at Takshashila.

Nature of education

By some accounts, Taxilla was considered to be amongst the earliest universities in the world. Others do not consider it a university in the modern sense, in that the teachers living there may not have had official membership of particular colleges, and there did not seem to have existed purpose-built lecture halls and residential quarters in Takshashila, in contrast to the later Nalanda University.

No external authorities like kings or local leaders subjected the scholastic activities at Takshashila to their control. Each teacher formed his own institution, enjoying complete autonomy in work, teaching as many students as he liked and teaching subjects he liked without conforming to any centralized syllabus. Study terminated when the teacher was satisfied with the student's level of achievement. In general, specialisation in a subject took around eight years, though this could be lengthened or shortened in accordance with the intellectual abilities and dedication of the student in question. In most cases the "schools" were located within the teachers' private houses, and at times students were advised to quit their studies if they were unable to fit into the social, intellectual and moral atmosphere there.

Knowledge was considered too sacred to be bartered for money, and hence any stipulation that fees ought to be paid was vigorously condemned. Financial support came from the society at large, as well as from rich merchants and wealthy parents. Though the number of students studying under a single Guru sometimes numbered in the hundreds, teachers did not deny education even if the student was poor; free boarding and lodging was provided, and students had to do manual work in the household. Paying students like princes were taught during the day; non-paying ones, at night. Guru Dakshina was usually expected at the completion of a student's studies, but it was essentially a mere token of respect and gratitude - many times being nothing more than a turban, a pair of sandals, or an umbrella. In cases of poor students being unable to afford even that, they could approach the king, who would then step in and provide something. Not providing a poor student a means to supply his Guru's Dakshina was considered the greatest slur on a King's reputation.

Examinations were treated as superfluous, and not considered part of the requirements to complete one's studies. The process of teaching was critical and thorough- unless one unit was mastered completely, the student was not allowed to proceed to the next. No convocations were held upon completion, and no written "degrees" were awarded, since it was believed that knowledge was its own reward. Using knowledge for earning a living or for any selfish end was considered sacrilegious.

Students arriving at Takshashila usually had completed their primary education at home (until the age of eight), and their secondary education in the Ashrams (between the ages of eight and twelve), and therefore came to Takshashila chiefly to reach the ends of knowledge in specific disciplines.

Ruins

The British archaeologist Sir John Marshall (1876-1958) conducted excavations over a period of twenty years in Taxila.

Sarai Kala

This is an archaeological site 3 km southwest of Taxila that has the earliest occupation, and preserves Neolithic remains going back to 3360 BC. It also has Early Harappan remains of 2900-2600 BC. A later settlement in this area has parallels with Hathial in the Taxila area.

Other sites

The ruins of Taxila contain buildings and Buddhist stupas located over a large area. The main ruins of Taxila are divided into three major cities, each belonging to a distinct time period.

The oldest of these is the Hathial area, which yielded surface shards similar to Red Burnished Ware (or soapy red ware) recovered from early phases at Charsadda—these may date from as early as the late 2nd millennium BCE to the 6th century BCE. Bhir Mound dates from the 6th century BCE and has Northern Black Polished Ware.

The second city of Taxila is located at Sirkap and was built by Greco-Bactrian kings in the 2nd century BCE.

The third and last city of Taxila is at Sirsukh and relates to the Kushan rulers.

In addition to the ruins of the city, a number of buddhist monasteries and stupas also belong to the Taxila area. Some of the important ruins of this category include the ruins of the stupa at Dharmarajika, the monastery at Jaulian, the monastery at Mohra Muradu in addition to a number of stupas.

Culture

Taxila is a mix of wealthy urban and rustic rural environs. Urban residential areas are in the form of small neat and clean colonies populated by the workers of heavy mechanical complex & heavy industries, educational institutes and hospitals that are located in the area. The city has many educational institutes including CIIT Wah Campus, HITEC University and the University of Engineering and Technology Taxila.

In addition to the ruins of ancient Taxila, relics of Mughal gardens and vestiges of historical Grand Trunk Road, which was built by the Mauryan Empire, are also found in Taxila region. Nicholson's Obelisk, a monument of British colonial era situated at the Grand Trunk road welcomes the travellers coming from Rawalpindi/Islamabad into Taxila. The monument was built by the British to pay tribute to Brigadier John Nicholson (1822–1857) an officer of the British army who died in India during the Indian Rebellion of 1857.

Taxila Museum, dedicated mainly to the remains of ancient Taxila, is also situated in the city.

Industry

The industries include heavy machine factories and industrial complex, Pakistan Ordnance Factories at Wah Cantt and the cement factory. Heavy Industries Taxila and Heavy Mechanical Complexes are also based here. Small, cottage and household industries include stoneware, pottery and footwear.

Jewish King Afghana of Gandhara

Afghana or Avagana (born ~ 1000 BC) according to old Asian common folklore, is considered a tribal chief or prince of Bani Israel(Israelite) origin, and a Jewish King of Gandhara. He was either buried or his ashes were burned in Gandhara or Ghor.

According to the Tanakh, King Saul (Talut) was the son of Kish, a member of the tribe of Benjamin, one of the twelve Tribes of Israel(1 Samuel 9:1-2). Saul married Ahinoam, daughter of Ahimaaz and had four sons and two daughters. The sons were Jonathan,Abinadab, Malchishua and Ish-bosheth. Saul's daughters were named Merab and Michal.

Pashtun folklore and some historians suggest that King Saul had five sons instead of four, the fifth was named Irmia (Jeremiah).

The legend describes Malak Afghana as the son of Irmia (Jeremiah) and grandson of King Saul (Talut). This name is mentioned in the form of Abgan in the 3rd century CE by the Sassanians and as Avagana in the 6th century CE by Indian astronomerVarahamihira.

It is mentioned that Afghana was orphaned at a young age, and brought up by King David. When Solomon became the king, Afghana was made commander-in-chief of the army. Malak Afghana is also credited with the building of the first temple, The Temple Mount, in Arabicas the Haram al-Sharif.

Part of Greater Iran

Cyrus the Great (558–530 BC) united the Iranian people into a single state that stretched from the Bosphorus to the western banks of theIndus River. Both Gandhara and Kamboja soon came to be included under this state which was governed by the Achaemenian Dynastyduring the reign of Cyrus the Great or in the first year of Darius I. The Gandhara and Kamboja had constituted the seventh satrapies (upper Indus) of the Achaemenid Empire; its far easternmost satrapies.

When the Achamenids took control of this kingdom, Pushkarasakti, a contemporary of king Bimbisara of Magadha, was the king of Gandhara. He was engaged in a power struggle against the kingdoms of Avanti and Pandavas.

The inscription on Darius' (521–486 BC) tomb at Naqsh-i-Rustam near Persepolis records GADĀRA (Gandāra) along with HINDUSH (Həndu̯š, Sindh) in the list of satrapies.

The capital of Gandhara satrapy was Pushkalavati.[22] Sir Mortimer Wheeler conducted some excavations there in 1962, and identified various Achaemenid remains.

Under the Persian rule, a system of centralised administration with a bureaucratic system was introduced in the region. Great scholars such as Panini and Kautilya lived in this cosmopolitan environment. The Kharosthi alphabet, derived from the one used for Aramaic (the official language of Achaemenids), developed here and remained the national script of Gandhara until the 3rd century AD.

By about 380 BC the Persian hold on the region weakened. Many small kingdoms sprang up in Gandhara. In 327 BC Alexander the Great conquered Gandhara as well as the Indian satrapies of the Persian Empire. The expeditions of Alexander were recorded by his court historians and by Arrian (around AD 175) in his Anabasis Alexandri and by other chroniclers many centuries after the event.

The companions of Alexander the Great did not record the names of Kamboja and Gandhara, rather they located a dozen small political units within their territories. Alexander conquered most of these political units of the former Gandhara, Sindhu and Kamboja Mahajanapadas.

According to Greek chroniclers, at the time of Alexander's invasion, hyparchs Kubhesha, Hastin (Astes), and Ambhi (Omphes) were ruling the lower Kabul valley, Puskalavati (modern Charasadda), and Taxila, respectively, while Ashvajit (chief of Aspasoi/Aspasii or Ashvayanas) and Assakenos (chief of Assakenoi or Ashvakayanas, both being parts of the Kambojas) ruled the upper Kabul valley and Mazaga/Massaga (Mashkavati), respectively.

Mauryas

Chandragupta, the founder of the Mauryan dynasty is said to have lived in Taxila when Alexander captured this city. According to tradition, he trained

under Kautilya, who remained his chief adviser throughout his career. Supposedly using Gandhara and Vahika as his base, Chandragupta led a rebellion against the Magadha Empire and ascended the throne at Pataliputra in 321 BC. However, there are no contemporary Indian records of Chandragupta Maurya and almost all that is known is based on the diaries of Megasthenes, the ambassador of Seleucus at Pataliputra, as recorded by Arrian in his Indika. Ambhi hastened to relieve Alexander of his apprehension and met him with valuable presents, placing himself and all his forces at his disposal. Alexander not only returned Ambhi his title and the gifts but he also presented him with a wardrobe of "Persian robes, gold and silver ornaments, 30 horses and 1000 talents in gold". Alexander was emboldened to divide his forces, and Ambhi assisted Hephaestion and Perdiccas in constructing a bridge over the Indus where it bends at Hund (Fox 1973), supplied their troops with provisions, and received Alexander himself, and his whole army, in his capital city of Taxila, with every demonstration of friendship and the most liberal hospitality.

On the subsequent advance of the Macedonian king, Taxiles accompanied him with a force of 5000 men and took part in the battle of the Hydaspes River. After that victory he was sent by Alexander in pursuit of Porus, to whom he was charged to offer favourable terms, but narrowly escaped losing his life at the hands of his old enemy. Subsequently, however, the two rivals were reconciled by the personal mediation of Alexander; and Taxiles, after having contributed zealously to the equipment of the fleet on the Hydaspes, was entrusted by the king with the government of the whole territory between that river and the Indus. A considerable accession of power was granted him after the death of Philip, son of Machatas; and he was allowed to retain his authority at the death of Alexander himself (323 BC), as well as in the subsequent partition of the provinces at Triparadisus, 321 BC. Later Ambhi was deposed and killed by Chandragupta Maurya, the emperor of the Mauryan Empire. Gandhara was acquired from the Greeks by Chandragupta Maurya.

After a battle with Seleucus Nicator (Alexander's successor in Asia) in 305 BC, the Mauryan Emperor extended his domains up to and including present Southern Afghanistan. With the completion of the Empire's Grand Trunk Road, the region prospered as a center of trade. Gandhara remained a part of the Mauryan Empire for about a century and a half.

Ashoka, the grandson of Chandragupta, was one of the greatest Indian rulers. Like his grandfather, Ashoka also started his career from Gandhara as a governor. Later he supposedly became a Buddhist and promoted this religion in his empire. He built many stupas in Gandhara. Mauryan control over the northwestern frontier, including the Yonas,Kambojas, and the Gandharas, is attested from the Rock Edicts left by Ashoka. According to one school of scholars, the Gandharas and Kambojas were cognate people. It is also contended that the Kurus, Kambojas, Gandharas and Bahlikas were cognate people and all had Iranian affinities,[26] or that the Gandhara and Kamboja were nothing but two provinces of one empire and hence influencing each other's language. However, the local language of Gandhara is represented by Panini's conservative bhāṣā, which is entirely different from the Iranian (Late Avestan) language of the Kamboja that is indicated by Patanjali's quote of Kambojan śavati 'to go' (= Late Avestan šava(i)ti).

Graeco-Bactrians, Sakas, and Indo-Parthians

The decline of the Empire left the sub-continent open to Greco-Bactrian invasions. Present-day southern Afghanistan was absorbed by Demetrius I of Bactria in 180 BC. Around about 185 BC, Demetrius invaded and conquered Gandhara and the Punjab. Later, wars between different groups of Bactrian Greeks resulted in the independence of Gandhara from Bactria and the formation of the Indo-Greek kingdom. Menander was its most famous king. He ruled from Taxila and later from Sagala (Sialkot). He rebuilt Taxila (Sirkap) and Pushkalavati. He became a Buddhist and is remembered in Buddhists records due to his discussions with a great Buddhist philosopher, Nāgasena, in the book Milinda Panha.

Around the time of Menander's death in 140 BC, the Central Asian Kushans overran Bactria and ended Greek rule there. Around 80 BC, the Sakas, diverted by their Parthian cousins from Iran, moved into Gandhara and other parts of Pakistan and Western India. The most famous king of the Sakas, Maues, established himself in Gandhara.

By 90 BC the Parthians had taken control of eastern Iran and in around 50 BC they put an end to the last remnants of Greek rule in today's Afghanistan. Eventually an Indo-Parthian dynasty succeeded in taking control of Gandhara. The Parthians continued to support Greek artistic traditions. The start of the Gandharan Greco-Buddhist art is dated to about 75–50 BC. Links between Rome and the Indo-Parthian kingdoms existed. There is archaeological evidence that building techniques were transmitted between the two realms. Christian records claim that around AD 40 Thomas the Apostle visited India and encountered the Indo-Parthian king Gondophares.

Kushan rule

The Parthian dynasty fell about 75 to another group from Central Asia. The Kushans, known as Yuezhi in China (although ethnically Asii) moved from Central Asia to Bactria, where they stayed for a century. Around 75, one of their tribes, the Kushan (Kuṣāṇa), under the leadership of Kujula Kadphises gained control of Gandhara and other parts of what is now Pakistan.

The Kushan period is considered the Golden Period of Gandhara. Peshawar Valley and Taxila are littered with ruins of stupas and monasteries of this period. Gandharan art flourished and produced some of the best pieces of Indian sculpture. Many monuments were created to commemorate the Jatakas.

Gandhara's culture peaked during the reign of the great Kushan king Kanishka the Great (128–151). The cities of Taxila (Takṣaśilā) at Sirsukh and Peshawar were built. Peshawar became the capital of a great empire stretching from Gandhara to Central Asia. Kanishka was a great patron of the Buddhist faith; Buddhism spread to Central Asia and the Far East across Bactria and Sogdia, where his empire met the Han Empire of China. Buddhist art spread from Gandhara to other parts of Asia. Under Kanishka, Gandhara became a holy land of Buddhism and attracted Chinese pilgrims eager to view the monuments associated with many Jatakas.

In Gandhara, Mahayana Buddhism flourished and Buddha was represented in human form. Under the Kushans new Buddhists stupas were built and old ones were enlarged. Huge statues of the Buddha were erected in monasteries and carved into the hillsides. Kanishka also built a great tower to a height of 400 feet at Peshawar. This tower was reported by Chinese monks Faxian, Song Yun and Xuanzang who

visited the country. This structure was destroyed and rebuilt many times until it was finally destroyed by Mahmud of Ghazni in the 11th century.

After Kanishka, the empire started losing territories in the east. In the west, Gandhara came under the Sassanid, the successor state of the Parthians, and became their vassal from 241 until 450.

Invasion by the Huns

The Hephthalite Huns captured Gandhara around 451, and did not adopt Buddhism, but in fact "perpetrated frightful massacres". Mihirakulabecame a "terrible persecutor" of the religion. During their rule, Hinduism revived itself and the Buddhist Gandharan civilization declined. The Sassanids, aided by Turks from Central Asia, destroyed the Huns' power base in Central Asia, and Gandhara once again came under Persian suzerainty in 568.

The travel records of many Chinese Buddhists pilgrims record that Gandhara was going through a transformation during these centuries. Buddhism was declining and Hinduism was rising. Fa-Xian travelled around 400, when Prakrit was the language of the people and Buddhism was flourishing. 100 years later, when Song-Yun visited in 520, a different picture was described: the area had been destroyed by the White Huns and was ruled by Lae-Lih, who did not practice the laws of the Buddha. Xuan-Zang visited India around 644 and found Buddhism on the wane in Gandhara and Hinduism in the ascendant. Gandhara was ruled by a king from Kabul, who respected Buddha's law, but Taxila was in ruins and Buddhist monasteries were deserted. Instead, Hindu temples were numerous and Hinduism was popular.

Kabulshahi

After the fall of the Sassanid Empire to the Arabs in 644, today's Afghanistan region and Gandhara came under pressure from Muslims. But they failed to extend their empire to Gandhara. Gandhara was first ruled from Kabul and then from Udabhandapura (Hind).

Gandhara was ruled from Kabul by Kabulshahi for next 200 years. Sometime in the 9th century the Kabulshahi replaced the shahi. Based on various Muslim records the estimated date for this is 870. According to Al-Biruni (973–1048), Kallar, a Brahmin minister of the Kabulshahi, founded the Shahi dynasty in 843. The dynasty ruled from Kabul, later moved their capital to Udabhandapura. They built great temples all over their kingdoms. Some of these buildings are still in good condition in the Salt Range of the Punjab.

End

Jayapala was the last great king of this dynasty. His empire extended from west of Kabul to the river Sutlej. However, this expansion of Gandhara kingdom coincided with the rise of the powerful Ghaznavid Empire under Sabuktigin. Defeated twice by Sabuktigin and then byMahmud of Ghazni in the Kabul valley, Jayapala gave his life on the funeral pyre. Anandapala, a son of Jayapala, moved his capital near Nandana in the Salt Range. In 1021 the last king of this dynasty, Trilochanapala, was assassinated by his own troops which spelled the end of Gandhara. Subsequently, some Shahi princes moved to Kashmir and became active in local politics.

The city of Kandahar in Afghanistan is said to have been named after Gandhara. According to H.W. Bellow, an emigrant from Gandhara in the 5th century brought this name to modern Kandahar. Faxian reported that the Buddha's alms-bowl existed in Peshawar Valley when he visited around 400 (chapter XII). In 1872 Bellow saw this huge begging bowl (seven feet in diameter) preserved in the shrine of Sultan Wais outside Kandahar. When Olaf Caroe wrote his book in 1958 (Caroe, pp. 170–171), this relic was reported to be at Kabul Museum. The present status of this bowl is unknown.

Al Biruni writing c. 1030 CE, reported on the devastation caused during the conquest of Gandhara and much of northwest India by Mahmud of Ghazni following his defeat ofJayapala in the Battle of Peshawar at Peshawar in 1001:

"Now in the following times no Muslim conqueror passed beyond the frontier of Kâbul and the river Sindh until the days of the Turks, when they seized the power in Ghazna under the Sâmânî dynasty, and the supreme power fell to the lot of Nâṣir-addaula Sabuktagin. This prince chose the holy war as his calling, and therefore called himself al-Ghâzî ("the warrior/invader"). In the interest of his successors he constructed, in order to weaken the Indian frontier, those roads on which afterwards his son Yamin-addaula Maḥmûd marched into India during a period of thirty years and more. God be merciful to both father and son ! Maḥmûd utterly ruined the prosperity of the country, and performed there wonderful exploits, by which the Hindus became like atoms of dust scattered in all directions, and like a tale of old in the mouth of the people. Their scattered remains cherish, of course, the most inveterate aversion towards all Muslims. This is the reason, too, why Hindu sciences have retired far away from those parts of the country conquered by us, and have fled to places which our hand cannot yet reach, to Kashmir, Benares, and other places. And there the antagonism between them and all foreigners receives more and more nourishment both from political and religious sources."

During the closing years of the tenth and the early years of the succeeding century of our era, Mahmud the first Sultan and Musalman of the Turk dynasty of kings who ruled at Ghazni, made a succession of inroads twelve or fourteen in number, into Gandhar – the present Peshwar valley – in the course of his proselytizing invasions of Hindustan.

Fire and sword, havoc and destruction, marked his course everywhere. Gandhar which was styled the Garden of the North was left at his death a weird and desolate waste. Its rich fields and fruitful gardens, together with the canal which watered them (the course of which is still partially traceable in the western part of the plain), had all disappeared. Its numerous stone built cities, monasteries, and topes with their valuable and revered monuments and sculptures, were sacked, fired, razed to the ground, and utterly destroyed as habitations.

Rediscovery

By the time Gandhara had been absorbed into the empire of Mahmud of Ghazni, Buddhist buildings were already in ruins and Gandhara art had been forgotten. After Al-Biruni, the Kashmiri writer Kalhaṇa wrote his book Rajatarangini in 1151. He recorded some events that took place in Gandhara, and gave details about its last royal dynasty and capital Udabhandapura.

In the 19th century, British soldiers and administrators started taking interest in the ancient history of the Indian Subcontinent. In the 1830s coins of the post-

Ashoka period were discovered and in the same period Chinese travelogues were translated. Charles Masson, James Prinsep, and Alexander Cunningham deciphered the Kharosthi script in 1838. Chinese records provided locations and site plans of Buddhists shrines. Along with the discovery of coins, these records provided necessary clues to piece together the history of Gandhara. In 1848 Cunningham found Gandhara sculptures north of Peshawar. He also identified the site of Taxila in the 1860s. From then on a large number of Buddhist statues have been discovered in the Peshawar valley.

John Marshall performed an excavation of Taxila from 1912 to 1934. He discovered separate Greek, Parthian, and Kushan cities and a large number of stupas and monasteries. These discoveries helped to piece together much more of the chronology of the history of Gandhara and its art.

After 1947 Ahmed Hassan Dani and the Archaeology Department at University of Peshawar made a number of discoveries in the Peshawar and Swat Valley. Excavation on many sites of the Gandhara Civilization are being done by researchers from Peshawar and several universities around the world.

Taliban destruction of Buddhist relics

Swat Valley in Pakistan has many Buddhist carvings, stupas and Jehanabad contains a Seated Buddha status. Kushan era Buddhist stupas and status in Swat valley were demolished by the Taliban and after two attempts by the Taliban, the Jehanabad Buddha's face was dynamited. Only the Bamiyan Buddhas were larger than the carved giant Buddha status in Swat near Mangalore which the Taliban attacked. The government did nothing to safeguard the statue after the initial attempt at destroying the Buddha, which did not cause permanent harm, and when the second attack took place on the statue the feet, shoulders, and face were demolished. Islamists such as the Taliban and looters destroyed much of Pakistan's Buddhist artifacts left over from the Buddhist Gandhara civilization especially in Swat Valley. The Taliban deliberately targeted Gandhara Buddhist relics for destruction. The Christian Archbishop of Lahore Lawrence John Saldanha wrote a letter to Pakistan's government denouncing the Taliban activities in Swat Valley including their destruction of Buddha statues and their attacks on Christians, Sikhs, and Hindus. Gandhara Buddhist artifacts were illegally looted by smugglers.

Language

The Gandharan Buddhist texts are both the earliest Buddhist as well as Asian manuscripts discovered so far. Most are written on birch bark and were found in labelled clay pots. Panini has mentioned both the Vedic form of Sanskrit as well as what seems to be Gandhari, a later form of Sanskrit, in his Ashtadhyayi.

Gandhara's language was a Prakrit or "Middle Indo-Aryan" dialect, usually called Gāndhārī. Texts are written right-to-left in the Kharoṣṭhīscript, which had been adapted for Indo-Aryan languages from a Semitic alphabet, the Aramaic alphabet. Gandhāra was then controlled by the Achaemenid dynasty of the Persian Empire, which used the Aramaic script to write the Iranian languages of the Empire.

Semitic scripts were not used to write South Asian languages again until the arrival of Islam and subsequent adoption of the Persian-styleArabic alphabet for New Indo-Aryan languages like Urdu, Punjabi, Sindhi and Kashmiri. Kharosthi script died out about the 4th century. However, the Hindko and the archaic

Dardic, Kohistani dialects and Pothohari dialect, derived from the local Indo-Aryan Prakrits, are minority languages, and the Eastern Iranian language Pashto language is the prevailing language of Gandhara (Peshawar).

Buddhism

Mahāyāna Buddhism

Mahāyāna Pure Land sūtras were brought from the Gandhāra region to China as early as 147 CE, when the Kushan monk Lokakṣemabegan translating some of the first Buddhist sūtras into Chinese. The earliest of these translations show evidence of having been translated from the Gāndhārī language. Lokakṣema translated important Mahāyāna sūtras such as the Aṣṭasāhasrikā Prajñāpāramitā Sūtra, as well as rare, early Mahāyāna sūtras on topics such as samādhi, and meditation on the buddha Akṣobhya. These translations from Lokakṣema continue to give insight into the early period of Mahāyāna Buddhism. This corpus of texts often includes emphasizes ascetic practices and forest dwelling, and absorption in states of meditative concentration:

Paul Harrison has worked on some of the texts that are arguably the earliest versions we have of the Mahāyāna sūtras, those translated into Chinese in the last half of the second century CE by the Indo-Scythian translator Lokakṣema. Harrison points to the enthusiasm in the Lokakṣema sūtra corpus for the extra ascetic practices, for dwelling in the forest, and above all for states of meditative absorption (samādhi). Meditation and meditative states seem to have occupied a central place in early Mahāyāna, certainly because of their spiritual efficacy but also because they may have given access to fresh revelations and inspiration.

Some scholars believe that the Mahāyāna Longer Sukhāvatīvyūha Sūtra was compiled in the age of the Kushan Empire in the 1st and 2nd centuries CE, by an order of Mahīśāsaka bhikṣus which flourished in the Gandhāra region. However, it is likely that the longerSukhāvatīvyūha owes greatly to the Mahāsāṃghika-Lokottaravāda sect as well for its compilation, and in this sūtra there are many elements in common with the Lokottaravādin Mahāvastu. There are also images of Amitābha Buddha with the bodhisattvasAvalokiteśvara and Mahāsthāmaprāpta which were made in Gandhāra during the Kushan era.

The Mañjuśrīmūlakalpa records that Kaniṣka of the Kushan Empire presided over the establishment of the Mahāyāna Prajñāpāramitāteachings in the northwest. Tāranātha wrote that in this region, 500 bodhisattvas attended the council at Jālandhra monastery during the time of Kaniṣka, suggesting some institutional strength for Mahāyāna in the northwest during this period. Edward Conze goes further to say that Prajñāpāramitā had great success in the northwest during the Kushan period, and may have been the "fortress and hearth" of early Mahāyāna, but not its origin, which he associates with the Mahāsāṃghika branch of Buddhism.

Buddhist translators

Gandharan Buddhist missionaries were active, with other monks from Central Asia, from the 2nd century AD in Han-dynasty (202 BC – 220 AD) China's capital

of Luoyang, and particularly distinguished themselves by their translation work. They promoted scriptures from Early Buddhist schools as well as those from the Mahāyāna.

Lokakṣema, a Kushan and the first to translate Mahāyāna scriptures into Chinese (167–186)

Zhi Yao (c. 185), a Kushan monk, second generation of translators after Lokakṣema

Zhi Qian (220–252), a Kushan monk whose grandfather had settled in China during 168–190

Zhi Yue (c. 230), a Kushan monk who worked at Nanjing

Dharmarakṣa (265–313), a Kushan whose family had lived for generations at Dunhuang

Jñānagupta (561–592), a monk and translator from Gandhāra

Śikṣānanda (652–710), a monk and translator from Oḍḍiyāna, Gandhāra

Prajñā (c. 810), a monk and translator from Kabul, who educated the Japanese Kūkai in Sanskrit texts

Textual finds

The Chinese Buddhist monk Xuanzang visited a Lokottaravāda monastery in the 7th century CE, at Bamiyan, Afghanistan, and this monastery site has since been rediscovered by archaeologists. Birchbark and palm leaf manuscripts of texts in this monastery's collection, including Mahāyāna sūtras, have been discovered at the site, and these are now located in the Schøyen Collection. Some manuscripts are in the Gāndhārī language and Kharoṣṭhī script, while others are in Sanskrit and written in forms of the Gupta script. Manuscripts and fragments that have survived from this monastery's collection include the following source texts:

Pratimokṣa Vibhaṅga of the Mahāsāṃghika-Lokottaravāda (MS 2382/269)

Mahāparinirvāṇa Sūtra, a sūtra from the Āgamas (MS 2179/44)

Caṃgī Sūtra, a sūtra from the Āgamas (MS 2376)

Vajracchedikā Prajñāpāramitā Sūtra, a Mahāyāna sūtra (MS 2385)

Bhaiṣajyaguru Sūtra, a Mahāyāna sūtra (MS 2385)

Śrīmālādevī Siṃhanāda Sūtra, a Mahāyāna sūtra (MS 2378)

Pravāraṇa Sūtra, a Mahāyāna sūtra (MS 2378)

Sarvadharmapravṛttinirdeśa Sūtra, a Mahāyāna sūtra (MS 2378)

Ajātaśatrukaukṛtyavinodana Sūtra, a Mahāyāna sūtra (MS 2378)

Śāriputra Abhidharma Śāstra (MS 2375/08)

A Sanskrit manuscript of the Bhaiṣajyaguruvaiḍūryaprabhārāja Sūtra was among the textual finds at Gilgit, Pakistan, attesting to the popularity of the Medicine Buddha in Gandhāra. The manuscripts in this find are dated before the 7th century, and are written in the upright Gupta script.

Art

Gandhāra is noted for the distinctive Gandhāra style of Buddhist art, which developed out of a merger of Greek, Syrian, Persian, and Indian artistic influence. This development began during the Parthian Period (50 BC – AD 75). Gandhāran style flourished and achieved its peak during the Kushan period, from the 1st to the 5th centuries. It declined and suffered destruction after invasion of the White Huns in the 5th century.

Stucco as well as stone was widely used by sculptors in Gandhara for the decoration of monastic and cult buildings. Stucco provided the artist with a medium of great plasticity, enabling a high degree of expressiveness to be given to the sculpture. Sculpting in stucco was popular wherever Buddhism spread from Gandhara – Afghanistan, Pakistan, India, Central Asia and China.

Timeline

Legend: Bharat, the brother of Lord Rama of Kosala, ruled from Gandhara, his sons were Taksh and Pushkala, who inhabited new cities called Taksha-shila (Taxila), and Pushkarvati (Peshawar). Tentative timeline for this event is 5000 BC or before that .

Legend: Gandhari, the princess of Gandhara is married to Dhritrashtra, the king of Hastinapur. The Ancient Indian scripture Mahabharata dates this event to be around 3000 BC.

c. 2300 – c. 1900 BC Indus Valley civilization

c. 1900 – c. 520 BC No written records. Indo-Aryan migrations. Ramayana legend says Lord Rama's brother Bharat ruled from Gandhara.

c. 1500 – c. 500 BC Gandhara grave culture

c. 1200 – c. 800 BC Gandhari people mentioned in Rigveda and Atharvaveda.

c. 520 – c. 326 BC Persian Empire. Under direct Persian control and/or local control under Achaemenid suzerainty.

c. 326 – c. 305 BC Occupied by Alexander the Great and Macedonian generals

c. 305 – c. 180 BC Controlled by the Maurya dynasty, founded by Chandragupta. Converted to Buddhism under King Ashoka (273–232 BC)

c. 185 – c. 97 BC Under control of the Indo-Greek Kingdom, with some incursions of the Indo-Scythians from around 100 BC

c. 97 BC – c. AD 7 Saka (Indo-Scythian) Rule

c. 7 – c. 75 Parthian invasion and Indo-Parthian Kingdom, Rule of Commander Aspavarman?. Ambhi Kumar, king of Gandhara was a descendant of Lord Raghu and prince Bharat of Kosala Kingdom.

c. 75 – c. 230 Kushan Empire

c. 230 – c. 440 Kushanshas under Persian Sassanid suzerainty

c. 450 – c. 565 White Huns (Hephthalites)

c. 565 – c. 644 Nezak kingdom, ruled from Kapisa and Udabhandapura

c. 650 – c. 870 Turkshahi, ruled from Kabul

c. 870 – 1021 Hindushahi, ruled from Udabhandapura

c. 1032 – 1350 Conquered and controlled by the empire of Mahmud of Ghazni.

The Karkotas

Karkota Empire (625 CE - 1003 CE) was a major power from the Indian subcontinent; which originated in the region ofKashmir. It was founded by Durlabhvardhana during the lifetime of Harshavardhan. The dynasty marked the rise of Kashmir as a power in Central Asia and Northern India.

According to Kalhana's Rajatarangini, Lalitaditya Muktapida was able to extend the power of Kashmir beyond the normal mountain limits and in about 740 AD inflicted a defeat upon Yashovarman, the King of Kannauj. Lalitaditya was able to vanquish the Turks, Tibetans, Bhutias, Kambojas and others. According to historians, Kalhana highly exaggerated the conquests of Lalitaditya.

The Martand complex of temples in the Anantnag district of today's Kashmir perpetuate the memory of Lalitaditya.

After Lalitaditya, we know about two more important kings of Kashmir named Avanativarmana and Shankarvarman. But after death of Lalitaditya many territories declared their independence. The campaigns against these newly independent kings were stopped in Avantivarman's time but again started by his son and successor Shankarvarman. He made Kashmir strong-politically and economically. Kabul Valley as well as Kashmir was mainly Hindu kingdoms during those times.

Religion

The Karkota emperors were primarily Hindu. They built spectacular Hindu temples in their capital Parihaspur. They however also allowed Buddhism to flourish under them. Stupa, Chaitya and Vihara can be found in the ruins of their capital. Karkotas built Martand Temple, the oldest known Sun temple in India. It was also the biggest temple complex till that time.

The Kabul Shahis

Turkic origin

Xuanzang describes the ruler of Kapisa/Kabul, whom he had personally met, as a devout Buddhist and a Kshatriya. The the 11th-century Persian Muslim scholar Alberuni recorded folklore concerning the early history of the Kabul Shahi rulers,[8] including beliefs that:

the kings residing in Kabul, while they practised Hinduism, also belonged to a Turkic culture;

they were also, however, Tibetan in origin, including the founder of the dynasty, Barahatakin;

when Barahatakin migrated from Tibet, he took up residence in a cave near Kabul and did not venture out in public for a few days, at which point local people regarded him and his Turkic clothing with curiosity, like a "new born baby", and honoured him as a being of miraculous birth, who was destined to be a king;

in his lifetime Barahatakin cam to rule the country, under the title "Shahiya of Kabul";

the title remained among his descendants for about 60 generations and;

the descendants of Barahatakin include one was Kanik (possibly the Kushan ruler Kanishka), who is said to have built a viharacalled Kanika Caitya in Purushapura (Peshawar).

Thus the folklore accounts recorded by Alberuni connect the earlier Shahis of Kabul/Kapisa to Turkish extraction and also claim their descent from Kanik (or Kanishaka of Kushana lineage). At the same time it is also claimed that 'their first king Barahatigin (Vrahitigin?) had originally come from Tibet and concealed in a narrow cave in Kabul area (and here is given a strange legend which we omit).' One can easily see the above account of Shahi origin as totally fanciful and fairy tale-like. These statements taken together are very confusing, inconsistent and bear the express marks of a folklore and vulgar tradition, hence unworthy of inspiring any confidence in the early history of Shahis. The allegation that the first dynasty of Kabul was Turki is plainly based on the vulgar tradition, which Alberuni himself remarked was clearly absurd.

The historian V. A. Smith speculates – based on Alberuni – that the earlier Shahis were a cadet branch of the Kushanas who ruled both over Kabul and Gandhara until the rise of the Saffarids. H. M. Elliot relates the early Kabul Shahis to the Kators and further connects the Kators with the Kushanas. Charles Frederick Oldham also traces the Kabul Shahi lineage to the Kators—whom he identifies with the Kathas or Takkhas—Naga worshipping collective groups of Hinduism (Sun god-worshiping) lineage. He further speaks of the Urasas, Abhisaras, Daradas, Gandharas,Kambojas, et al. as allied tribal groups of the Takkhas belonging to the Sun-worshipingraces of the north-west frontier. D. B. Pandey traces the affinities of the early Kabul Shahis to the Hunas.

Other accounts suggest Punjabi Kshatriya origins for the Shahi dynasty. Xuanzang clearly describes the ruler of Kapisa/Kabul, whom he had personally met, as a devout Buddhist and a Kshatriya and not a Tu-kiue/Tu-kue (Turk). The fact that Xuanzang (AD 644) specifically describes the ruler of Kapisa as Ksatriya, and that of Zabul at this time being known as Shahi casts serious doubt about the speculated connections of the first Shahis of Kabul/Kapisa to the Kushanas or the Hephthalites. Neither the Kushanas, the Hunas/Hephthalites nor the Turks (or Turushkas) have ever been designated or classified as Ksatriyas in any ancient Indian tradition. Therefore, the identification of the first line of Shahi kings of Kapisa/Kabul with the Kushanas, Hunas, or Turks obviously seems to be in gross error.

It is very interesting that Alberuni calls the early Shahi rulers "Turks", but this should be interpreted to mean Turkicised, rather than Turkic in origin.

Hindu origins and Turkic influences

The Shahi rulers of Kapisa/Kabul who ruled Afghanistan from the early 4th century till AD 870 were Hindu Kamboj Kshatriyas. The Shahis of Afghanistan were discovered in 1874 to be connected to the Kamboja "race" by E. Vesey Westmacott.

E. Vesey Westmacott, Bishan Singh, K. S. Dardi, et al. connect the Kabul Shahis to the ancient Indian Ksatriya clans of the Kambojas/Gandharas. George Scott Robertson[19]writes that the Kators/Katirs of Kafiristan belong to the well known Siyaposh tribal group of the Kams, Kamoz and Kamtoz tribes. But numerous scholars now also agree that the Siyaposh tribes of Hindukush are the modern representatives of the ancient Iranian cis-Hindukush Kambojas.

The powerful evidence from Xuanzang (AD 644) attesting that the ruler of Kabul/Kapisa was a devout Buddhist and belonged to Ksatriya caste would rather connect this ruling dynasty either to the erstwhile Gandharas or more probably to Ashvaka clan of the Kambojas, the eminent Ksatriya clan of the Mauryan times from the neighbouring region in India.

The name (Katorman or Lagaturman) of the last king of the so-called first Shahi line of Kabul/Kapisa simply reveals a trace of Tukhara cultural influence in the Kamboja (Kapisa) region, as hinted in the above discussion. Thus, the first ruling dynasty of Kapisa and Kabul, designated as a Ksatriya dynasty by Xuanzang had been a Kamboja dynasty from India.

From the 2nd century BC onwards (much prior to the Huna ascendancy), the Tukharas had settled in considerable numbers in the ancient Kamboja land and thus the culture of the Kambojas undoubtedly underwent some changes and due to the interaction of two cultures, the Kambojas of Kapisa were also substantially influenced by Tukharas who remained for quite a time the ruling power in this region.

This fact is also verified by Xuanzang who records that the literature, customary rules, and currency of Bamiyan were same as those of Tukhara; the spoken language is only little different and in personal appearance the people closely resembled those of the Tukhara country. On the other hand, the literature and written language of Kapisa (=Kamboja) was like that of Tukharas but the social customs, colloquial idiom, rules of behavior (and their personal resemblance) differed somewhat from those of Tukhara country[28]which means that the original and dominant community of Kapisa had imbibed the Tukharan culture and customs but to a limited extent and the penetration of the Tukharas in the Kapisa territory

appears to have therefore been also limited. The Kambojas and the Tukharas (Turks) are mentioned as immediate neighbors in north-west as late as the 8th century AD as Rajatarangini of Kalhanademonstrates.

Evidence also exists that some medieval Muslim writers have confused the Kamboja clans of Pamirs/Hindukush with the Turks and invested the former with Turkic ethnicity. For example, 10th-century Arab geographer Al-Muqaddasi, refers to the Kumiji(=Kamoji/Kamboja) tribesmen of Buttaman mountains (Tajikistan),[30] on upper Oxus, and calls them of Turkic race. Song Yun, the Chinese Ambassador to the Huna kingdom of Gandhara, in AD 520 writes that the Yethas (Hephthalites) had invaded Gandhara two generations prior to him and had completely destroyed this country. The then Yetha ruler was extremely cruel, vindictive, and anti-Buddhist and had engaged in a three years border war with the king of Ki-pin (Cophene or Kapisa), disputing the boundaries of that country.[36] The Yetha king referred to by Song Yun may have been Mihirakula (AD 515-540/547) or his governor. This evidence also proves that the Kapisa kingdom was well established prior to the Huna/Hephthalite invasion of Gandhara (c. AD 477) and that it did not submit to the Yethas but had survived and continued to maintain its independence.

Once the political clout of the invaders like the Kushanas or the Hephthalites had declined, some native chieftain from the original dominant clans of this region seems to have attained ascendancy in political power and established an independent kingdom on the ruins of the Kushana and/or the Hephthalite empire.

Commenting on the rise of Shahi dynasty in Kabul/Kapisa, Charles Frederick Oldham observes: "Kabulistan must have passed through many vicissitudes during the troublous times which followed the overthrow of the great Persian empire by the Alexander. It no doubt fell for a time under the sway of foreign rulers (Yavanas, Kushanas, Hunas etc). The great mass of the population, however, remained Zoroastrian or Shamanic Polytheists. And probably too, the Kshatriya chiefs from India retained great shadow of authority, and conquered Kabulistan when the opportunity arose.".

Barhatigin is said to be the founder of the dynasty which is said to have ruled for 60 generations until AD 870. This, if true, would take Barhatigin and the founding of the early Shahi dynasty back about 20x60=1200 years, i.e., to about the 4th century BC if we take the average generation of 20 years; and to the 7th century BC if an average generation is taken as 25 years. It is well nigh impossible that a single dynasty could have ruled for 1200 (or 1500) years at a stretch. Moreover, King Kanik (if Kanishaka) ruled (AD 78 – 101) not over Kabul but over Purushapura/Gandhara and his descendants could not have ruled for almost 900 years as a single dynasty over Kapisa/Kabul especially in a frontier region called the gateway of India.Pre Islamic Hindu and Buddhist heritage of Afghanistan is well established in the Shahi coinage from Kabul of this period.

Based on fragmentary evidence of coins, there was one king named Vrahitigin (Barhatigin?) who belonged to pre-Christian times as Alberuni's accounts would tend to establish. If Kanik is same as Kanishaka of Kushana race as is often claimed, then the second claim that the ancestors of the early Shahis came from Tibet becomes incompatible to known facts of history.

According to Olaf Caroe, "the earlier Kabul Shahis in some sense were the inheritors of the Kushana chancery tradition and were staunch Hindus in character. The affinities of the early Shahis of Kapisa/Kabul are still speculative, and

the inheritance of the Kushan-Hephthalite chancery tradition and political institutions by Kabul Shahis do not necessarily connect them to the preceding dynasty (i.e. the Kushanas or Hephthalites).

It appears that from start of the 5th century till AD 793-94, the capital of the Kabul Shahis was Kapisa. As early as AD 424, the prince of Kapisa (Ki-pin of the Chinese) was known as Guna Varman. The name ending "Varman" is used after the name of a Ksahriya only. Thus the line of rulers whom Xuanzang refers to in his chronicles appears to be an extension of the Ksatriya dynasty whom this Guna Varman of Ki-pin or Kapisa (AD 424) belonged. Thus this Ksatriya dynasty was already established prior to AD 424 and it was neither a Kushana nor a Hephthalite dynasty by any means.

It appears more than likely that, rather than the Kushanas or Hunas or the Turks, the Shahi rulers of Kabul/Kapisa and Gandhara had a descent[citation needed] from the neighbouring warlike Ksatriya clans of the Kambojas known as Ashvakas (q.v.), who in the 4th century BC, had offered stubborn and decisive resistance to Macedonian invader, Alexander, and later had helped Chandragupta Maurya found theMauryan empire of India. They were the same bold and warlike people on whom king Ashoka Maurya had thought it wise and expedient to bestow autonomous status and to whom he gave eminent place in his Rock Edicts V and XIII. They were fiercely independent warlike people who had never easily yielded to any foreign overlord. They were the people who, in the 5th century AD, had formed the very neighbours of the Bactrian Ephthalites of Oxus and whom Chandragupta II of Gupta dynasty had campaigned against and had obtained tribute from about the start of the 5th century AD. Dr V. A. Smith says that this epic verse is reminiscent of the times when the Hunas first came into contact with the Sassanian dynasty of Persia. Sata-pañcāśaddesa-vibhaga of the medieval era Tantra book Saktisamgma Tantra[50] locates Kambojas (Kabul Shahis?) to the west of southwest Kashmir (or Pir-pañcāla), to the south of Bactria and to the east of Maha-Mlechcha-desa (=Mohammadan countries i.e Khorasan/Iran) and likewise, locates the Hunas (Zabul Shahis?) to the south of Kama valley (or Jallalabad/Afghanistan) and to the north of Marudesa (or Rajputana) towards western Punjab.

The Kavyamimasa of Rajshekhar also lists the Sakas, Kekayas, Kambojas, Vanayujas, Bahlikas, Hunas, Pahlvas, Limpakas, Harahuras, Hansmaragas (Hunzas) etc in the north-west. Since Rajshekhar (AD 880–920) was contemporary with Hindu Shahis, he identifies people called Kambojas (Kabul/Kapisa), Vanayujas (Bannus), Limpakas (Lamghanis), Hunas (Zabul), Pahlvas (Persians—Maha-mlechchas), Harahuras (Red Hunas located in Herat) etc almost exactly in the same localities which were occupied by Kabul Shahi and Zabul Shahi kingdoms respectively. The above referred to pieces of evidence again spotlight on the Kambojas and the Hunas together and places them near the environs of the Muslim Persians in north-west. During the 1st century AD and later in the 5th century (c. AD 477), the cis-Hindukush Kambojas and Gandharas partially came under the sway of foreign invaders like the Kushanas and the Hephthalites (Hunas). These warlike people were temporarily overpowered by the numerous hordes but they did not become extinct; and once the political tide of the foreign hordes ebbed, someone from the native chieftains from the original dominant clans (i.e. the Ksatrya Ashvakas) of this region asserted his authority and attained ascendancy in political power and had established himself as Ksatriya overlord of an independent kingdom on the ruins of the erstwhile Kushana and/or the Hephthalites empire.

The title of "Shahi"

In ancient time, the title Shahi appears to be a quite popular royal title in Afghanistan and the north-western areas of the Indian sub-continent. Sakas, [citation needed]Kushanas, Hunas, Bactrians, by the rulers of Kapisa/Kabul, and Gilgit used it. In Persian form, the title appears as Kshathiya, Kshathiya Kshathiyanam, Shao of the Kushanas and the Ssaha of Mihirakula (Huna chief). The Kushanas are stated to have adopted the title Shah-in-shahi ("Shaonano shao") in imitation of Achaemenid practice.

An ancient Jaina work, Kalakacarya-kathanaka, says that the rulers of the Sakas who had invaded Ujjaini/Malwa in 62 BC also used the titles of Sahi and Sahnusahi. Since the title Shahi was used by the rulers of Kapisa/Kabul or Gandhara also in imitation of Kushana "Shao", it has been speculated by some writers that the Shahi dynasty of Kapisa/Kabul or Gandhara was a foreign dynasty and had descended from the Kushans or Turks (Turushkas). However, the title has been used by several rulers irrespective of any racial connotations and this may refute the above speculation.

In addition, one ancient inscription and several ancient Buddhist manuscripts from the Gilgit area between upper Indus and river Kabul shed some light on the three kings who ruled in the Gilgit region in the 6th and 7th centuries AD. They also bore Shahi titles and their names are mentioned as Patoladeva alias Navasurendradiyta Nandin, Srideva alias Surendra Vikrmadiyta Nandin and Patoladeva alias Vajraditya Nandin. It is very relevant to mention here that each of the Shahi rulers mentioned in the above list of Gilgit rulers has Nandin as his surname or last name[63] It is more than likely that the surname Nandin refers to their clan name. It is also very remarkable that the modern Kamboj tribe of northern Punjab still has Nandan (Nandin) as one of their important clan names. It is therefore very likely that these Gilgit rulers of upper Indus may also have belonged to theKamboja lineage. Furthermore, "Shahi, Sahi, Shahiya" as a septal name is still carried by a section of the Punjab Kambojs which appears to be a relic from the Shahi title of their Kabul/Kapisa princes.

Hindu and Buddhist culture

Alberuni's reference to the supplanting of the Kabul Shahi dynasty in about AD 870 by a Brahmin called Kallar actually implies only that the religious faith of the royal family had changed from Buddhism to Hinduism by about that date; it might not have actually involved any physical supplanting of the existing Kabul Shahi dynasty as is stated by Alberuni whose account of early Shahis is indeed based on telltale stories.

Archeological sites of the period, including a major Hindu Shahi temple north of Kabul and a chapel in Ghazni, contain both the pre-dominant Hindu andBuddhist statuary, suggesting that there was a close interaction between the two religions.

When the Chinese monk Xuanzang visited Kapisa (about 60 km north of modern Kabul) in the 7th century, the local ruler was a Kshatriya King Shahi Khingala. A Ganesha idol has been found near Gerdez that bears the name of this king, see Shahi Ganesha.

Several 6th- or 7th-century AD Buddhist manuscripts were found from a stupa at Gilgit. One of the manuscripts reveals the name of a Shahi king Srideva Sahi Surendra Vikramaditya Nanda.

See also: Pre Islamic Hindu and Buddhist heritage of Afghanistan

Invasions from the 7th century

In the wake of Muslim invasions of Kabul and Kapisa in second half of the 7th century (AD 664), the Kapisa/Kabul ruler called by Muslim writers Kabul Shah (Shahi of Kabul) made an appeal to the Ksatriyas of the Hind who had gathered there in large numbers for assistance and drove out the Muslim invaders as far as Bost.[69] This king of Kapisa/Kabul who faced the Muslim invasion was undoubtedly a Ksatriya.[70]

In AD 645, when Chinese pilgrim Xuanzang was passing through the Uttarapatha, Udabhanda or Udabhandapura was the place of residence or secondary capital of emperor of Kapisa which then dominated over 10 neighboring states comprising Lampaka, Nagara, Gandhara and Varna (Bannu) and probably also Jaguda. About Gandhara, the pilgrim says that its capital was Purushapura; the royal family was extinct and country was subject to Kapisa; the towns and villages were desolate and the inhabitants were very few. It seems that under pressure from Arabs in the southwest and the Turks in the north, the kings of Kapisa had left their western possessions in the hands of their viceroys and made Udabhanda their principal seat of residence. The reason why Udabhandapura was selected in preference to Peshawar is at present unknown but it is possible that the new city of Udabhanda was built by Kapisa rulers for strategic reasons.

In AD 671 Muslim armies seized Kabul and the capital was moved to Udabhandapura.

Move to Kabul; dynastic continuity

In subsequent years, the Muslim armies returned with large reinforcements and Kabul was swept when the Shahi ruler agreed to pay tribute to the conquerors. For strategical reasons, the Shahis, who continued to offer stubborn resistance to Muslim onslaughts, finally moved their capital from Kapisa to Kabul in about AD 794. Kabul Shahis remained in Kabul until AD 879 when Ya'qub-i Laith Saffari, the founder of the Saffarid dynasty, conquered the city. Kabul Shahis had built a defensive wall all around the Kabul city to protect it against the army of Muslim Saffarids. The remains of these walls are still visible over the mountains which are located inside the Kabul city.

The first Hindu Shahi dynasty was founded in AD 870 by Kallar (see above). Kallar is well documented to be a Brahmin. The kingdom was bounded on the north by the Hindu kingdom of Kashmir, on the east by Rajput kingdoms, on the south by the Muslim Emirates of Multan and Mansura, and on the west by the Abbasid Caliphate.

According to the confused accounts recorded by Alberuni which are chiefly based on folklore, the last king of the first Shahi dynasty, Lagaturman (Katorman)

was overthrown and imprisoned by his Brahmin vizier Kallar, thus resulting in the change-over of dynasty.

The Hindu Shahi, a term used by history writer Al-Biruni[76] to refer to the ruling Hindu dynastythat took over from the Turki Shahi and ruled the region during the period prior to Muslim conquests of the 10th and 11th centuries.

The term Hindu Shahi was a royal title of this dynasty and not its actual clan or ethnological name. Al-Biruni used the title Shah for many other contemporary royal houses in his descriptions as well.

It is very remarkable[according to whom?] that Kalhana (c. 12th century), the author of Rajatarangini (written in AD 1147–49), also refers to the Shahis and does not maintain any difference or distinction between the earlier Shahis (RT IV.143) and the later Shahis or does not refer to any supplanting of the dynasty at any stage as Alberuni does in hisTarikh-al-Hind. etc., unbroken to as far as or earlier than AD 730. It is also remarkable[according to whom?] that Rajatrangini and all other sources refer to the Shahi rulers of Udabhandapura/Waihind as belonging to the Kshatriya lineage in contrast to Alberuni who designates the earlier Shahi rulers as Turks and the later as Brahmins.

Since the change of Shahi capital from Kabul to Waihind or Uddhabhandapura had also occurred precisely around this period, it is probable that the narrator of the folklore/tellatale to Alberuni had confused the "change of capital" issue with the "supplanting of Kabul Shahi dynasty" since the incidence of shift had occurred remotely about 200 years prior to Alberuni's writing (AD 1030). There is no doubt, as the scholars also admit, that the change in dynasty is effected by "a common legend of eastern story", which surely bears the express mark of folklore for the previous history of Kabul Shahis, hence obviously speculative and not much worthy of serious history.

Retreat and dependence on Kashmir

The Hindu Shahis became engaged with the Yamini Turks of Ghazni[85] over supremacy of the eastern regions of Afghanistan initially before it extended towards the Punjab region. They briefly recaptured the Kabul Valley from the Samanid successors of the Saffarids, until a general named Alptigin drove out the Samanid wali of Zabulistan and established the Ghaznavid dynasty at Ghazna. Under his general and successor Sabuktigin the Ghaznavids had begun to raid the provinces of Lamghan. and Multan. This precipated an alliance first between the then King Jayapala and the Amirs of Multan, and then in a second battle in alliance with Delhi, Ajmer, Kalinjar, and Kannauj which saw the Hindu Shahi lose all lands west of the Indus River. His successor Anandapala arrived at a tributary arrangement with Sebuktigin's successor, Mahmud of Ghazni, before he was defeated and exiled to Kashmir in the early 11th century.

Al-Idirisi (AD 1100-1165/66) testifies that until as late as the 12th century, a contract of investiture for every Shahi king was performed at Kabul and that here he was obliged to agree to certain ancient conditions which completed the contract. Kalhana remarked: "To this day, the appellation Shahi throws its lustre on a numberless host of kshatriyaabroad who trace their origin to that family".

The kings of Kashmir were related to the Shahis through marital and political alliance. Didda, a queen of Kashmir was a granddaughter of the Brahmin Shahi Bhima, who was married to Kshemagupta (r. 951–959). Bhima had visited Kashmir and built the temple Bhima Keshava.

Jayapal

The initial Hindu Shahi dynasty was the House of Kallar, but in AD 964 the rule was assumed from Bhima upon his death by Jayapala, son of Rai Asatapala[citation needed] .[90]Epithets from the Bari Kot inscriptions record his full title as "Parambhattaraka Maharajadhiraja Paramesvara Sri Jayapala deva" the first Emperor of the Janjua Shahi phase.[citation needed] He is celebrated as a hero for his struggles in defending his kingdom from the Turkic rulers of Ghazni.

Emperor Jayapala was challenged by the armies of Sultan Sabuktigin in Battle of Peshawar (1001) and later by his son Sultan Mahmud of Ghazni. According to the Minháj ad-Dīnin his chronicle Tabaqát-i Násiri, he bears a testament to the political and powerful stature of Maharaja Jayapala Shah, "Jayapála, who is the greatest of all the ráis (kings) of Hind..." Misra wrote on Jaypala: "(He) was perhaps the last Indian ruler to show such spirit of aggression, so sadly lacking in later Rajput kings."

Anandpal

Prince Anandapala who ascended his father's throne (in about March/April AD 1002) already proved an able warrior and general in leading many battles prior to his ascension. According to 'Adáb al-Harb' (pp. 307–10) in about AD 990, it is written, "the arrogant but ambitious Raja of Lahore Bharat, having put his father in confinement, marched on the country of Jayapála with the intention of conquering the districts of Nandana, Jailum (Jehlum) and Tákeshar" (in an attempt to take advantage of Jayapala's concentrated effort with defence against the armies of Ghazni). "Jayapala instructed Prince Anandapala to repel the opportunist Raja Bharat. Anandapala defeated Bharat and took him prisoner in the battle of Takeshar and marched on Lahore and captured the city and extended his father's kingdom yet further."

However, during his reign as emperor many losses were inflicted on his kingdom by the Ghaznavids. During the battle of Chach between Mahmud and Anandapala, it is stated that "a body of 30,000 Gakhars fought alongside as soldiers for the Shahi Emperor and incurred huge losses for the Ghaznavids". However, despite the heavy losses of the enemy, he lost the battle and suffered much financial and territorial loss. This was Anandapala's last stand against Sultan Mahmud of Ghazni. He eventually signed a treaty with the Ghaznavid Empire in AD 1010 and shortly a year later died a peaceful death. R.C Majumdar (D.V. Potdar Commemoration Volume, Poona 1950, p. 351) compared him ironically to his dynastic ancient famous ancestor "King Porus, who bravely opposed Alexander but later submitted and helped in subduing other Indian rulers". And Tahqíq Má li'l-Hind (p. 351) finally revered him in his legacy as "noble and courageous" .

Trilochanpal

Prince Trilochanpála, the son of Anandapala, ascended the imperial throne in about AD 1011. Inheriting a reduced kingdom, he immediately set about expanding his kingdom into the Sivalik Hills, the domain of the Rai of Sharwa. His kingdom now

extended from the River Indus to the upper Ganges valley. According to Al-Biruni, Tirlochanpála "was well inclined towards the Muslims (Ghaznavids)" and was honourable in his loyalty to his father's peace treaty to the Ghaznavids. He eventually rebelled against Sultan Mahmud and was later assassinated by some of his own mutinous troops in AD 1021–22, an assassination which was believed to have been instigated by the Rai of Sharwa who became his arch-enemy due to Tirlochanpala's expansion into the Siwalik ranges. He was romanticised in Punjabi folklore as the Last Punjabi ruler of Punjab.

Bheempal

Prince Bhímapála, son of Tirlochanpala, succeeded his father in AD 1021–22. He was referred to by Utbí as "Bhīm, the Fearless" due to his courage and valour. Considering his kingdom was at its lowest point, possibly only in control of Nandana, he admirably earned the title of "fearless" from his enemy's own chronicle writer. He is known to have commanded at the battle of Nandana personally and seriously wounded the commander of the Ghaznavid army Muhammad bin Ibrahim at-Tāī ('Utbi, vil.ii, p. 151.). He ruled only five years before meeting his death in AD 1026. He was final Shahi Emperor of the famed dynasty.

Kalhana, a 12th-century Kashmiri Brahmin, wrote of one campaign in the process that led to this collapse.

After the loss of empire

His sons Rudrapal, Diddapal, Kshempala, and Anangpala served as generals in Kashmir. They gained prominence in the Kashmiri royal court where they occupied influential positions and intermarried with the royal family. Hindu Kashmir had aided the Hindus Shahis against Mahmud of Ghazni. As a result after barely defeating the Hindu Shahis, Mahmud marched his men to Hindu Kashmir to take revenge for Kashmir's support of the Hindu Shahis. Al-Biruni was with Mahmud on these campaigns. They are mentioned frequently in Rajatarangini of Kalhana written during AD 1147–49. Rudrapal was mentioned by the writer Kalhana as a valiant general in the campaigns he led to quell resistance to the Kashmiri kings whom they served whilst in exile. His later descendants fell out of favour at the royal court and were exiled to the Siwalik Hills, retaining control of the Mandu fort. After a brief period, they rose again to take control of Mathura under Raja Dhrupet Dev in the 12th century before the campaigns of the Ghorid Empire.

The Janjua Rajputs of Punjab region claim to be the descendants of the Jayapala, though the claim is not proven.

Shahi rulers

Khingala of Kapisa (7th century)

Patoladeva alias Navasurendradiyta Nandin of Gilgit (6th–7th century)

Srideva alias Surendra Vikrmadiyta Nandin of Gilgit (6th–7th century)

Patoladeva alias Vajraditya Nandin of Gilgit (6th–7th century)

Kallar alias Lalliya (c. 890–895) of Kabul

Kamaluka (895–921)

Bhima (921–964), son of Kamaluka

Ishtthapala (?)

Jayapala (964–1001)

Anandapala (1001 - c. 1010), son of Jayapala

Trilochanapala (ruled c. 1010 - 1021-22; assassinated by mutinous troops)

Bhímapála (died in 1022–1026)

The Satavahana Empire

Names and etymology

According to one theory, "Satavahana" is a Prakrit form of the Sanskrit Sapta-Vahana ("driven by seven"; in Hindu mythology, the chariot of the sun god is drawn by seven horses). This would indicate that the Satavahanas originally claimed descent from the legendary solar dynasty, as was common in ancient India. Another theory connects their name to the earlier Satiyaputa dynasty. Yet another theory derives their name from the Munda words Sadam ("horse") and Harpan ("son"), imply "son of the performer of ahorse sacrifice".

A number of Satavahana rulers adopted the title Satakarni (IAST: Śātakarṇi). Shalivahana (IAST: Śālivāhana) is also considered a variation of Satavahana. According to Damodar D. Kosambi, Satavahana, Satakarni and Shalivahana seem to be Sanskritised versions of the Dravidian word Sātakaṇi.

The Satavahanas are identified with dynasties mentioned by the names Andhra (Matsya Purana), Andhrara-jatiya (Vayu andBrahmanda) and Andhra-bhrtya in the Puranic literature. Although these names do not appear in the coins or inscriptions of the Satavahanas, the names of several Satavahana rulers overlap with the names mentioned in the Puranic chronologies of the Andhra dynasty. The term "Andhra" may refer to ethnicity or territory (see Origin below). The term Andhra-bhrtya may be interpreted as "Andhra servants", implying that the ancestors of the Satavahanas served as subordinates of Mauryas or Sungas. However, that term can also be interpreted as "Servants of Andhras", thus implying that they were feudatories of another dynasty that ruled Andhra. Another possibility is that Andhra-bhrtya refers to a related dynasty that succeeded the Satavahanas.

Origin

The date and place of origin of the Satavahanas, as well as the meaning of the dynasty's name, are a matter of debate among the historians. Some of these debates have happened in the context of regionalism, with the present-day Andhra Pradesh, Maharashtra and Karnataka being variously claimed as the original homeland of the Satavahanas.

The Satavahana kings do not refer to themselves as "Andhra" in any of their coins or inscriptions. But their names match with the names of the Andhra dynasty rulers mentioned in the various Puranas. This has led a section of scholars to believe that the Satavahanas originated in the eastern Deccan (present-day Andhra Pradesh), which was the homeland of the ancient Andhra tribe. However, Andhra has been used as a both tribal and territorial name, so it cannot be said with certainty if the Satavahanas were called "Andhra" because of their ethnicity or because of their territory. The epigraphic, numismatic and literary evidences suggest that the Satavahanas originated in western Deccan (present-day Maharashtra). The earliest of the Satavahana inscriptions are found at Pandu Leni (Nashik) and Nanaghat in this region. Accordingly, historians conclude that the Satavahanas initially established their rule over Pratishthana, and then expanded their rule to the eastern Deccan. While some coins of the early Satavahanas have been found in eastern Deccan, this is not conclusive evidence, since coins can spread via trade. According toVidya Dehejia, the writers of the Puranas (which were written after the Satvahana period) mistook the Satavahana presence in eastern Deccan as evidence of their origin there, and called them "Andhra". C. Margabandhu also believes that the Satavahana kingdom was founded in western Deccan, but suggests that the kings were called "Andhra", because their ancestors were Mauryan subordinates who belonged to the Andhra tribe.

In the Nashik inscription of Gautami Balashri, her son Gautamiputra Satakarni is called "ekabamhana", which is interpreted by some as "unrivaled Brahmana", thus indicating aBrahmin origin. However, R. G. Bhandarkar interprets this word as "the only protector of the Brahmins".

History

Establishment

Simuka is mentioned as the first king in a list of royals in a Satavahana inscription at Nanaghat. According to Jain legends, he adopted Jainism; but, in the last years of his life, he became a tyrant, for which he was deposed and killed.

The Puranas state that the first Andhra king ruled for 23 years, and mention his name variously as Sishuka, Sindhuka, Chhismaka, Shipraka etc. These are believed to be corrupted spellings of Simuka, resulting from copying and re-copying of manuscripts.

Simuka cannot be dated with certainty based on available evidence. Based on the following theories, the beginning of the Satavahana rule is dated variously from 271 BCE to 30 BCE.

The Matsysa and Vayu Puranas mention that the first Andhra king overthrew the Kanva ruler Susharman (c. 40–30 BCE). Based on identification of Simuka with this king, some scholars believe that Simuka's reign started in 30 BCE. Scholars supporting this theory include D. C. Sircar, H. C. Raychaudhuri and others.

The Matsya Purana mentions that the Andhra dynasty ruled for 450 years. It is known that the Satavahana rule continued till the beginning of the early 3rd century. Therefore, the beginning of the Satavahana rule can be dated to 3rd century BCE. In addition, Indica by Megasthenes (350 – 290 BCE) mentions a powerful tribe named "Andarae", whose king maintained an army of 100,000 infantry, 2,000 cavalry and 1,000 elephants. If Andarae is identified with the Andhras, this can be considered additional evidence of Satavahana rule starting in 3rd century BCE. According to this theory, Simuka

was an immediate successor of the Mauryan emperor Ashoka (304–232 BCE). Its proponents argue that the Kanvas were Interregnal rulers who grabbed power from the Satavahanas. The last Kanva ruler Susharman was overthrown by a Satavahana successor of Simuka. Scholars supporting this theory include A. S. Altekar, K. P. Jayaswal, V. A. Smith and others. Sudhakar Chattopadhyaya also supports the Kanva interregnum theory, but argues that it was Simuka who overthrew the Kanva rule.

According to Charles Higham, the coin-based evidence suggests that Simuka's reign ended at a later date, sometime before 120 BCE.

Chronologies of the Satavahana kings (as "Andhra" dynasty) are mentioned in the following Puranas: Matsya, Vayu, Vishnu, Brahmanda, and Bhagavata. The various Puranas give different chronologies of the Andhra kings. Even among the different manuscripts of the same Purana, there are substantial differences between the number of kings stated, the number of kings actually named, the names of the kings and the length of their reigns. In some manuscripts, the number of kings is mentioned as 30, and their total reign is mentioned around 450 years. However, many of these actually name only 17-19 kings, and their total reign adds up to around 300. Sudhakar Chattopadhyaya explains these inconsistencies as follows: The original Satavahana rule started somewhere in the second half of the 3rd century BCE. From this point, around 30 Satvahana kings ruled for nearly 450 years until 220-225 CE. During this period there was a Kanva interregnum. According to Chattopadhyaya, the Brahmanda Purana states: "the four Kanvas will rule the earth for 45 years; then (it) will again go to the Andhras". This indicates that after overthrowing the Kanvas, the Satavahanas regained their power: from this point, around 17-19 kings ruled for nearly 300 years until 220-225 CE. He further argues that Simuka was the person who overthrew Kanvas; the compiler of the Puranas confused him with the founder of the dynasty.

Early expansion

Simuka was succeeded by his brother Kanha (also known as Krishna), who extended the kingdom up to Nashik in the west. His successor Satakarni I conquered westernMalwa, Anupa (Narmada valley) and Vidarbha, taking advantage of the turmoil caused by Greek invasions of northern India. He performed Vedic sacrifices includingAshvamedha and Rajasuya. Instead of the Buddhists, he patronized Brahmins and donated a substantial amount of wealth to them. The Hathigumpha inscription of the Kalingaking Kharavela mentions a king named "Satakani" or "Satakamini", who is identified with Satakarni. The inscription describes dispatching of an army and Kharavela's threat to a city. Since the inscription is only partially legible, different scholars interpret the events described in the inscription differently. According to R. D. Banerji and Sailendra Nath Sen Kharavela sent out an army against Satakarni. According to Bhagwal Lal, Satakarni wanted to avoid an invasion of his kingdom by Kharavela. So, he sent horses, elephants, chariots and men to Kharavela as a tribute. According to Sudhakar Chattopadhyaya, Kharavela's army diverted its course after failing to advanced against Satakarni. According to Alain Daniélou, Kharavela was friendly with Satakarni, and only crossed his kingdom without any clashes.

Satakarni's successor Satakarni II ruled for 56 years, during which he captured eastern Malwa from the Shungas. He was succeeded by Lambodara. The coins of Lambodara's son and successor Apilaka have been found in eastern Madhya Pradesh.

First Saka invasion

Little is known about Apilaka's successors, except cryptic references to one Kuntala Satakarni. The next well-known ruler of the dynasty was Hāla (20-24 CE), who composedGaha Sattasai in Maharashtri Prakrit. Around this time, the Sakas invaded the Satavahana kingdom. Like Hala, his four successors also ruled for very short periods (a total of 12 years), indicating troubled times for the Satavahanas. The Western Kshatrapa (Saka) king Nahapana defeated the Satavahanas, and ruled their territory for nearly half a century.

First revival

The Satavahana power was revived by Gautamiputra Satakarni, who is considered the greatest of the Satavahana rulers. Charles Higham dates his reign c. 103-127 CE. S. Nagaraju dates it 106-130 CE. Gautamiputra defeated Nahapana and recovered the territories lost to the Sakas. His kingdom extended from the present-day Rajasthan in the north to Krishna river in the south, and from Saurashtra in the west to Kalinga in the east. He assumed the titles Raja-Raja (King of Kings) and Maharaja (Great King), and was described as the Lord of Vindhya. The Nashik inscription of his mother Gautami Balashri, dated to the 20th year after his death, records his achievements.

During the last years of his reign, his administration was apparently handled by his mother, which could have been a result of an illness or military preoccupation. According to the Nasik inscription made by his mother Gautami Balasri, he is the one...

...who crushed down the pride and conceit of the Kshatriyas; who destroyed the Sakas (Western Satraps), Yavanas (Indo-Greeks) and Pahlavas (Indo-Parthians),... who rooted out the Khakharata family (the Kshaharata family of Nahapana); who restored the glory of the Satavahana race.

Gautamiputra was the first Satavahana ruler to issue the portrait-type coinage, in a style derived from the Western Satraps.

Gautamiputra was succeeded by his son Vasisthiputra Sri Pulamavi (or Pulumayi). According to Sailendra Nath Sen, Pulumavi ruled from 96-119 CE. According to Charles Higham, he ascended the throne around 110 CE. Pulumavi features in a large number of Satavahana inscriptions and his coins have been found distributed over a wide area. This indicates that he maintained Gautamiputra's territory, and ruled a prosperous kingdom. He is believed to have added the Bellary region to Satakarni's kingdom. His coins featuring ships with double mast have been found on the Coromandel Coast, indicating involvement in maritime trade and naval power. The old stupa at Amaravati was renovated during his reign.

Second Saka invasion

Pulumavi's successor was his brother Vashishtiputra Satakarni. According to S. N. Sen he ruled during 120-149 CE; according to Charles Higham, his regnal years spanned 138-145 CE. He entered into a marriage alliance with the Western Satraps, marrying the daughter ofRudradaman I.

The Junagadh inscription of Rudradaman I states that he defeated Satakarni, the lord of Dakshinapatha (Deccan), twice. It also states that he spared the life of the defeated ruler because of close relations:

"Rudradaman (...) who obtained good report because he, in spite of having twice in fair fight completely defeated Satakarni, the lord of Dakshinapatha, on account of the nearness of their connection did not destroy him."

— Junagadh rock inscription

According to S.N. Sen and Charles Higham, the Satakarni mentioned in this inscription was Vashishtiputra's successor Shivaskanda or Shiva Sri Pulumayi (150-156 CE). According to Upinder Singh, this Satakarni was Vashishtiputra's father Gautamiputra.

As a result of his victories, Rudradaman regained all the former territories previously held by Nahapana, except for the extreme south territories of Pune and Nasik. Satavahana dominions were limited to their original base in the Deccan and eastern central India around Amaravati.

Second revival

Sri Yajna Sātakarni, the last person belonging to the main Satavahana dynastic line, briefly revived the Satavahana rule. According to S. N. Sen, he ruled during 170-199 CE. Charles Higham dates the end of his reign to 181 CE. His coins feature images of ships, which suggest naval and marine trade success.[4] Wide distribution of his coins, and inscriptions at Nashik, Kanheri and Guntur indicate that his rule extended over both eastern and western parts of Deccan. He recovered much of the territory lost the Western Kshatrapas, and issued silver coinage, imitating them. During the last years of his reign, the Abhiras captured the northern parts of the kingdom, around Nashik region.

Decline

After Yajna Satakarni, the dynasty was soon extinguished following the rise of its feudatories, perhaps on account of a decline in central power. Yajna Sri was succeeded by Madhariputra Swami Isvarasena. The next king Vijaya ruled for 6 years. His son Vasishthiputra Sri Cahdha Satakarni ruled for 10 years. Pulumavi IV, the last king of the main line, ruled until c. 225 CE. During his reign, several Buddhist monuments were constructed at Nagarjunakonda and Amaravati. Madhya Pradesh was also part of his kingdom.

After the death of Pulumavi IV, the Satavahana empire fragmented into smaller regional entities:

After Pulumavi IV, the Satavahana empire fragmented into five smaller kingdoms:

Northern part, ruled by a collateral branch of the Satavahanas (which ended in early 4th century)

Western part around Nashik, ruled by the Abhiras

Eastern part (Krishna-Guntur region), ruled by the Andhra Ikshvakus

South-western parts (northern Karanataka), ruled by the Chutus of Banavasi

South-eastern part, ruled by the Pallavas

Administration

The Satavahanas followed the administration guidelines from the Shastras. Their government was less top-heavy than that of the Mauryans, and featured several levels of feudatories:

Rajan, the hereditary rulers

Rajas, petty princes who stuck coins in their own names

Maharathis, hereditary lords who could grant villages in their own names and maintained matrimonial relations with the ruling family

Mahabhojas

Mahasenapati (civil administrator under Pulumavi II; governor of a janapada under Pulumavi IV)

Mahatalavara ("great watchman")

The royal princes (kumaras) were appointed as viceroys of the provinces.

Economy

The Satavahanas controlled the eastern coast of India along the Bay of Bengal, and as a result, they dominated the growing Indian trade with the Roman Empire. The Periplus of the Erythraean Sea mentions two important Satavahana trade centres: Pratishthana and Tagara. Other important urban centres included Kondapur, Banavasi and Madhavpur. Nanaghat was the site of an important pass that linked the Satavahana capital Pratishthana to the sea. During 60-70 BCE, the consorts of Satakarni set up inscriptions detailing their donations here.

Coinage

The Satavahanas are the first native Indian rulers to issue their own coins with portraits of their rulers, starting with king Gautamiputra Satakarni, a practice derived from that of the Western Satraps he defeated, itself originating with the Indo-Greek kings to the northwest.

Satavahana coins give unique indications as to their chronology, language, and even facial features (curly hair, long ears and strong lips). They issued mainly lead and copper coins; their portrait-style silver coins were usually struck over coins of the Western Kshatrapa kings.

The coin legends of the Satavahanas, in all areas and all periods, used a Prakrit dialect without exception. Some reverse coin legends are inTamil, and Telugu language, which seems to have been in use in their heartland abutting the Godavari, Kotilingala, Karimnagar inTelangana, Krishna, Amaravati, Guntur in Andhra Pradesh.

Their coins also display various traditional symbols, such as elephants, lions, horses and chaityas (stupas), as well as the "Ujjain symbol", a cross with four circles at the end. The legendary Ujjayini Emperor Vikramditiya on whose name the Vikram Samvat is initiated

might be Satakarni II a Satavahana emperor as the Ujjayini symbol also appeared on the Satavahana coins.

Cultural achievements

Of the Sātavāhana kings, Hāla (r. 20–24 CE) is famous for compiling the collection of Maharashtri poems known as the Gaha Sattasai(Sanskrit: Gāthā Saptashatī), although from linguistic evidence it seems that the work now extant must have been re-edited in the succeeding century or two. The Lilavati describes his marriage with a Ceylonese Princess.

The Satavahanas influenced South-East Asia to a great extent, spreading Hindu culture, language and religion into that part of the world. Their coins had images of ships.

Art of Amaravati

The Sātavāhana rulers are also remarkable for their contributions to Buddhist art and architecture. They built great stupas in the Krishna River Valley, including the stupa at Amaravati in Andhra Pradesh. The stupas were decorated in marble slabs and sculpted with scenes from the life of the Buddha, portrayed in a characteristic slim and elegant style. The Satavahana empire colonized Southeast Asia and spreadIndian culture to those parts. The Amaravati style of sculpture spread to Southeast Asia at this time.

Art of Sanchi

The Satavahanas contributed greatly to the embellishment of the Buddhist stupa of Sanchi. The gateways and the balustrade were built after 70 BCE, and appear to have been commissioned by them. An inscription records the gift of one of the top architraves of the Southern Gateway by the artisans of the Satavahana Emperor Satakarni:

Gift of Ananda, the son of Vasithi, the foreman of the artisans of rajan Siri Satakarni

List of rulers

Because of uncertainty regarding the establishment date of the Satavahana kingdom, it is difficult to give absolute dates for the reigns of the Satavahana kings.[1]

Multiple Puranas contain chronology of Satavahana kings. However, there are inconsistencies among the various Puranas over the number of kings in the dynasty, the names of the kings, and the length of their rule. In addition, some of the kings listed in the Puranas are not attested via archaeological and numismatic evidence. Similarly, there are some kings known from coins and inscriptions, whose names are not found in the Puranic lists.

The reconstructions of the Satavahana kings by historians fall into two categories. According to the first one, 30 Satavahana kings ruled for around 450 years, starting from Simuka's rule immediately after the fall of the Mauryan empire. This view relies heavily on the Puranas, and is now largely discredited. According to the second (and more widely accepted) category of reconstructions, the Satavahana rule started in around first century BCE. The chronologies in this category contain a smaller number of kings, and combine Puranic records with archaeological, numismatic and textual evidence.

Himanshu Prabha Ray provides the following chronology, based on archaeological and numismatic evidence:

Simuka (before 100 BCE)

Kanha (100-70 BCE)

Satakarni I (70-60 BCE)

Satakarni II (50-25 BCE)

Kshatrapa interregnum with vassal Satavahana kings like Hāla

Gautamiputra Satakarni (86-110 CE)

Pulumavi (110-138 CE)

Vashishtiputra Satakarni (138-145 CE)

Shiva Shri Pulumavi (145-152 CE)

Shiva Skanda Satakarni (145-152 CE)

Yajna Shri Satakarni (152-181 CE)

Vijaya Satakarni

Chandra Shri

Pulumavi II

Abhira Isvasena

Madhariputra Sakasena

Haritputra Satakarni

Sudhakar Chattopadhyaya believes that Simuka was not the founder of the original dynasty, rather its reviver after the Kanva interregnum. According to him, some Purana compilers confused Simuka with the dynasty's founder, and introduced inaccurate names to fill the resulting gaps in the chronology. Accordingly, he dates Simuka's reign to c. 30-7 BCE, and Satakarni I to 1st century CE.

Puranic lists

The names of the Andhra kings (in IAST), as mentioned in the various Puranas, are given below. The names vary across different manuscripts of the same Puranas, and some names are missing in some of the manuscripts. The list given below for each Purana contains the most exhaustive version. In the Puranas, Krishna (IAST: Kṛṣṇa) is described as brother of the first king, who overthrew the Kanva king Susharman. All other kings are described as sons of their predecessors. The names and years in brackets indicate alternatives given in various manuscripts. The first king is also known as Shudraka or Suraka in the Kumarika Khanda of Skanda Purana (not present in the table below).

Historical identificatio	Bhagavata	Brahmanda	Reign (years	Matsya	Reign (Years	Vayu	Reign (years	Vishnu

n			)		)		)	
Simuka	Balihita (Balin)	Chhismaka	23	Śiśuka	23	Sindhuka	23	Śipraka (Śūdraka)
	Kṛṣṇa	Kṛṣṇa	18	Kṛṣṇa	18	Kṛṣṇa	18	Kṛṣṇa
	Śri Śatakarṇi	Śri-Śatakarṇi	10	Śri-Mallakarni or Simalakarni	18	Śri Śatakarṇi	-	Śri Śatakarṇi
	Paurṇamāsa	Pūrṇotsanga	18	Pūrṇotsanga	18	Pūrṇotsanga	18	Pūrṇotsanga
				Skandastambhi (Śrivasvani)	18			
Satakarni		Śatakarṇi	56	Śatakarṇi	56	Śatakarṇi	56	Śatakarṇi
	Lambodara	Lambodara	18	Lambodara	18	Lambodara	18	Lambodara
	Ivīlaka	Āpīlaka	12	Apilaka (Apitaka)	12	Āpīlaka	12	Ivīlaka
		Saudāsa	18					
	Meghasvāti			Meghasvāti (Sangha)	18			Meghasvāti
				Svāti (Śatakarṇi)	18			
	Aṭamāna	Ābhi	12			Puṭumābi (Padurāvi)	24	Paṭumat
						Nemi Kṛṣṇa	25	Arishṭakarman
		Skandasvāti	28	Skandasvāti	7			
				Mrigendra (Mrigendra-Svātikarṇa)	3			
				Kuntala-Svāti (Kuntala-Svātikarṇa)	8			
				Svātikarṇa	1			
				Pulomavi (Pulomavit)	36			
				Gorakśāśvaśri (Gaurakṛṣṇa)	25			

Hāla	Hāleya			Hāla	5	Hala	-	Hala
	Talaka	Bhavaka	5	Mandalaka (Mantalaka)	5	Pulaka	5	Pattalaka
	Purīṣbhoru	Pravillasena	12	Purindrasena	5	Purikasena	21	Pravillasena
	Sunandana	Sundara Śatakarṇi	1	Sundara Svātikarṇika	1	Śatakarṇi	1	Sundara Śatakarṇin
	Chakora	Chakora Śatakarṇin	6	Chakora-Svātikarṇa (Rajāda-Svāti)	6	Chakora Śatakarṇi	0.5	Chakora Śatakarṇin
		Mahendra Śatakarṇi	3					
	Vataka	Kuntala Śatakarṇi	8					
	Śivasvāti	Svātisena	1	Śivasvāti	28	Śivasvami	28	Śivasvāti
Gautamiputra Satakarni	Gotamiputra	Yantramati	34	Gautamīputra	21	Gautamīputra	21	Gotamīputra
Vasisthiputra Sri Pulamavi	Purīmān			Pulomat	28			Pulimat
Vashishtiputra Satakarni		Śatakarṇi	29					Śatakarṇin
	Madaśirā	Ābhi	4	Śivaśri	7			Śivaśri
Shivaskanda Satakarni	Śivaskanda	Śivaskanda Śatakarṇi	2	Śivaskanda-Śatakarṇi (Skandha-Svāti)	7 (9)			Śivaskanda
Yajna Sri Satakarni	Yajñaśri	Yajñaśri Śatakarṇi	19	Yajñaśri (Yajñaśri-Śatakarṇika)	9 (20)	Yajñaśri	29	Yajñaśri
						Śatakarṇi	60	
	Vijaya			Vijaya	6			Vijaya
	Chandravijaya	Daṇḍaśri Śatakarṇi	3	Vada-Śri (Chandra-Śri-Śatakarṇi)	10	Daṇḍaśri	3	Chandraśri
	Lomadhi	Puloma	7	Pulomat	7	Puloma	7	Pulomarchis

S. Nagaraju relies on the Puranic lists of 30 kings, and gives the following regnal dates:
Simuka (r. 228–205 BCE)
Krishna (r. 205–187 BCE)
Satakarni I (r. 187–177 BCE)
Purnotsanga (r. 177–159 BCE)
Skandhastambhi (r. 159–141 BCE)
Satakarni II (r. 141–85 BCE)
Lambodara (r. 85–67 BCE)
Apilaka (r. 67-55 BCE)
Meghasvati (r. 55-37 BCE)
Svati (r. 37-19 BCE)
Skandasvati (r. 19-12 BCE)
Mrigendra Satakarni (r. 12-9 BCE)
Kunatala Satakarni (r. 9-1 BCE)
Satakarni III (r. 1 BCE-1 CE)
Pulumavi I (r. 1-36 CE)
Gaura Krishna (r. 36-61 CE)
Hāla (r. 61–66 CE)
Mandalaka aka Puttalaka or Pulumavi II (r. 69-71 CE)
Purindrasena (r. 71-76 CE)
Sundara Satakarni (r. 76-77 CE)
Chakora Satakarni (r. 77-78 CE)
Shivasvati (r. 78-106 CE)
Gautamiputra Satkarni (r. 106-130 CE)
Vasisthiputra aka Pulumavi III (r. 130-158 CE)
Shiva Sri Satakarni (r. 158-165 CE)
Shivaskanda Satakarni (r. 165–172)
Sri Yajna Satakarni (r. 172–201 CE)
Vijaya Satakarni (r. 201-207 CE)
Chandra Sri Satakarni (r. 207-214 CE)
Pulumavi IV (r. 217-224 CE)
Dr. M. Rama Rao gives the following chronology, with gaps indicating uncertainty:[30]
Simukha (221-198 BCE)
Krishna (198-180 BCE)
Satakarni (180-170 BCE)

The Mahameghavahana dynasty

The Mahameghavahana dynasty (c. 250s BCE-400s CE) was an ancient ruling dynasty of Kalinga after the decline of the Mauryan Empire. The third ruler of the dynasty,Khārabēḷa, conquered much of India in a series of campaigns at the beginning of the common era. Kaḷingan military might was reinstated by Khārabēḷa: under Khārabēḷa's generalship, the Kaḷinga state had a formidable maritime reach with trade routes linking it to the then-Simhala (Sri Lanka), Burma (Myanmar), Siam (Thailand), Vietnam, Kamboja (Cambodia), Borneo, Bali, Samudra (Sumatra) and Jabadwipa (Java). Khārabēḷa led many successful campaigns against the states of

Magadha, Anga, the Satavahanas and theSouth Indian regions ruled by the Pandyan dynasty (modern Andhra Pradesh) and expanded Kaḷinga as far as the Ganges and the Kaveri.

The Kharavelan state had a formidable maritime empire with trading routes linking it to Sri Lanka, Burma, Thailand, Vietnam, Cambodia, Borneo, Bali, Sumatra and Java. Colonists from Kalinga settled in Sri Lanka, Burma, as well as the Maldives and Maritime Southeast Asia. Even today Indians are referred to as Keling in Malaysia because of this.

Although religiously tolerant, Khārabēḷa patronised Jainism, and was responsible for the propagation of Jainism in the Indian subcontinent but his importance is neglected in many accounts of Indian history. The main source of information about Khārabeḷa is his famous seventeen line rock-cut Hātigumphā inscription in the Udayagiri and Khandagiri Caves near Bhubaneswar, Odisha. According to the Hathigumpha inscription, he attacked Rajagriha in Magadha, thus inducing the Indo-Greek king Demetrius I of Bactria to retreat to Mathura.

The Bharshiva dynasty

Before the rise of the Guptas, Bharshiva Kings ruled most of the Indo-Gangetic plains. They perform ten Ashvamedha sacrifices on the banks of Ganga River. Samudraguptamention Naga rulers in his Allahabad pillar.

The Bharshiva dynasty (170–350) was the most powerful dynasty of the pre-Gupta period. The Nagas of Vidisha moved to Mathura and start annexing other kingdoms under Virasena. They made Padmavati Pawaya, Kantipuri and Vidisha their capitals and placed their family members as rulers of the states. The Nagas of Mathura were the head of the Bharshiva dynasty according to K.P. Jayaswal.

The Harsha Vardhana

Background

After the decline of the Gupta Empire in the mid-6th century CE, North India was split into several independent kingdoms. The northern and western regions of India passed into the hands of a dozen or more feudatory states.[citation needed]Prabhakarvardhana, the ruler of Thanesar, who belonged to the Pushyabhuti family, extended his control over neighbouring states.

Rajyashri, the sister of Rajyavardhana and Harsha, had married the Maukhari king, Grahavarman, whose capital was at Kannauj. Some time later, Grahavarman was killed by the ruler of the Malava kingdom, who also kidnapped Rajyashri. Rajyavardhana, who had succeeded his father as king at Thanesar, marched against the Malava king and defeated him. Around 606 CE, Rajyavardhana died, perhaps murdered at a meeting by Shashanka, ruler of the Gauda kingdom.[a] It was after the death of Rajyavardhana that Harsha succeeded to the throne.

History

The Empire of Harsha revived the past glory of the Gupta Empire in northern India.[3] The economy of northern India prospered and his capital at Kanauj became a great centre of trade. During his early career he possessed a force of 5,000 elephants, 20,000 cavalry and 50,000 infantry and with this he overran northern India. After the conquest of almost the entire of northern India, his military resources were so increased that he could field an army with 100,000 cavalry and 60,000 elephants. His long run of victories was only broken when he was defeated by the south Indian Emperor Pulakesi II of the Chalukya dynasty.

The administration of Harsha was similar to the Gupta Empire. He was just in his administration and punctilious in exercising his responsibilities. There was no forced labour and everyone was free to busy himself with his own affairs. Harsha built for the benefit of the poor throughout his Empire in both the towns and rural parts Rest-Houses which provided food, drink and medicine. Harsha was continually travelling up and down his wide dominions to see with his own eyes how the people were ruled in his Empire. The merchants travelled freely in his Empire and officials were paid regularly. The taxes were light and one-sixth of the land produce was charged as land revenue.

Today a mound 1 km long and 750 m wide known as "Harsh ka Tila" in Thanesar has ruins of structures built during the reign of Harsha. Amongst the archaeological finds from the mound include 'Painted Grey Ware' shreds in the pre-Kushana levels and 'Red Polished Ware' from post Gupta period.

Economy

Economy under the Empire of Harsha became increasingly more locally self-sufficient and feudal in nature as trade and commerce receded. This is reflected in the decline of trade centres, paucity of coins and near complete disappearance of trader and merchant guilds. Diminishing trade and commerce affected handicraft and other industries through want of demand; and affected agriculture although not directly. As a result of the lack of trade, the need to produce agricultural goods for sale externally vanished and people began producing amounts adequate enough to meet their own local needs. This marked the rise of self-sufficiency in the village economy and the growing dependence on agriculture.

Feudalism

When scholars mention Indian feudalism, the Empire of Harsha is usually taken as a typical state. Insight into Harsha's Empire is given by the discovery of a set of plates of copper, dating back to 632 CE, recording the gift of land by a military officer under Harsha's service to two Brahmins. Donations before Harsha's reign had come from either a royal prince or one of the provincial governors. In the copper plates, the first dignitary mentioned was a Mahasamanta, who ruled a territory adjoining Kanauj. But, the donor of the land was a military servant of Kanauj, and the execution of the grant came under Harsha's accounts. This leads to the conclusion that the Mahasamantas were in fact independent rulers with kingdoms near the core area of an overlord - here, King Harsha - and they paid tribute and provided military assistance to him. Though they may have obtained their territories through inheritance or conquest, there were some who served kings and got grants in the form of land to support their official duties; a process similar to distribution of feudal grants in Europe.

Contact with China

Harsha maintained diplomatic relations with China, which was under the rule of Emperor Taizong of the Tang dynasty. He also had good relations with the Tang rulers of China. Envoys from each country visited each other nation, most notably being Xuanzang who spent eight years in the Empire of Harsha.

Patron of Buddhism and literature

Harsha's father, Prabhakarvardhana, was from Thanesar, his brother followed Hinayana Buddhism while, according to Bana, Harsha himself was a Mahayana Buddhist. Harsha was a tolerant ruler and supported all Indic faiths – Buddhism, Vedism and Jainism. Early in his life, he seems to have been a follower of Sun Worship, becoming a patron of Shaivism and Buddhism later on.

His sister Rajyashri's conversion to Buddhism presumably had a positive effect on his support to the religion. His approach to religion is evident in his celebrated play Nagananda. The play's theme is based on the Jataka tale of the Bodhisattva Jimutavahana, but Harsha introduces the Goddess Gauri, Shiva's consort, as the saviour of Jimutavahana, a feature not found in the Jataka.

According to the Chinese Pilgrim Xuanzang, who visited his kingdom in 636, Harsha built numerous stupas in the name of Buddha. Xuanzang entered a grand competition organised by Harsha and won the theological debate. Harsha also became a patron of art and literature. He made numerous endowments to the University at Nalanda. Two seals of Harsha have been found in Nalanda in the course of the excavations. All these favours and donations of the great emperor were crowned by the construction of a lofty wall enclosing all the buildings of the university to defend the institution from any other possible attack. In 643 he held a Buddhist convocation at Kannauj which was reputedly attended by 20 kings and thousands of pilgrims.

In 641, following Xuanzang's visit, Harsha sent a mission to China which established the first diplomatic relations between China and India. The Chinese responded by sending an embassy consisting of Li Yibiao and Wang Xuance, who probably travelled through Tibet and whose journey is commemorated in inscriptions at Rajagriha – modern Rajgir, and Bodhgaya.

Harsha was a noted author on his own merit. He wrote three Sanskrit plays – Nagananda, Ratnavali and Priyadarsika. His reign is comparatively well documented, thanks to his court poet Bana in Harschacharita and by Xuanzang in Si-Yu-Ki. Bana composed an account of Harsha's rise to power in Harsha Charitha, the first historical poetic work in Sanskrit language. Xuanzang wrote a full description of his travels in India.

Harsha's participation in the cultured life of his court was more direct than that of most kings, and it is in his personal contribution to Sanskrit literature that he clearly overshadows them. To him are assigned three plays: Priyadarsika, Ratnavali, and the Nagananda. In addition, he is credited with two significant poems on Buddhist themes – the Ashtamahasricaityastotra (Praise to Eight Grand Caityas [Buddhist assembly halls]) and Suprabhatastotra (Laud to Morning) – and a tract on grammatical gender, the Linganusasanam. Harsha's authorship has been disputed on several occasions, but no decisive contrary arguments have been proposed.

The Priyadarsika appears to be the earliest of Harsha's plays. It and the Ratnavali deal with the amorous adventures of the king Vatsa, his queen Vasavadatta, and newcomers

to the royal harem. Both plays borrow from the earlier works of Bhasa and Kalidasa (especially the latter's Malavikagnimitra) and are based ultimately on material in the collection Brhatkatha. These plays lack thematic novelty but sustain interest through brisk dialogue. Both are frequently cited by later writers on dramatic theory and technique.

Harsha's Nagananda is his most important play. It is, in fact, a singular creation in Sanskrit drama. This five-act drama draws again on the Brhatkatha for the substance of its first three acts. In them, the hero, Jimutavahana, Prince of the Vidyadharas, meets and marries the Siddha princess Malayavati. To that point, the romance of the fairy prince and princess is quite conventional.

The mood of the play changes sharply in the fourth act. Jimutavahana discovers mounds of skeletons which evidence the daily sacrifice of serpents to the celestial bird Garuda. The hero resolves to offer his own body so that the serpents may be spared (a type of resolution very familiar in Buddhist literature). At the drama's conclusion it is the non-Buddhist goddess Gauri, however, who restores the bodhisattva, Jimutavahana, to life. In this attractive and moving drama, Harsha combined Buddhist and "Hindu" themes adroitly and uniquely, and through it one sees clearly his artistic and political genius.

Disintegration

Harsha died in 647, having ruled for 41 years. His empire died with him, disintegrating rapidly into small states. The succeeding period is very obscure and badly documented, but it marks the culmination of a process that had begun with the invasion of the Huns in the last years of the Gupta Empire.

In 648, Tang Taizong sent Wang Xuance to India in response to Harsha sending an ambassador to China. However once in India he discovered Harsha had died and the new king attacked Wang and his 30 mounted subordinates. This led to Wang Xuance escaping to Tibet and then mounting a joint of over 7,000 Nepalese mounted infantry and 1,200 Tibetan infantry and attack on the Indian state on June 16. The success of this attack Wang Xuance the prestigious title of the "Grand Master for the Closing Court." He also secured a reported Buddhist relic for China.

Neither Bana's nor Xuanzang's account gives any details of this period. Harsha had two sons named Vagyavardhana and Kalyanvardhana. They were killed by Arunashwa, a chief minister in Harsha's court. Harsha's wife Durgavati was taken prisoner.

The Gurjars

History

Origin

Historians and Anthropologists differ on issue of Gurjar origin.[8]General Cunningham identifies the Gujjars with Kushanas (Indo-Scythian people) of eastern tartars. He explains that 'Korso' and 'Kushan' written on the coins of Kushana King Kanishka is same as Gorsi and Kusane clans of Gurjars respectively. He further adds that Gujars came to India in the 3rd wave of migration around the mid third century CE. Ibbeston also supports Indo-Scythians descend of Gurjars. K.S.Singh also support the theory on the basis

that beside Jats, Gurjars are the only race of foreign origin in north west part of Indian subcontinent who are known to have been powerful during early centuries of Christian era.

James Compbell, too, agrees on the central Asian origin of Gurjars but link them with the Khazar people (Huna people) of Armenia and north Medra, who occupied prominent position in 6th century CE in Europe and Asia border Area.Bhandarkar also traces Gujars from Khazar people of white Huna stock. He explains that Khazar people left imprints of their name en-route their migration in form of Gurjistans. He locates three such Gurjistans, one in central Asia, the other two in Hazara region of undivided Punjab and near Ghazini. He further mentions two Gurjar kingdoms, one in western Rajasthan (9th century CE) and one in Jaipur territory (Al-beruni's Gujarat province) and believes that when Xuan Xang visited India, Gujars got Hinduised and assimilated into ranks of warriors.

V.A.Smith believes Gujars to be a branch of the white Hunas or allied groups. Grierson, too, points out that Gurjars migrated along with Hunas and other allied Groups in about 6th century CE.Dr.BhagwanLal is of the opinion that Gurjars and Hunas came to India in two different waves at different times, Huna between 200BCE and 500CE, while Gujjars established themselves in Indian subcontinent between 400 CE and 600 CE.

Thus, historians who supports foreign origin of Gujars believe that they entered Indian subcontinent from North-west Indian Frontier and established themselves in the Indus region, Hazara, undivided Punjab, Kashmir and Rajasthan.

Some scholars contradict the foreign origin of Gurjars. Vaidya points out that that Gurjars are purely Aryan, their nasal index being 66.9, based on the anthropological reports of Sir H. Risely. G.H.Ojha, K.M.Munshi and A.N. Bhardwaj also support Indo-Aryan origin of Gurjars. Baij Nath Puri, too, points out that Gurjars were the original Indo-Aryan people of Rajasthan, partly from the Mount Abu region.

It has been suggested that the Gurjars, along with people from northwestern India, merged with the Hephthalites and formed the Rajput clan.

Linguistic theories

According to scholars such as Baij Nath Puri, the Mount Abu (ancient Arbuda Mountain) region of present-day Rajasthan had been abode of the Gurjars during medieval period. The association of the Gurjars with the mountain is noticed in many inscriptions and epigraphs including Tilakamanjari of Dhanpala. These Gurjars migrated from the Arbuda mountain region and as early as in the 6th century A.D., they set up one or more principalities in Rajasthan and Gujarat. Whole or a larger part of Rajasthan and Gujarat had been long known as Gurjaratra (country ruled or protected by the Gurjars) or Gurjarabhumi (land of the Gurjars) for centuries prior to the Mughal period.

In Sanskrit texts, the ethnonym has sometimes been interpreted as "destroyer of the enemy": gur meaning "enemy" and ujjar meaning "destroyer").

In its survey of The People of India, the Anthropological Survey of India (AnSI) – a government-sponsored organisation – noted that

The Gurjars/Gujjars were no doubt a remarkable people spread from Kashmir to Gujarat and Maharashtra, who gave an identity to Gujarat, established kingdoms, entered the Rajput groups as the dominant lineage of Badgujar, and survive today as a pastoral and a tribal group with both Hindu and Muslim segments.

Irawati Karve, the Indologist and historian, believed that the Gurjars position in society and the caste system generally varied from one linguistic area of India to another. In Maharashtra, Karve thought that they were probably absorbed by the Rajputs and Marathas but retained some of their distinct identity. She based her theories on analysis of clan names and tradition, noting that while most Rajputs claim their origins to lie in the

mythological Chandravansh or Suryavansh dynasties, at least two of the communities in the region claimed instead to be descended from the Agnivansh.

A 2009 study conducted by Tribal Research and Cultural Foundation, under the supervision of Gurjar scholar Javaid Rahi, claimed that the word "Gojar" has a Central AsianTurkic origin, written in romanized Turkish as Göçer. The study claimed that according to the new research, the Gurjar race "remained one of the most vibrant identity of Central Asia in BC era and later ruled over many princely states in northern India for hundred of years."

Gurjar rulers

According to some historical accounts, the kingdom with capital at Bhinmal (or Srimal) was established by the Gurjars. A minor kingdom of Bharuch was the offshoot of this Kingdom. In 640–41 CE, the Chinese traveller Xuanzang (Hieun Tsang) described the kingdoms of Su-la-cha (identified with Saurashtra) and Kiu-che-lo (identified with Gurjara) in his writings. He stated that the Gurjaras ruled a rich and populous kingdom with capital at Bhinmal (Pilo-mo-lo). According to his expositor, M. Vivien de St. Martin, Su-la-cha represents the modern Gujarat, and Kiu-che-lo (Gurjjara), "the country of the Gujars", represents the region between Anhilwaraand the Indus River, i.e. Sindh region.

D. B. Bhandarkar also believed that Gurjara-Pratiharas were a clan of Gurjars.

Dasrath Sharma believed that although some sections of the Pratiharas (i.e., the one to which Mathanadeva belonged) were Gurjars by caste, the Pratiharas of Kannauj were not Gurjars and there was no Gurjara empire in Northern India in 8th and 9th century, though from the work of other historians it has been known that Kannauj was capital of Gurjara-Pratihara.

Chavdas, also known as Gurjar Chapas, was also one of the ruling clans of Gurjars.

British rule

In the 18th century, several Gurjar chieftains and small kings were in power. During the reign of Rohilla Nawab Najib-ul-Daula, Dargahi Singh, the Gurjar chieftain of Dadri possessed 133 villages at a fixed revenue of Rs.29,000. A fort at Parlchhatgarh inMeerut District, also known as Qila Parikishatgarh, is ascribed to a Gurjar Raja Nain Singh.

During the revolt of 1857, the Gujars of Chundrowli rose against the British, under the leadership of Damar Ram. The Gujars of Shunkuri village, numbering around three thousand, joined the rebel sepoys. According to British records, the Gurjars plundered gunpowder and ammunition from the British and their allies.[32] In Delhi, the MetcalfeHouse was sacked by the Gurjar villagers from whom the land was taken to erect the building. The British records claim that the Gujars carried out several robberies. Twenty Gujars were reported to have been beheaded by Rao Tula Ram for committing dacoities in July 1857. In September 1857, the British were able to enlist the support of many Gujars at Meerut. The colonial authors always used the code word "turbulent" for the castes who were generally hostile to British rule. They cited proverbs that appear to evaluate the caste in an unfavorable light. The British ethnographer, William Crooke, described that Gurjars seriously impeded the operations of the British Army before Delhi.[36]Reporter Meena Radhakrishna believe that the British classified the Gurjars along with others as "criminal tribes" because of their active participation in the revolt of 1857, and also because, they considered these tribes to be prone to criminality in the absence of legitimate means of livelihood.

Demographics

Gurjars are mainly concentrated in the Indo-Gangetic plains, the Himalayan region, and eastern parts of Afghanistan, although the Gurjar diaspora is found in other places as

well. A majority of Gurjars follow Hinduism and Islam, though small Gurjar communities following other religions exist.

India

In India, the Gurjars are found mainly in Rajasthan, Gujarat, Delhi, Haryana, Punjab, western Uttar Pradesh, Uttarakhand, northern Madhya Pradesh, Himachal Pradesh and theMaharashtra. The semi-nomadic Muslim Gujjar groups are found in the states of Jammu and Kashmir, Himachal Pradesh, and northwestern Uttar Pradesh. The name for the state of Gujarat has derived from "Gurjar".

Afghanistan

Small pockets of Gurjars are found in Afghanistan's northeastern region, particularly in and around the Nuristan province. According to theNaval Postgraduate School:

They roam with their herds, usually of cows, from the high Himalayas in India to the Hindu Kush of Afghanistan, although rarely are they seen in Afghanistan anymore, as Pakistan has hindered their passage through its territory and most preferred to stay within India. Some in India remain Hindu, although further west many are Muslim. Often they can be recognized by their avoidance of others, and their brightly hennaed beards. They are proud, fierce, and loyal. Their traditions are millennia old, and they have preserved them well in the face of great adversity. They are somewhat related to Nuristanis, although exactly how is a subject of conjecture. Similar to Nuristanis, some genetic root gives many Gujjars a distinctly European appearance, up to and including blond hair and blue eyes.

Culture

Today, the Gurjars are classified under the Other Backward Class (OBC) category in some states in India. However, in Jammu and Kashmir and parts of Himachal Pradesh, they are designated as a Scheduled Tribe under the Indian government's reservation program of positive discrimination. Hindu Gurjars today are assimilated into severalvarnas.

Gujari (or Gojri), classified under Rajasthani, has traditionally been the primary language of the Gurjars.

Haryana

The Gurjar community in Haryana has set elaborate guidelines for solemnizing marriages and holding other functions. In a mahapanchayat ("the great panchayat"), the Gurjar community decided that those who sought dowry would be excommunicated from the society.

Rajasthan

Songs pertaining to Krishna and Gurjars were documented in Gurjar-inhabited areas during the British Raj, the connection being thatNand Mihir, the foster-father of Krishna, is claimed to be a Gurjar. Radha, the consort of Krishna, was also a Gurjar.[46]

The Rajasthani Gurjars worship the Sun God, Devnarayan (an avatar of Vishnu), Shiva and Bhavani.

In Rajasthan, some members of the Gurjar community resorted to violent protests over the issue of reservation in 2006 and 2007. During the 2003 election to the Rajasthan assembly, the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) promised them ST status. However, the party failed to keep its promise after coming to the power, resulting in protests by the Gurjars in September 2006.

In May 2007, during violent protests over the reservation issue, the members of the Gurjar community clashed with the police twenty six people (including two policemen). Subsequently, the Gurjars protested violently, under various groups including the Gurjar Sangarsh Samiti, Gurjar Mahasabha and the Gurjar Action Committee. The protestors blocked roads and set fire to two police stations and some vehicles. Presently, the Gurjars in Rajasthan are classified as Other Backward Classes (OBCs).

On 5 June 2007 the Gurjar rioted over their desire to be added to the central list of tribes who are given preference in India government job selection as well as placement in the schools sponsored by the states of India. This preference is given under a system designed to help India's poor and disadvantaged citizens. However, other tribes on the list oppose this request as it would make it harder to obtain the few positions already set aside.

In December 2007, the Akhil Bhartiya Gurjar Mahasabha ("All-India Gurjar Council") stated that the community would boycott BJP, which is in power in Rajasthan.[58] But now in 2009 all Gurjars were supporting BJP so that they can be politically benefitted.Kirori Singh Bainslafought and lost at BJP ticket. In early 2000s (decade), the Gurjar community in Dang region of Rajasthan was also in news for the fallingsex ratio, unavailability of brides, and the resulting polyandry.

Madhya Pradesh

Presently, the Gurjars in Madhya Pradesh are classified as Other Backward Classes (OBCs).

Gujarat and Maharashtra

A few scholars believe that the Leva Kunbis (or Kambis) of Gujarat, a section of the Patidars, are possibly of Gurjar origin. However, several others state that the Patidars are Kurmis or Kunbis (Kanbis);[65][66] the National Commission for Backward Classes of India lists Leva Patidars (or Lewa Petidars) as a sub-caste of Kunbis/Kurmis. Dode Gujars and Dore Gujars are listed as separate caste in Maharashtra and Gurjars are included in OBC list in Gujarat but Patidars are not.

A community using Gurjar and Gurjarpadhye as their surnames resides in the coastal Konkan region of Maharashtra, inhabiting Pangre, Hasol, and other villages in Ratnagiri District. Originally bearing the name "Gurjarpadhye", many now prefer to call themselves Gurjar. The community may have been living in the Konkan region for at least three centuries, although this estimate may be inaccurate. The community is a sub-caste of the larger Karhade Brahmin group and speaks the Marathi language.

Himachal Pradesh

As of 2001, the Gurjars in parts of Himachal Pradesh were classified as a Scheduled Tribe.

Jammu and Kashmir

In the Indian state of Jammu and Kashmir (J&K), the concentration of Muslim Gurjars is observed in the districts of Rajouri and Poonch, followed by, Ananatnag, Udhampur andDoda districts. It is believed that Gurjars migrated to Jammu and Kashmir from Gujarat (via Rajasthan) and Hazara district of NWFP.[72] Another group called Bakarwal (or Bakerwal) belongs to the same ethnic stock as the Gurjars, and inter-marriages freely take place among them.

As of 2001, the Gurjars and the Bakarwals in Jammu and Kashmir were classified as Scheduled Tribes.[69] According to the 2001 Census of India, Gurjar is the most populous

scheduled tribe in J&K, having a population of 763,806. Around 99.3 per cent population of Gurjar and Bakarwal in J&K follow Islam.

The Gurjars of Jammu and Kashmir in 2007 demanded to treat this tribal community as a linguistic minority in the State and provide constitutional safeguards to their languageGojri. They also impressed upon the state government to take up the matter with Delhi for inclusion of Gojri in the list of official languages of India.

In 2002, some Gurjars and Bakarwals in J&K demanded a separate state (Gujaristan) for Gurjar and Bakarwal communities, under the banner of All India Gurjar Parishad.

Van Gujjars

The Van Gujjars ("forest Gujjars") are found in the Shivalik hills area of North India. The Van Gujjars follow Islam, and they have their own clans, similar to the Hindu gotras.[76]They are a pastoral semi-nomadic community, practising transhumance. In the winter season, the Van Gujjars migrate with their herds to the Shiwalik foothills, and in summer, they migrate to pastures high up in the mountains. The Van Gujjars have had conflicts with the forest authorities, who prohibited human and livestock populations inside a reserved park, and blamed the Van Gujjar community for poaching and timber smuggling.[76] After the creation of the Rajaji National Park (RNP), the Van Gujjars in Deharadun were asked to shift to a resettlement colony at Pathari near Hardwar. In 1992, when the Van Gujjars returned to the foothills, the RNP authorities tried to block them from the park area. The community fought back and finally the forest authorities had to relent. Later, a community forest management (CFM) programme aiming to involve the Van Gujjars in forest management was launched.[citation needed

The Vishnukundinas

Origin of Vishnukundins

Vishnukundina is a Sanskritized name for Vinukonda. Several attempts have been made by scholars to find out the origins of this dynasty, but no definite conclusions have been reached yet. The early rulers of the dynasty migrated to the west in search of employment and under the Vakatakas they might have attained feudatory status.

During the reign of Madhava Varma the Great, they became independent and conquered coastal Andhra from the Salankayanasand might have shifted their capital to a place in the Coastal Andhra.

Chronology

The Vishnukundin reign might be fixed between the end of the Salankayana and the rise of the Eastern Chalukyan power in 624. Some historians mention Vishnukundins reign was from 420 to 624, while some other historian say there reign was from early 5th century to the 7th century.

Indra Varma

According to the Indra Pala Nagara plates, Indra Varma is considered to be the first ruler of the Vishnukundin dynasty. He might have carved out a small principality for himself probably as a subordinate of the Vakatakas sometime about the last quarter of the 4th century. He adorned the title of 'priyaputra'. According to historian P.V. Parabrama shastry,

Indraverma's capital wasIndrapalapuram in Nalgonda district of Telangana State. Indraverma laid the Ramathirtha shasanam. Not much information is known about the next two kings, Madhav Varma I and his son Govinda Varma. They might have kept intact the inheritance or extended their sway to some extent..

Madhav Varma II

By the middle of the 5th century, the dynasty began its imperial expansion under its most efficient ruler Madhav Varma II who ruled for nearly half a century. The reign of Madhav Varma (c. 440 – c. 460) was a golden age in the history of the Vishnukundins. It was during this period, the small Vishnukundin dynasty rose to imperial heights. A princess of the then powerful ruling family of theDeccan the Vakatakas was given in marriage to Madhav Varma's son, Vikramendra Varma.

This alliance gave them great power and made it easy for them to extend their influence to the east coast and vanquishing the petty chieftains lingering on in that area. Madhav Varma II led his arms against Ananda Gotrikas who were ruling over Guntur, Tenali andOngole, probably enjoying subordinate position under the Pallavas of Kanchipuram.

After occupying these areas from the Ananda Gotrikas, Madhav Varma II made Amarapura (modern Amaravati) his capital. Keeping in view the constant threat from the Pallavas, he created an out-post to check their activities and appointed his son, Deva Varma and after his death the grandson Madhav Varma III as its Viceroy.

Madhav Varma II next turned his attention against the Vengi kingdom which was under the Salankayanas. The Vengi region was annexed. The Godavari tract became part of the Vishnukundin territory. After these conquests the capital might have been shifted toBezwada (Vijayawada), a more central location than Amarapura. These extensive conquests entitle him to the title of the lord ofDakshinapatha (southern country). After these various conquests Madhav Varma performed many Asvamedha, Rajasuya and otherVedic sacrifices.

Successors of Madhav Varma II

The fortunes of the Vishnukundins were at a low point during the reign of next ruler Vikramendra Varma I (508–528). The next two and half decades also experienced the constant strife and dynastic struggles during the reign of Indra Bhattaraka Varma (528–555). Though Indra Bhattaraka could not withstand the hostile Kalinga subordinate, Indra Varma and lost his life in battle. The Vishnukundins lost their Kalinga possessions north of the Godavari.

Vikramendra Varma II

With the accession of Vikramendra Varma II (555–569), the fortunes of the Vishnukundin family were restored. To have an immediate access to the Kalinga region, he shifted his capital from Bezwada to Lenduluru (modem Denduluru in the West Godavari district). He repulsed the attack of the Pallava ruler Simhavarman. He was successful enough to restore the fortunes of the Vishnukundins in the Kalinga region. His son Govinda Varma II enjoyed a comparatively short period of rule (569–573).

Govinda Varma II

The Vishnukundin empire set about again to imperial expansion and cultural prosperity under its able ruler Janssraya Madhav Varma IV (573-621). This prudent king spent his early years of rule in consolidating his position in Vengi. The later part of his reign is marked by wars and annexations. In his 37th regnal year, he suppressed the revolt of his

subordinate chief the Durjaya Prithvi Maharaja in Guddadivishya (modern Ramachandrapuram in the East Godavari district).

Madhav Varma IV had to face the Chalukyan onslaught in his last years of rule. By about 616, Pulakeshin II and his brother Kubja Vishnuvardhana conquered Vengi from the Vishnukundins and the Pithapuram area from their subordinate Durjayas. In 621 in his 48th regnal year, Madhava crossed the Godavari probably to oust the Chalukyas from his territories. However he lost his life on the battlefield. His son Manchana Bhattaraka also might have been expelled by the Chalukyas. Thus the Vishnukundin rule was brought to a close by 624.

Vishnukundin country

They had three important cities, near Eluru, Amaravati and Puranisangam.

Administration

For administrative convenience, the empire was divided into a number of Rashtras and Vishayas. Inscriptions refer to Palki Rashtra, Karma rashtra, Guddadi Vishaya, etc.

Madhav Varma III appointed members of the royal family as Viceroys for various areas of the kingdom.

The king was the highest court of appeal in the administrator of justice. The Vishnukundin rulers established various kinds of punishments for various crimes. They were known for their impartial judgment and high sense of justice.

Army

Their army consisted of traditional fourfold divisions:

Elephants

Chariots

Cavalry

Infantry

The Hastikosa was the officer-in charge of elephant forces and the Virakosa was the officer-in-charge of land forces. These officers issued even grants on behalf of the kings.

Taxes

There may have been well-organised administrative machinery for collection of land revenue.[citation needed] Agrahara villages enjoyed tax exemptions. Sixteen types of coins of the Vishnukundin rulers have been found by archaeologists.

Religion

All the records of the Vishnukundins and the kings prior to the Madhav Varma II seem to be patrons of Hinduism.

From the time of accession of Madhav Varma II, an aggressive self-assertion of the Vedic Brahmanism occurred. Elaborate Vedic ceremonies like Rajasuya, Purushamedha,Sarvamedha and Aswamedha were undertaken. The celebration of all these sacrifices represents the militant spirit of the brahmanical revival. Some of the rulers referred to themselves as 'Parama Mahesvaras'. The inscriptions refer to their family deity Sri Parvata Swami.

The names of rulers like Madhav Varma and Govinda Varma show their Vaishnavite leanings. Thus both the Hindu sects of Saivism and Vaishnavism might have received equal patronage from them.

Literature

The Vishnukundins were also great patrons of learning. They established colleges for vedic learning. Learned Brahmins were encouraged by gifts of lands and colleges were established for the propagation of Vedic studies. Indra Bhattaraka established many schools for imparting education on Vedic literature. Performance of several elaborate Vedic ceremonies by Madhav Varma is evidence of the faith of the rulers in Brahmanism and popularity of Vedic learning with the people during this period.

Some of the Vishnukundin kings were credited with authorship of several books. Vikramendra Varma I was described as Mahakavi – great poet in a record. Further, an incomplete work on Sanskrit poetics called 'Janasraya Chando Vichiti', was attributed to Madhav Varma IV who bore the title of 'Janasraya'. Sanskrit enjoyed royal patronage.Telugu had not yet grown to the stature of receiving royal patronage.

Art and Architecture

Being great devotees of Siva, the Vishnukundins seem to have been responsible for construction of a number of cave temples dedicated to Siva. The cave structures at Bezwada (Vijayawada), Mogalrajapuram, Undavalli caves and Bhairavakonda were dated to this period. Though some of these cave temples were attributed to the Pallava Mahendra Varman I, the emblems found on the caves and the areas being under the rule of the Vishnukundins during this period clearly show that these were contributions of the Vishnukundins. The big four-storeyed cave at Undavalli and the 8 cave temples in Bhairavakonda in Nellore district show however clear resemblances with the architecture of Pallava Mahendra Varman's period.

The Maitrakas

Name

The name Maitraka is said to derive from Mithra, the Sun or Sun deity, also a synonym of Mihira. The Maitrakas, the worshippers of Mitra/Mithra i.e. Sun-worshippers identified with the Mihiras. There is evidence that the Maitraka rulers had switched to Shaivism, but when Chinese traveller Hieun-Tsang visited Vallabhi during second quarter of 7th century, he found its ruler to be aBuddhist follower. When I-Tsing, another Chinese traveller, visited Vallabhi in the last quarter of 7th century, he found Vallabhi as a great center of learning including Buddhism. Gunamati and Sthiramati were two famous Buddhist scholars of Vallabhi at the middle of 7th century. Vallabhi was famous for its catholicity and the students from all over the country, including the Brahmana boys, visited it to have higher education in secular and religious subjects. We are told that the graduates of Valabhi were given higher executive posts.

The Maitrakas of Vallabhi

Bhatarka (c. 470-c. 492)

Dharasena I (c. 493-c. 499)

Dronasinha (also known as Maharaja) (c. 500-c. 520)

Dhruvasena I (c. 520-c. 550)

Dharapatta (c. 550-c. 556)

Guhasena (c. 556-c. 570)

Dharasena II (c. 570-c. 595)

Siladitya I (also known as Dharmaditya) (c. 595-c. 615)

Kharagraha I (c. 615-c. 626)

Dharasena III (c. 626-c. 640)

Dhruvasena II (also known as Baladitya) (c. 640-c. 644)

Chkravarti king Dharasena IV (also known as Param Bhatarka, Maharajadhiraja, Parameshwara) (c. 644-c. 651)

Dhruvasena III (c. 651-c. 656)

Kharagraha II (c. 656-c. 662)

Siladitya II (c. 662- ?)

Siladitya III

Siladitya IV

Siladitya V

Siladitya VI

Siladitya VII (c. 766-c. 776).

The Rajputs

History

Origins

The origin of the Rajputs is the subject of debate. Writers such as M. S. Naravane and V. P. Malik believe that the term was not used to designate a

particular tribe or social group earlier than the 6th century AD, as there is no mention of the term in the historical record as pertaining to a social group prior to that time. One theory espouses that with the collapse of the Gupta empire from the late 6th century, the invading Hephthalites (White Huns) were probably integrated within Indian society. Leaders and nobles from among the invaders were assimilated into the Kshatriya ritual rank in the Hindu varna system, while others who followed and supported them – such as the Ahirs,Gurjars and Jats – were ranked as cultivators. At the same time, some indigenous tribes were ranked as Rajput, examples of which are the Bhatis, Bundelas, Chandelas and Rathors. Encyclopaedia Britannica notes that Rajputs "... actually vary greatly in status, from princely lineages, such as the Guhilot and Kachwaha, to simple cultivators." Aydogdy Kurbanov says that the assimilation was specifically between the Hephthalites, Gurjars, and people from northwestern India, forming the Rajput community. Pradeep Barua also believes that Rajputs have foreign origins, he says their practice of asserting Kshatriya status was followed by other Indian groups thereby establishing themselves as Rajputs. According to most authorities, successful claims to Rajput status frequently were made by groups that achieved secular power; probably that is how the invaders from Central Asia as well as patrician lines of indigenous tribal peoples were absorbed.

Rajput kingdoms

From the beginning of the 7th century, Rajput dynasties dominated North India, including areas now in Pakistan, and the many petty Rajput kingdoms became the primary obstacle to the complete Muslim conquest of Hindu India. In the 1020s, the Rajput rulers ofGwalior and Kalinjar raised a successful defence against the attacks of Mahmud of Ghazni although both the cities paid tribute to Mahmud. Thereafter, in the late 12th century Muhammad of Ghor attempted to invade Gujarat but was defeated by the Solanki dynastyof Rajputs. The Rajput kingdoms were disparate: loyalty to a clan was more important than allegiance to the wider Rajput social grouping, meaning that one clan would fight another. This and the internecine jostling for position that took place when a clan leader (raja) died meant that Rajput politics were fluid and prevented the formation of a coherent Rajput empire. Even after the Muslim conquest of the regions of Punjab and the Ganges River valley, the Rajputs maintained their independence in Rajasthan and the forests of central India. Later, Sultan Alauddin Khilji of the Khilji dynasty took the two Rajput forts of Chittor and Ranthambhor in eastern Rajasthan in the 14th century but could not hold them for long. Subsequently, the Rajput Mewar Kingdom under Rana Sanga came to be a contender for supremacy in India but was defeated by the Mughal invader Babur at Battle of Khanwa in 1527.

From as early as the 16th century, Rajput soldiers from the eastern regions of Bihar and Awadh, who were referred to as Purbiyas, were recruited as mercenaries for Rajputs in the west, particularly in the Malwa region.

After the mid-16th century, many Rajput rulers formed close relationships with the Mughal emperors and served them in different capacities. Some Rajput nobles married their daughters to Mughal emperors for political motives. For example, Akbaraccomplished 40 marriages for him, his sons and grandsons, out of which 17 were Rajput-Mughal alliances. The ruling Sisodia Rajput family of Mewar made it a point of honour not to engage in such relationships and thus claimed to stand apart from those Rajput clans who did so. The Rana of Mewar Pratap Singh had successfully resisted the efforts of Akbar to Subdue the Mewar kingdom.

Akbar's diplomatic policy for Rajputs had strengthened the foundations of Mughal empire but this policy was damaged due to the intolerant rules incorporated by his great-grandson Aurangzeb,[20] A prominent example of these rules includes the re-imposition ofJaziya, which had been abolished by Akbar. Rajputs had therefore revolted against Mughal empire. Aurangzeb's conflicts with Rajputs which commenced in the early 1680s proved him adverse, and henceforth became a contributing factor towards the downfall of Mughal empire.

In the 18th century, the Rajputs came under influence of the Maratha Empire.

By the late 18th century, the Rajput rulers begin negotiations with the East India Company and by 1818 all the Rajput states had formed an alliance with the company.

British colonial period

Mayo College was established by the British government in 1875 atAjmer, Rajputana to educate Rajput princes and other nobles.

The Derawar Fort built by a Hindudynasty of Bhatti Rajputs,[24] in modern-day Bahawalpur, Pakistan.

According to historian Virbhadra Singhji, Rajputs ruled in the "overwhelming" majority of the princely states of Rajasthan and Saurashtra in the British Raj era. These regions also contained the largest concentration of princely states in India, including over 200 in Saurashtra alone.

James Tod, a British colonial official, was impressed by the military qualities of the Rajputs but is today considered to have been unusually enamoured of them. Although the group venerate him to this day, he is viewed by many historians since the late nineteenth-century as being a not particularly reliable commentator. Jason Freitag, his only significant biographer, has said that Tod is "manifestly biased".

The Rajput practices of female infanticide and sati (widow immolation) were other matters of concern to the British. It was believed that the Rajputs were the primary adherents to these practices, which the British Raj considered savage and which provided the initial impetus for British ethnographic studies of the subcontinent that eventually manifested itself as a much wider exercise in social engineering.

In reference to the role of the Rajput soldiers serving under the British banner, Captain A. H. Bingley wrote:

Rajputs have served in our ranks from Plassey to the present day (1899). They have taken part in almost every campaign undertaken by the Indian armies. Under Forde they defeated the French at Condore. Under Monro at Buxar they routed the forces of the Nawab of Oudh. Under Lake they took part in the brilliant series of victories which destroyed the power of the Marathas.

Independent India

On India's independence in 1947, the princely states, including those of the Rajput, were given three choices: join either India or Pakistan, or remain independent. Rajput rulers of the 22 princely states of Rajputana acceded to newly independent India, amalgamated into the new state of Rajasthan in 1949–1950. Initially the maharajas were granted funding from the Privy purse in exchange for their acquiescence, but a series of land reforms over the following decades weakened their power, and their privy purse was cut off duringIndira Gandhi's administration under the 1971 Constitution 26th Amendment Act. The estates, treasures, and practices of the old Rajput rulers now form a key part of Rajasthan's tourist trade and cultural memory.

In 1951, the Rajput Rana dynasty of Nepal came to an end, having been the power behind the throne of the Shah dynasty figureheads since 1846.

The Rajput Dogra dynasty of Kashmir and Jammu also came to an end in 1947. though title was retained until monarchy was abolished in 1971 by the 26th amendment to the Constitution of India.

The Rajputs are today considered to be a Forward Caste in India's system of positive discrimination. This means that they receive no special treatment

by government bodies because forward castes are considered to be inherently privileged groups.

Subdivisions

There are several major subdivisions of Rajputs, known as vansh or vamsha, the step below the super-division jāti These vansh delineate claimed descent from various sources, and the Rajput are generally considered to be divided into three primary vansh:[38] Suryavanshi denotes descent from the solar deity Surya, Chandravanshi from the lunar deity Chandra, and Agnivanshi from the fire deity Agni. The four prominent clans in the post-Gupta period - Chauhans, Paramaras, Pratiharas and Solankis – all claimed their mythological origin to have been from a sacrificial fire at Mount Abu.

Lesser-noted vansh include Udayvanshi, Rajvanshi, and Rishivanshi. The histories of the various vanshs were later recorded in documents known as vamshāavalīis; André Wink counts these among the "status-legitimizing texts".

Beneath the vansh division are smaller and smaller subdivisions: kul, shakh ("branch"), khamp or khanp ("twig"), and nak ("twig tip").Marriages within a kul are generally disallowed (with some flexibility for kul-mates of different gotra lineages). The kul serves as the primary identity for many of the Rajput clans, and each kul is protected by a family goddess, the kuldevi. Lindsey Harlan notes that in some cases, skakhs have become powerful enough to be functionally kuls in their own right.

Culture and ethos

The Rajputs were a Martial Race in the period of the British Raj. This was a designation created by administrators that classified each ethnic group as either "martial" or "non-martial": a "martial race" was typically considered brave and well built for fighting,[46] whilst the remainder were those whom the British believed to be unfit for battle because of their sedentary lifestyles.

Rajput lifestyle

The double-edged scimitar known as the khanda was a popular weapon among the Rajputs of that era. On special occasions, a primary chief would break up a meeting of his vassal chiefs with khanda nariyal, the distribution of daggers and coconuts. Another affirmation of the Rajput's reverence for his sword was the Karga Shapna ("adoration of the sword") ritual, performed during the annual Navaratrifestival, after which a Rajput is considered "free to indulge his passion for rapine and revenge".

Rajputs generally have adopted the custom of purdah (seclusion of women).

By the late 19th century, there was a shift of focus among Rajputs from politics to a concern with kinship. Many Rajputs of Rajasthan are nostalgic about their past and keenly conscious of their genealogy, emphasising a Rajput ethos that is martial in spirit, with a fierce pride in lineage and tradition.

Rajput diet

The Anthropological Survey of India identified that in Gujarat, Rajputs are 'by and large' non-vegetarians, regular drinkers of alcohol, and also smoke and chew betel leaves. These traits are also followed by Rajputs of Maharashtra with mutton, chicken and fish being consumed; and also pork (which historically dates back to the predilection for Rajput warriors and princes to hone their fighting skills by hunting and eating wild-pig).

Katoch Dynasty

The Katoch were a Hindu clan who rose to power across Trigarta Kingdom a region stretching from the Multan to Pinjore in North India around Satyuga (7000 BC) and ruled in Hindustan until 1948. The Katoch Dynasty having four sub clans (i)Jaswal (ii)Guleria (iii)Sibaia & (iv)Dadwal.

Katoch is a Rajput clan of the Chandravanshi lineage. Their traditional areas of residence was Trigarta Kingdom, Jalandhar, Multan.

Recent research suggests that the Katoch dynasty may be the oldest royal dynasty in the world. They first find mention in the Hindu epics Ramayana and Mahabharata, then in the era of Alexander the Great, during which time an area near to Kangra may have been ruled by a Katoch king. In the Mahabharata they are referred to as the Trigarta who fought Arjuna under the leadership of Susarma Chandra, who was an ally of Duryodhana and sworn enemy of the Virata and Matsya kingdoms.

In past centuries, they ruled several princely states in the region. The originator of the clan was Rajanaka Bhumi Chand. Their rulers include Sansar Chand II and Rajanaka Bhumi Chand, the latter being the founder of the Jwalamukhi temple in Himachal Pradesh.

The Chauhans

Myth of origin

Rajput bardic accounts, which are based on mythology, describe the Chauhans as one of the four Agnikula Rajput clans[a] who claim to have originated from a sacrificial fire-pit (agnikunda) at Mount Abu. These claims of supernatural origin are clearly improbable and unacceptable to the modern mind. However, these have numerous variants and give rise to the Chauhans claiming to be a clan of theAgnivanshi dynasty.

Ethnographic status

Denzil Ibbetson, an administrator of the British Raj, classified the Chauhans as a tribe rather than as a caste. He believed, like Nesfield, that the society of the Northwest Frontier Provinces and Punjab in British India did not permit the rigid imposition of an administratively-defined caste construct as his colleague, H. H. Risley preferred. According to Ibbetson, society in Punjab was less governed byBrahmanical ideas of caste, based on varna, and instead was more open and fluid. Tribes, which he considered to be kin-based groups that dominated small areas, were the dominant feature of rural life. Caste designators, such as Jat and Rajput, were status-based titles to which any tribe that rose to social prominence could lay a claim, and which could be dismissed by their peers if they declined. Susan Bayly, a modern anthropologist, considers him to have had "a high degree of accuracy in his observations of Punjab society n his writings we really do see the beginnings of modern, regionally based Indian anthropology."

History

The Chauhans were historically a powerful group in the region now known as Rajasthan. For around 400 years from the 7th century AD their strength in Sambhar was a threat to the power-base of the Guhilots in the south-west of the area, as also was the strength of their fellow Agnivanshi clans. They suffered a set-back in 1192 when their leader, Prithviraj Chauhan, was defeated at the Battle of Tarain but this did not signify their demise. The kingdom broke into the Satyapura and Devda branches after the invasion ofQutbu l-Din Aibak in 1197.

The earliest Chauhan inscription are the Hansot Plates.

Notable people

Vasudeva started the dynasty in the 6th century, with the capital located in Ahichatra. The dynasty assumed the title of Maharaja during the reign of Vakpatiraja (917-944 AD). His son Simharaja declared independence from the Pratiharas. His son Vigraharaja (971-998 AD) conquered Gujarat.

Aryaraja led Chauhans who captured the commander of the Paramara forces in his "aggressive imperial policy", and founded the city of Ajayameru (Ajmer). His son Anroraja (1135-1150) defeated a Muslim invasion by Bahram Shah.

Vigraharaja IV (1150-1164 AD) extended the kingdom by defeating the Tomaras while defending incursions by the Muslims of Ghazni under Bahram

Shah and Khusrau Shah. He also composed Harikeli Nataka and built the Sarasvati Mandir temple, Adhai-din-ka-Jhonpra, in Ajmer.

Prithviraj (1178-1192 AD)) fought the Chandellas, Chalukyas and the Gahadavalas, besides Muhammad Ghori in the Battles of Tarain.

Gugga, a warrior, minor king and Nāga demigod

Hammir Dev Chauhan, ruler of Ranathambore

The Kachwaha

Origins

The modern-day Kushwaha community, of which the Kachwaha form a part, generally claim descent from Kusha, a son of the mythological avatar of Vishnu, Rama. This enables their claim to be of the Suryavansh dynasty but it is a myth of origin developed in the twentieth century. Prior to that time, the various branches that form the Kushwah community - the Kachwahas, Kachhis, Koeris, andMuraos - favoured a connection with Shiva and Shakta.

Ganga Prasad Gupta claimed in the 1920s that Kushwah families worshiped Hanuman - described by Pinch as "the embodiment of true devotion to Ram and Sita" - during Kartika, a month in the Hindu lunar calendar.

Rulers

A Kachwaha family ruled at Amber, which later became known as the Jaipur State, and this branch is sometimes referred to as being Rajput. They were chiefs at Amber and in 1561 sought support from Akbar, the Mughal emperor. The then chief, Bharamail Kachwaha, was formally recognised as a Raja and was invested into the Mughal nobility in return for him giving his daughter to Akbar's harem. A governor was appointed to oversee Bharamail's territory and a tribute arrangement saw Bharamail given a salaried rank, paid for from a share of the area's revenue. The Rajput practice of giving daughters to the Mughal emperors in return for recognition as nobility and the honour of fighting on behalf of the Empire originated in this arrangement and thus the Mughals were often able to assert their dominance over Rajput chiefs in north India without needing to physically intimidate them, especially after their rout of rulers in Gondwana.

Classification

The Kushwaha were traditionally a peasant community and considered to be of the stigmatised Shudra varna. Pinch describes them as "skilled agriculturalists". The traditional perception of Shudra status was increasingly challenged during the later decades of British Raj rule, although various castes had made claims of a higher status well before the British administration instituted its first census. Pinch describes that "The concern with personal dignity, community identity, and caste status reached a peak among Kurmi, Yadav, and Kushvaha peasants in the first four decades of the twentieth century."

From around 1910, the Kachhis and the Koeris, both of whom for much of the preceding century had close links with the British as a consequence of their favoured role in the cultivation of the opium poppy, began to identify themselves as Kushwaha Kshatriya. An organisation claiming to represent those two groups and the Muraos petitioned for official recognition as being of the Kshatriya varna in 1928. This action by the All India Kushwaha Kshatriya Mahasabha (AIKKM) reflected the general trend for social upliftment by communities that had traditionally been classified as being Shudra. The process, which M. N. Srinivas called sanskritisation, was a feature of late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century caste politics.

The position of the AIKKM was based on the concept of Vaishnavism, which promoted the worship and claims of descent from Rama or Krishna as a means to assume the trappings of Kshatriya symbolism and thus permit the wearing of the sacred thread even though the physical labour inherent in their cultivator occupations intrinsically defined them as Shudra. The movement caused them to abandon their claims to be descended from Shiva in favour of the alternate myth that claimed descent from Rama. In 1921, Ganga Prasad Gupta, a proponent of Kushwaha reform, had published a book offering a proof of the Kshatriya status of the Koeri, Kachhi, Murao and Kachwaha. His reconstructed history argued that the Kushwaha were Hindu descendants of Kush and that in the twelfth century they had served Raja Jaichand in a military capacity during the period of Muslim consolidation of the Delhi Sultanate. Subsequent persecution by the victorious Muslims caused the Kushwaha kshatryia to disperse and disguise their identity, foregoing the sacred thread and thereby becoming degraded and taking on various localised community names. Gupta's attempt to prove Kshatriya status, in common with similar attempts by others to establish histories of various castes, was spread via the caste associations, which Dipankar Gupta describes as providing a link between the "urban, politically literate elite" and the "less literate villagers". Some communities also constructed temples in support of these claims as, for example, did the Muraos in Ayodhya.

Some Kushwaha reformers also argued, in a similar vein to the Kurmi reformer Devi Prasad Sinha Chaudhari, that since Brahmans and also Kshatriya Rajputs and Bhumiharsworked the fields in some areas, there was no rational basis for assertions that such labour marked a community as being of the Shudra varna.

Notable people

Pajawan

Jai Singh I

Ramsingh I

Maharaja Sawai Jai Singh II

Maharaj Sawai Madhosingh I

Maharaja Sawai Pratapsingh

Maharaja Sawai Man Singh II

Rao Shekha

The Paramaras

Origin

Like several other Rajput dynasties, the Parmaras claimed Agnivanshi origin from Mount Abu in Rajasthan.[1][5] According to theBhavisya Purana, the Kamadhenu (a cow which grants all wishes of one) of the sage Vasishtha was stolen by another sage Vishvamitra. Vasishtha therefore made an offering to the sacrificial fire at Mount Abu. A hero sprang out from the sacrificial fire and brought back the cow to the sage Vasishtha, who bestowed the name Parmar (slayer of the enemy) on him.

The early Paramara inscriptions do not narrate this story, and describe the Paramaras as descendants of the Rashtrakutas. The Paramara kingdom was established by the Rashtrakuta dynasty of southern India as governors of Malwa when the south Indian Emperor Govinda III of the Rashtrakuta Dynasty conquered Malwa.

Notable Kings

Upendra

Upendra, or Krishnaraja, founded the dynasty in Dhara in the middle of the 10th century. They were a feudatory of the Rashtrakutas.

Siyaka

Defied the Rashtrakutas.

Munja

Munja,or Vakpati, was a "glamorous" and "great warrior king." He "humbled the pride of Mewar, Marwar, Lata, Huna, Chedi, and Gurjararulers." He was a patron supporter of the poets Dhananjaya, Bhatta Halayudha, Dhanika, and Padmagupta.

Bhoja I

Bhoja I (1010-1055) was the most well-known ruler of this dynasty. He took Konkan in 1020 from the Silhara dynasty. He was best known as a scholar, authoring 23 books, including a commentary on the Yoga Sutras of Patanjali, which is "inferior to none." He established a centre for Sanskrit studies in Dhara Nagari, his capital. His works include the Samaranganasutradhara.

Mahlak Deo

The last king, who was defeated by Alauddin Khalji.

Rulers

	Name	Reign Began	Reign Ended
1	Upendra	800	818
2	Siyaka	818	843
3	Siyaka I	843	893
4	Vakpatiraja I	893	918
5	Vairisimha II	918	948
6	Siyaka II (Harsha Siyaka). Expanded the kingdom in various battles with neighbours such as Mewar, Indore and in the east touched the Chandela Kingdom. He was defeated by Yashorvarman Chandela. He took Ujjain from the Pratiharas. He later invaded the Rashtrakutas and sacked Manyakheta in the spring of 972. Khottiga Amoghavarsha of the Rashtrakutas died fighting, resulting in collapse and overtake of his empire by Western Chalukyas under Tailapa II.	948	974
7	Vakpatiraja II Munja – Defeated Mewar under Narwahana or his son Shakti Kumar and plundered Ahar their new capital. He also invaded Marwar which was under the Chauhanas. He defeated the Kalachuri king Yuvaraja II and sacked his capital Tripuri. His battles with Tailapa II of Western Chalukya are considered epic. He invaded the Western Chalukyas, hoping to defeat the still-evolving new regional power, but Tailapa repelled the invasion and captured him. He died in captivity.	974	995
8	Sindhuraja - Decisively defeated the Hunas north west of Malwa possibly in Indore. He defeated the Chalukyas of Lata (Gujarat) as well as King of Kosala, Kalingaraja. He also defeated the Silhara dynasty of Konkan at	995	1010

	Aparanta. He may or may not have been killed in battle with Western Chalukya.		
9	Bhoja I – Fought with his neighbours with varying results but was able to keep Muslims out of Malwa. He was a polymath and authored many books on various topics including Samarangana-sutradhara. He is considered the greatest king of his dynasty. He is also a subject of early known brain surgery for a tumour by inducing coma using something called sammohini.	1010	1055
10	Jayasimha I - Killed in battle by Kalachuri King Karna.	1055	1068-69
11	Udayaditya - Defeated by Chamundaraja, his vassal at Vagada. Invaded in 1079 byKarna, Solanki ruler of Lata and defeated him at Sudakupa Pass. In reply he along with allies defeated Karna.	1068-69	1087
12	Lakshmanadeva	1087	1094
13	Naravarmandeva Nirvana-Narayana - Lost Bhilsa District to the Chandelas underSalakshanavarman. Also defeated by Chauhanas of Sakambhari under Ajayavarman. He was also defeated by Jayasimha Siddharaja, the Solanki ruler of Lata.	1094	1134
14	Yasovarman - Invaded by Jayasimha Siddharaja, the Solanki ruler of Gujarat losing to him the greater part of Malwa but restored a portion of the Kingdom with the help ofChauhans of Ajmer.	1134	1142
15	Jayavarman I	1142	1143
	Ballala - A usurper, killed in battle by Kaka, a general of Kumarapala, the Solanki ruler of Gujarat.	1143	1150-51

	Briefly a province of Kumarpala		
16	Vindhyavarman	1160	1193
17	Subhatavarman	1193	1210
18	Arjunavarman I - Restored past glory of his kingdom by defeating the Solankis of Gujarat as well as the Yadava dynasty	1210	1218
19	Devapala	1218	1239
20	Jaitugideva	1239	1256
21	Jayavarman II	1256	1269
22	Jayasimha II	1269	1274
23	Arjunavarman II	1274	1283
24	Bhoja II	1283	?
25	Mahlakadeva - He was defeated in 1305 by Ain-ul-Mulk Multani and Malwa was annexed by the Delhi Sultanate.		?

The Solankis

Origins

Historians D. R. Bhandarkar and Hoernle hold the view that Chalukyas, i.e., Solankis, were one of the ruling clans of Gurjaras (or Gujjars), citing the name change of Lataprovince to Gurjaratra during the reign. Bhandarkar explains that If the Chalukyas had not been Gurjars, it is inconceivable how that province could have named Gurjaratra(country

ruled or protected by Gurjars) when it was up-till their advent known as Lata. However, according to the scholar D. P. Dikshit, the Chalukyas ruled over that part of country formerly known as Lata and taken as Gurjaratra or Gujarat implied the Chalukyas made a change in the nomenclature because of their close association with the region. V. A. Smith and A. M. T. Jackson also endorsed the view that Chalukyas were a branch of famous Gurjar (or Gujjars).

Solanki rule

Mularaja

Mularaja supplanted the last Chavda king of Gujarat and founded an independent kingdom with his capital in Anahilapataka in 940-941 AD.[1] He was a Shaiva king operating within Brahmanical and Vedic paradigms of kingship. He built Mulavasatika (Mula's residence) temple for Digambaras and the Mulanatha-jinadeva (the Jina who is Mula's lord) temple for the Svetambaras.[4]

Bhimdev I

Bhimdev I succeeded Mulraj. He built Sun Temple, of Modhera. His wife Udaymati built the Rani ki vav step-well in his memory.

The guardian family deity of the Solanki was Somnath at Prabhas. It was during the Solanki's rule that the scared shrine was sacked byMahmud of Ghazni.

Karandev I

Bhimdev's successor Karandev I defeated a Bhil chieftain and founded Karnavati which is now known as Ahmedabad. Karandev married Minaldevi by whom he begot Siddhraj Jaisinh.

Siddharaj Jaisinh

Siddharaj Jaisinh ruled for half a century starting in 1094 and enlarged the kingdom to become an empire. The Rudra Mahakala Temple at Siddhapur is an architectural expression of his rule.

Hemachandra, a Jain monk, rose to prominence and had good relation with the king. Apart from Saurashtra and Kutch, Jaysinh also conquered Malwa. One of the favourite legends of the Gujarat bards is woven around the siege of Junagadh by Jaysinh. The fort was ultimately captured by him along with Ranakdevi, wife of the Chudasama ruler Ra Khengar. Ranakdevi preferred to commit sati rather than remarry Jaisinh and he was persuaded to allow her to burn herself on a pyre at Wadhwan. Ranakdevi Temple still stands in Wadhwan at the site of her death.[citation needed]

Kumarpal

Siddhraj's successor Kumarpal's reign lasted for 31 years from 1143 to 1174 AD. He too had good relationship with Hemchandracharya and he propagated Jainism during his rule in Gujarat. He rebuilt Somnath temple. During Kumarpal's reign, Gujarat's prosperity was at its peak.

Bal Mulraj

Bal Mulraj successfully repelled the incursions of Mahmud of Ghor who had the ambition of repeating the act performed by Mahmud Ghazni.

Successor

After the fall of Solanki rule, the Hindu Vaghela dynasty, who had been in the service of the Solankis, established a short-lived (76 years) but powerful dynasty. The rulers of this dynasty were responsible for consolidating the stabilising the prosperity of Gujarat after the fall of the Solankis but the last of them, Karandev, was defeated and overthrown by Alauddin Khilji in 1297. With his defeat, Gujarat became part of the Delhi Sultanate.

The Tanwars (Tomara)

History

The Tomara Rajput-Gurjar clan claim descent from the mythical Chandravanshi dynasty, numbering the Mahabharata warrior Arjuna among their forebears. They ruled in Delhifrom around 736CE - 1115CE and also in Gwalior (1438-1486) and Rajasthan.

Delhi

The establishment of Delhi as a political centre during the early medieval period was the work of the Rajput Tomara ruler Anangpal Tomar (Anangapala), although Rajasthani bardic stories that claim the involvement of Vasuki, a serpent demon, in the process are myths. Evidence of their time in Delhi still exists; for example, a fort and dam in the village of Anangpur and the remains of Lal Kot, which was later enhanced by the Chauhan rulers who supplanted the Tomars. Other possible evidence is less certainly attributed and the Mehrauli pillar that is traditionally said to have been erected by a Tomar ruler may in fact have been moved to its present location from elsewhere.

Kosli village was established by Kosal Dev Singh in 1193 A.D, grandson of Anangpal Tomar and a son of Ausan Singh.

The Tomara dynasty of Delhi lasted until the demise of Anangpal Tomar, who was responsible for the construction of Lal Kot, a fortified wall around the city, likely in reaction to the raids of Mahmud of Ghazni. This is one of the oldest defence structures in Delhi.[9] Anangpal Tomar appointed his grandson (daughter's son, and son of King of Ajmer),Prithviraj Chauhan, as the heir-apparent

The Chauhan dynasty of Ajmer was able to firmly establish control by the mid-12th century.

Gwalior

Members of the Tomara clan ruled an area north of Gwalior known as the Tonwarghar tract. The most notable of these rulers was Man Singh Tomar (1486-1517).

The Candras

The Chandra dynasty were a family who ruled over the kingdom of Harikela in eastern Bengal (comprising the ancient lands ofHarikela, Vanga and Samatala) for roughly 150 years from the beginning of the 10th century CE. Their empire also encompassed Vanga and Samatala, with Srichandra expanding his domain to include parts of Kamarupa. Their empire was ruled from their capital,Vikrampur (modern Munshiganj) and was powerful enough to militarily withstand the Pala Empire to the north-west.

They were replaced later by the Varman dynasty as rulers of Harikela.

Rulers

The five Chandra rulers were:

Traillokyachandra (900–930 CE)

Srichandra (930–975 CE)

Kalyanachandra (975–1000 CE)

Ladahachandra (1000–1020 CE)

Govindachandra (1020–1050 CE)

The Eastern Gangas

Background

After the fall of Mahameghavahana dynasty, Kalinga was divided into different kingdoms under feudatory chiefs. Each of these chiefs bore the title Kalingadhipathi (Lord of Kalinga). The beginnings of what became the Eastern Ganga dynasty came about whenIndravarma I defeated the Vishnukundin king, Indrabhattaraka and established his rule over the region with Kalinganagara (orMukhalingam) as his capital, and Dantapura as a secondary capital. The Ganga kings assumed various titles viz. Trikalingadhipathior Sakala Kalingadhipathi (Lord of three Kalinga or all three Kalingas namely Kalinga proper (South), Utkal (North), and Kosal (West)).

Mukhalingam near Srikakulam of Andhra Pradesh bordering Orissa has been identified as Kalinganagara, the capital of the early Eastern Gangas.

After the decline of the early Eastern Gangas reign, the Chalukyas of Vengi took control of the region. Vajrahastha I, a descendant of the early Eastern Ganga dynasty took advantage of the internal strife and revived the power of the Ganga dynasty. It was during their rule thatShaivism took precedence over Buddhism and Jainism. The magnificent Madhukeshwara temple at Mukhalingam was built during this period.

In the 11th century, the Cholas brought the Ganga Kingdom under their rule.

Intermarriage

The Eastern Gangas were known to have intermarried with the Cholas as well as Chalukyas. The early state of the dynasty may have started from the early 8th century.

Anantavarman Chodaganga

The dynastic founding started with Anantavarman Chodaganga. He is believed to have ruled from the Ganges River in the north to the Godavari River in the south. This laying the foundation of the Eastern Ganga Dynasty. Also during his rule, the great Jagannath Temple at Puri was being built. He assumed the title of Trikalingadhipathi (ruler of the three Kalingas which compriseKalinga proper, Utkal north and Koshal west) in 1076. Resulting in him being the first to rule all three divisions of Kalinga.

Intrudes

Rajaraja III ascended the throne in 1198 and did nothing to resist the Muslims of Bengal, who invaded Orissa in 1206. Rajaraja's son Anangabhima III, however, repulsed the Muslims and built the temple of Megheshvara at Bhuvaneshvara. Narasimhadeva I, the son of Anangabhima, invaded southern Bengal in 1243, defeated its Muslim ruler, captured the capital (Gauda), and built the Sun Temple at Konark to commemorate his victory. With the death of Narasimha in 1264, the Eastern Gangas began to decline; the sultan of Delhi invaded Orissa in 1324, and Vijayanagar defeated the Orissan powers in 1356. Narasimha IV, the last known king of the Eastern Ganga dynasty, ruled until 1425. The "mad king," Bhanudeva IV, who succeeded him, left no inscriptions; his minister Kapilendra usurped the throne and founded the Suryavamsha dynasty in 1434–35.

Legacy

The Eastern Gangas were great patrons of religion and the arts, and the temples of the Ganga period rank among the masterpieces of Hindu architecture.

Rulers

Indravarman (496-535)

Devendravarman IV (893-?)

Vajrahasta Anantavarman (1038-?)

Rajaraja I (?-1078)

Anantavarman Chodaganga (1078–1150)

Ananga Bhima Deva II (1178–1198)

Rajaraja II (1198 - 1211)

Ananga Bhima Deva III (1211–1238)

Narasimha Deva I (1238–1264)

Bhanu Deva I (1264–1279)

Narasimha Deva II (1279–1306)

Bhanu Deva II (1306–1328)

Narasimha Deva III (1328–1352)

Bhanu Deva III (1352–1378)

Narasimha Deva IV (1379–1424)

Bhanu Deva IV (1424–1434)

The Senas

Origins

The political space after the decline of the Pala power in Bengal was occupied by the Senas whose king Vijayasena succeeded in conquering a large part of Pala territory. The Senas were the supporters of orthodox Hinduism. The dynasty traces its origin to the South, to the Western Chalukya Empire of southern India. Theres is a record of a Western Chalukya invasion during the reign ofSomeshvara I led by his son Vikramaditya VI who defeated the kings of Gauda and Kamarupa. This invasion of the Kannadaruler brought bodies of his countrymen from Karnataka into Bengal which explains the origin of the Sena Dynasty.

The founder of the Sena rule was Samantasena who described himself as a Kshatriya of Karnata(Karnataka). He himself stated that he fought the outlaws of Karnata and later turned an ascetic.[citation needed] The inscriptions of the Sena kings mention them as Brahma-Kshatriyas or Kshatriyas. Otherwise, sources have identified them with the Vaidya as well as the Ambashtha caste or sub-caste, considered as a mixed caste, being born of Brahmin father and Vaishya mother, and they married with and were identified with the Bengali Vaidyas (commonly known as Baidyas in Bengal) in Vaidya Kula-panjikas(family-tree accounts).

Sena Dynasty had ruled Bengal for little over a century (c 1097-1225). The emergence of the dynasty, which supplanted the Palas in Bengal towards the close of 11th century A.D., had constituted a significant epoch in the history of ancient India. Taking advantage of the revolt of Samantachakra in Varendra during the reign of Mahipala II, Vijaysena, founder of the Sena dynasty, gradually consolidated his position in western Bengal and ultimately assumed an independent position during the reign of Madanapala. One important aspect of Sena rule in Bengal is that the whole territory of Bengal was brought under a single rule for the first time. It is likely impossible to provide definite information to the question as to how the family entered Bengal. The Sena records also are amazingly silent about this.

The Sena kings claim in their own inscriptions that they are Brahma-Kshatriyas. Their remote ancestor was one Virasena, whose name was supposed to have been mentioned in Puranas. The "Deopara Inscription" of the Senas also traces the Sena ancestry from Virasena. Since there are no authentic records available still, a keen controversy prevails among scholars regarding origin of the Senas.[citation needed]

Like the origin of the Senas, their early history or circumstances, which led them to concentrate in Bengal is also still unknown. It has been presumed by historians that the Senas came to Bengal on the eve of the invading army led by the Chalukya kings

Vikramaditya VI and Someswara III. Some scholars have also suggested that when Rajendra Chola's army had invaded Bengal, the Senas had accompanied them. According to some other historians, a few Karnataka officials, who were subordinate to the Pala kings, had established their independent kingdom in the region of Radha, taking advantage of the weakness of the Pala powers. Those Karnataka chiefs might have arrived in Bengal in wake of the Chalukya invasion and had settled into a kingdom of their own. According to historians Samantasena was such a chief who had established his independent kingdom in the Radha region of Bengal.

Samantasena was a scion of the Sena family, who had distinguished himself through various warfares in South India. He had settled in Radha in Bengal, at an old age. He had also laid the foundation of the Sena family in Bengal. His son Hemantasena carved out an important kingdom in Radha, taking advantage of the decline of the Pala Empire. From their base in Radha, the Senas ultimately extended their powers over the whole of Bengal.

Inscription

A copperplate was found in the Adilpur or Edilpur pargana of Faridpur District in 1838 A.D. and was acquired by the Asiatic Society of Bengal, but now the copperplate is missing from collection. An account of the copperplate was published in the Dacca Review andEpigraphic Indica. The copperplate inscription is written in Sanskrit and in Gandacharacter, and dated 3rd jyaistha of 1136 samval, or 1079 A.D. In the Asiatic Society's proceeding for January 1838, an account of the copperplate states that three villages were given to a Brahman in the third year of Kaesava Sana. The grant was given with the landlord rights, which include the power of punishing the chandrabhandas or Sundarbans, a race that lived in the forest.[10] The land was granted in the village of Leliya in the Kumaratalaka mandala, which is situated in shatata-padamavati-visaya. The copperplate of Kaesava Sana records that the king Vallal Sena carried away, from the enemies, the goddesses of fortune on palanquins (Shivaka), which elephant tusk staff supported; and also states that Vallal Sena's son, Lakshman Sena (1179–1205), erected pillars of victory and sacrificial posts at Benaras, Allahbad, and Adon Coast of the South Sea. The copperplate also describes the villages with smooth fields growing excellent paddy, the dancing and music in ancient Bengal, and ladies adorned with blooming flowers. The Edilpur copperplate of Kaesava Sena records that the king made a grant in favor of Nitipathaka Isvaradeva Sarman for the inscae of the subha-varsha.

Society

The Sena rulers consolidated the caste system in Bengal. Although Bengal borrowed from the caste system of Mithila, caste was not so strong in Bengal as in Mithila.

Architecture

The Sena dynasty is famous for building Hindu temples and monasteries, which include the renowned Dhakeshwari Temple in what is now Dhaka, Bangladesh. In Kashmir, the dynasty also likely built a temple, which is ascribed to a Gaureshwara or Ballala Sena.

Literature

The Sena rulers were also great patrons of literature. During the Pala dynasty and the Sena dynasty, major growth in Bengali was witnessed. Some Bengali authors believe thatJayadeva, the famous Sanskrit poet and author of Gita Govinda, was one of the Pancharatnas (five gems) in the court of Lakshman Sen. Dhoyin - himself an eminent court poet of Sena dynasty - mentions nine gems (ratna) in the court of Lakshmana Sen, among whom were:

1. Govardhana
2. Sarana
3. Jayadeva
4. Umapati
5. Dhoyi/ Dhoyin Kaviraja

Legacy

After the Sena dynasty, the Deva dynasty ruled in eastern Bengal. The Deva dynasty was probably the last independent Hindu dynasty of Bengal.

The Sen rulers

Samanta Sen

Hemanta Sen (1070–1096 AD)

Vijay Sen (1095–1158 AD)

Ballal Sen (1158–1179 AD)

Lakshman Sen (1179–1206 AD)

Vishwarup Sen (1206–1225 AD)

Keshab Sen (1225–1230 AD)

The Varmans

Genealogy

The genealogy of the Varman dynasty appears most fully in the Dubi and Nidhanpur copper plate inscriptions of the last Varman king, Bhaskar Varman (650-655), where Pushya Varman is named the founder. The Dubi copper plate inscription of Bhaskar Varman asserts that Pushya Varman was born in the family of Naraka, Bhagadatta and Vajradatta (as did the other two Kamarupa dynasties) three thousand years after these mythical ancestors. The middle or Mlechha (Mech) dynasty, though claim same descent, are native tribal rulers. K.L. Barua opines that there was a Mlechha (i.e., Mech) revolt in Kamarupa and Salastambha, the leader or governor of the Mlecchas usurped the throne by deposing Bhaskar Varman's immediate successor Avanti Varman.

Ethnic origins

The dynasty traces its lineage from mythical Naraka, an immigrant from Aryavarta[10] (land of Aryans). The exact ethnic genealogy of Naraka is in dispute, with authors such as N N Vasu and K L Barua claiming he was Dravidian, whereas authors like P C Choudhury consider him to be of Alpine origin. Since the claim to Naraka's lineage was made at the end of the Varman dynasty (Bhaskarvarman); and since it was natural for the ruling house to fabricate a respectable lineage, authors like Sircar refuse to give much importance to these claims.

Historical documents and legends are contradictory on the ethnicity of this dynasty. Naraka, according to an early account was the son of an asura named Hiranksha and Bhumi (Earth). In the late 10th-century Kalika Purana, Naraka is said to be the son of Vishnu in his Varaha form and Bhumi, who grew up in household of Janaka. The Kalika Purana goes on to describe two Narakas: one who was religious and the other who was hostile to Brahminism. The relationship of Bhagadatta, also mentioned as an ancestor of the Varmans, with Naraka is not clear from legendary sources either: Bhagadatta is called a grandson (Kalika Purana), a son (Bhagavata Purana) or not specified at all (Mahabharata, Harivamsha and Vishnu Purana). In the Mahabharata, a much earlier text, Bhagadatta, the son of Naraka is mentioned as Mleccha, an appellation used for non-Indo-Aryans. All three Kamarupa dynasties draw their lineage from Naraka and Bhagadatta.

Yuan Chwang called Bhaskar Varman a Brahman king who originated with Narayana Deva. On the other hand, Bhaskarvarman told She-Kia-Fang-Che that his ancestors hailed from China, four thousand years ago, flying through air as holy spirit. Sylvain writes, "At the time of Hiuan-tsang's visit King Bhaskaravarman, was "a descendant of the God Narayana" ; he was "of the caste of the Brahman, as," and had the title of " Kumara." "Since the possession of the kingdom by his family up to his time, the succession of princes covers a space of a thousand generations" (Mem.II,77.)The evidence of his contemporary Bana (Harsacarita, chap. VII) confirms almost all these details. Finally we possess since a few years ago an inscription of King Bhaskaravarman (Nidhanpur plates,Ep.Ind.,XII,65), which takes back the genealogy up to King Bhagadatta, the famous adversary of the by a long list of ancestors. However, when he had business with others than Indians, the same prince boasted of another origin altogether. When the envoy of the T'ang dynasty, Li Yi-piao, paid him a visit during the course of his mission (643-646) the king in a private conversation told him: "the royal family has handed down its power for 4,000 years. The first was a holy spirit which came from China (Han-ti) flying through the air." (She-kia fang tche, ed. Tok. XXXV, 1, 94b, col. ult.) As though he would show sympathy for China, he asked the envoy to get him a portrait of Lao-tseu and a Sanskrit translation of the Tao-to-king. (She-kia fang tche, ed. Tok. XXXV, 1, 94b, col. ult.).

Many scholars, including Kamarupa Anusandhan Samiti have speculated that the Varman dynasty as the first Indo-Aryan dynasty in Assam, that was overthrown by Salastambha of Mongoloid origin, who then made himself the king of Kamarupa.

Suniti Kumar Chatterjee calls Bhaskar Varman a mleccha king, though scholars established that only middle dynasty of Haruppeshwara (Tezpur) is of mleccha or non-Aryan origin. Mukunda Madhava Sharma considers all the dynasties of Kamarupa as of Aryan origin. Urban terms all kings of Brahmaputra Valley as non-Aryans. Kanak Lal Barua refutes any extra Aryan origin of dynasty. In his "Early History Of Kamarupa", he writes, "Suffice is to say that he (Bhaskar Varman) was Hindu by religion spreading light of Arya Dharma though he has great preverence for learned Buddhist priests and professors of his time and was distinctly inclined towards Buddhism. The text of his message to Silabhadra leave no doubt in this point. The very high functions allotted to him during the famous religious assembly at Kanauj by the Hindu emperor Sri Harsha proves that he was not a Hindu of despised low caste. He was undoubtedly looked upon as a good Kshatriya, as his surname Varma indicates, whatever might have been his origin. In any case he was certainly not a Hinduized Koch. All the kings of his dynasty beginning from Pushya Varman were Kshatriya monarchs. When Yuan Chwang visited the kingdom he found hundreds of Hindu temples there and evidently there were large numbers of Brahmans and other high caste Hindus living within the kingdom which was a seat of learning that people of other countries came there for study"

Politics and diplomacy

The most illustrious of this dynasty was the last, Bhaskar Varman, who claimed be a descendant from god Vishnu and referred to as "lord of eastern India". He accompanied King Harshavardhana to religious processions from Pataliputra to Kannauj.

Kings of Varman dynasty maintained both diplomatic and matrimonial relations with other countries of Aryavarta. Pushya Varman who himself named after king Pushyamitra Shunga, named his son Samudra Varman after king Samudragupta in appreciations of kings of Aryavarta. King Bala Varman organised Swayamvara for his daughter Amrita Prabha; which was attended by princes of different countries. Princess eventually chosen prince of Kashmir Meghavahana as her groom. The alliance between king Harsha of Thanesar and Bhaskar Varman lead to spread of political influence of later to entire eastern India.

Cultural environment

In Nidhanpur copper plate inscription of Bhaskar Varman, it is mentioned that "prakasit aryadharmaloka" i.e. king (Bhaskar Varman) spread the light of the Arya religion by dispelling the accumulated darkness of Kaliyuga. Yuan Chwang writes about existence of hundreds of Hindu temples. Brahmins and upper caste Hindus makes large chunk of lands population. Being a seat of learning people from other countries visits for studies.

The dynasty

	Reign	Name	succession	Queen
1	350-374	Pushya Varman	claimed descent from Bhagadatta	(unknown)
2	374-398	Samudra Varman	son of Pushya Varman	Dattadevi
3	398-422	Bala Varman	son of Samudra Varman	Ratnavati
4	422-446	Kalyana Varman	son of Bala Varman	Gandharavati
5	446-470	Ganapati Varman	son of Kalyana Varman	Yajnavati
6	470-494	Mahendra Varman	son of Ganapati Varman	Suvrata
7	494-518	Narayana Varman	son of Mahendra Varman	Devavati
8	518-542	Bhuti Varman	son of Narayana Varman	Vijnayavati
9	542-566	Chandramukha Varman	son of Bhuti Varman	Bhogavati
10	566-590	Sthita Varman	son of Chandramukha Varman	Nayanadevi
11	590-595	Susthita Varman	son of Sthita Varman	Syamadevi
12	595-600	Supratisthita Varman	son of Susthita Varman	(Bachelor)
13	600-650	Bhaskar Varman	brother of Supratisthita Varman	(Bachelor)
14	650-655	Avanti Varman	(unknown)	(unknown)

The Kamrup

Sources

Kamarupa and the northeast Indian region find no mention in the Ashokan records (3rd century BCE).[6] The first dated mention comes from the Periplus of the Erythraean

Sea (1st century) where it describes a people called Sêsatai. The second mention comes from Ptolemy's Geographia (2nd century) calls the region Kirrhadia after the Kirata population. The first mention of the kingdom comes from the 4th-century Allahabad inscription of Samudragupta that calls the kings of Kamarupa (Western Assam) and Davaka (now in Nagaon district) frontier rulers (pratyanta nripati). The Chinese traveler Xuanzang visited the kingdom in the 7th century, then ruled by Bhaskar Varman. The corpus of Kamarupa inscriptions left by the rulers of Kamarupa, including Bhaskar Varman, at various places in Assam and present-day Bangladesh are important sources of information. Nevertheless, local grants completely eschew the name Kamarupa; instead they use the name Pragjyotisha, with the kings called Pragjyotishadhipati.

Boundaries

According to the 10th century Kalika Purana and the 7th century Xuanzang, the western boundary was the historical Karatoyariver. The eastern border was the temple of the goddess Tamreshvari (Pūrvāte Kāmarūpasya devī Dikkaravasini, given in Kalika Purana) near present-day Sadiya in the eastern most corner of Assam, which too agrees with Xuanzang. The people of Kamarupa were aware of Sichuan which lay two months' journey away from its eastern borders.

The southern boundary was near the border between the Dhaka and Mymensingh districts in Bangladesh. Thus it spanned the entire Brahmaputra valley and at various times included present-day Bhutan and parts of Bangladesh. This is supported by the various epigraphic records found scattered over these regions. The kingdom appears to have broken up entirely by the 13th century into smaller kingdoms and from among them rose the Kamata kingdom in the west and the Ahom kingdom in the east as the main successor kingdoms.

State

The extent of state structures can be culled from the numerous Kamarupa inscriptions left behind by the Kamarupa kings as well as accounts left by travellers such as those from Xuanzang. Governance followed the classical saptanga structure of state.

Kings and courts: The king was considered to be of divine origin. Succession was primogeniture, but two major breaks resulted in different dynasties. In the second, the high officials of the state elected a king, Brahmapala, after the previous king died without leaving an heir. The royal court consisted of a Rajaguru, poets, learned men and physicians. Different epigraphic records mention different officials of the palace: Mahavaradhipati, Mahapratihara, Mahallakapraudhika, etc.

Council of Ministers: The king was advised by a council of ministers (Mantriparisada), and Xuanzang mentions a meeting Bhaskaravarman had with his ministers. According to the Kamauli grant, these positions were filled by Brahmanas and were hereditary. State functions were specialized and there were different groups of officers looking after different departments.

Revenue: Land revenue (kara) was collected by special tax-collectors from cultivators. Cultivators who had no proprietary rights on the lands they tilled paid uparikara. Duties (sulka) were collected by toll collectors (kaivarta) from merchants who plied keeled boats. The state maintained a monopoly on copper mines (kamalakara). The state maintained its stores and treasury via officials:Bhandagaradhikrita and Koshthagarika.

Grants: The king occasionally gave Brahmanas grants (brahmadeya), which consisted generally of villages, water resources, wastelands etc. (agraharas). Such grants conferred on the donee the right to collect revenue and the right to be free of any regular tax himself and immunity from other harassments. Sometimes, the Brahmanas were relocated from North India, with a view to establish varnashramdharma. Nevertheless, the existence of donees indicate the existence of a feudal class. Grants made to temples and religious institutions were called dharmottara and devottara respectively.

Land survey: The land was surveyed and classified. Arable lands (kshetra) were held individually or by families, whereas wastelands (khila) and forests were held collectively. There were lands called bhucchidranyaya that were left unsurveyed by the state on which no tax was levied.

Administration: The entire kingdom was divided into a hierarchy of administrative divisions. From the highest to the lowest, they were bhukti, mandala, vishaya, pura (towns), agrahara (collection of villages) and grama (village). These units were administered by headed by rajanya, rajavallabha, vishayapati etc. Some other offices were nyayakaranika, vyavaharika, kayastha etc., led by theadhikara. They dispensed judicial duties too, though the ultimate authority lay with the king. Law enforcement and punishments were made by officers called dandika, (magistrate) and dandapashika (one who executed the orders of a dandika).

Political history

Kamarupa, first mentioned on Samudragupta's Allahabad rock pillar as a frontier kingdom, began as a subordinate but sovereign ally of the Gupta empire around present-day Guwahati in the 4th century. It finds mention along with Davaka, a kingdom to the east of Kamarupa in the Kapili river valley in present-day Nagaon district, but which is never mentioned again as an independent political entity in later historical records. Kamarupa, which was probably one among many such state structures, grew territorially to encompass the entire Brahmaputra valley and beyond. The kingdom was ruled by three major dynasties, all of which drew their lineage from the legendary king Naraka, who is said to have established his line by defeating the aboriginal king Ghatakasura of the Danava dynasty.

Varman dynasty (c350–c650)

Pushyavarman (350–374) established the Varman Dynasty, by fighting many enemies from within and without his kingdom; but his son Samudravarman (374–398), named after Samudragupta, was accepted as an overlord by many local rulers. Nevertheless, subsequent kings continued their attempts to stabilize and expand the kingdom. Kalyanavarman (422-446) occupied Davaka and Mahendravarman (470-494) further eastern areas. Narayanavarma (494–518) and his son Bhutivarman (518–542) offered the ashwamedha (horse sacrifice); and as the Nidhanpur inscription of Bhaskarvarman avers, these expansions included the region of Chandrapuri visaya, identified with present-day Sylhet division. Thus, the small but powerful kingdom that Pushyavarman established grew in fits and starts over many generations of kings and expanded to include adjoining possibly smaller kingdoms and parts of Bangladesh.

After the initial expansion till the beginning of Bhutivarman's reign, the kingdom came under attack from Yasodharman(525–535) of Malwa, the first major assault from the west. Though it is unclear what the effect of this invasion was on the kingdom; that Bhutivarman's grandson, Sthitavarman (566–590), enjoyed victories over the Gauda of Karnasuvarna and performed two aswamedha ceremonies suggests that the Kamarupa kingdom had recovered nearly in full. His son, Susthitavarman (590–600) came under the attack of Mahasenagupta of East Malwa. These back and forth invasions were a result of a system of alliances that pitted the Kamarupa kings (allied to the Maukharis) against the Gaur kings (allied with the East Malwa kings). Susthitavarman died as the Gaur invasion was on, and his two sons, Suprathisthitavarman and Bhaskarvarman fought against an elephant force and were captured and taken to Gaur. They were able to regain their kingdom due probably to a promise of allegiance. Suprathisthitavarman's regin is given as 595–600, a very short period, at the end of which he died without an heir.

Supratisthitavarman was succeeded by his brother, Bhaskarvarman (600–650), the most illustrious of the Varman kings who succeeded in turning his kingdom and invading the very kingdom that had taken him captive. Bhaskarvarman had become strong enough to offer his alliance with Harshavardhana just as the Thanesar king ascended the throne in 606 after the murder of his brother, the previous king, by Shashanka of Gaur. Harshavardhana finally took control over the kingless Maukhari kingdom and moved his capital to Kanauj. The alliance between Harshavardhana and Bhaskarvarman squeezed Shashanka from either side and reduced his kingdom, though it is unclear whether this alliance resulted in his complete defeat. Nevertheless, Bhaskarvarman did issue the Nidhanpur copper-plate inscription from his victory camp in the Gaur capital Karnasuvarna (present-day Murshidabad, West Bengal) to replace a grant issued earlier by Bhutivarman for a settlement in the Sylhet region of present-day Bangladesh.

In about 643, Xuanzang visited Bhaskarvarman's court and confirmed that the western border of the Kamarupa kingdom was the Karatoya River. At the end of this visit, Bhaskarvarman accompanied Xuanzang to Kanauj, and participated in a religious assembly and a festival at Prayaga (Allahabad) with Harshavardhana, spending more than a year away from his own kingdom. It seems Bhaskaravarman maintained relations with China. He recounted to Xuanzang a Chinese song about the Jin dynasty, which became very popular in his kingdom. After the death of Harsha, he helped a mission from China led by Wang Hiuen-ts'oe according to a Chinese account. Bhaskarvarman, also called Kumar, or Shri Kumar, was a bachelor king and died without an heir.

Mlechchha dynasty (c655–c900 CE)

After Bhaskaravarman's death without an heir, the kingdom passed into the hands of Salasthambha (655–670), an erstwhile local governor and a member of an aboriginal group called Mlechchha (or Mech), after a period of civil and political strife. This dynasty too drew its lineage from the Naraka dynasty, though it had no dynastic relationship with the previous Varman dynasty. The capital of this dynasty was Haruppeshvara, now identified with modern Dah Parbatiya near Tezpur. The kingdom took on feudal characteristics with political power shared between the king and second and third tier rulers called mahasamanta and samanta who enjoyed considerable autonomy. The last ruler in this line was Tyāga Singha (890–900).

Pala dynasty (c900–c1100)

After the death of Tyāgasimha without an heir, a member of the Bhauma family, Brahmapala (900–920), was elected as king by the ruling chieftains, just as Gopala of the Pala dynasty of Bengal was elected. The original capital of this dynasty was Hadapeshvara, and was shifted to Durjaya built by Ratnapala, near modern Guwahati. The greatest of the Pala kings, Dharmapala had his capital at Kamarupanagara, now identified with North Guwahati. The last Pala king was Jayapala (1075–1100). Around this time, Kamarupa was attacked and the western portion was conquered by the Pala king Ramapala.

Non-dynastic Independent Kings

The Gaur king could not hold Kamarupa for long, and Timgyadeva (1110–1126) ruled Kamarupa independently for sometime. A minister of the Gaur king Kumarapala (the son of Ramapala) began an expedition against Timgyadeva and installed himself as a ruler at Hamshkonchi in the Kamrup region. Though he maintained friendly relationships with Kumarapala, he called styled himself after the Kamarupa kings issuing grants under the elephant seal[30] of erstwhile Kamarupa kings and assuming the title of Maharajadhiraja. The period saw a waning of the Kamarupa kingdom, and in 1205 the Afghan Muhammad-i-Bakhtiyar passed through Kamarupa against Tibet which ended in a disaster. Mughith al-Din Yuzbak of the Mameluk rulers of Bengal attacked and defeated an unknown ruler of Kamarupa in 1257. But Yuzbak could not hold on to the capital as he was weakened by the Monsoon rains that led to his defeat and death by the local population.

End of Kamarupa kingdom

The Kamarupa kingdom came to an end in the middle of the 13th century when a ruler of Kamarupanagara (Guwahati), named Sandhya, moved his capital to Kamatapur (North Bengal) and established the Kamata kingdom.[31] At that time, western Kamarupa was being ruled by the chiefs of the Bodo people, Koch and Mech tribes. In central Assam theKachari kingdom was growing, and further east, the Sutiya kingdom. The Ahoms, who would establish a strong and independent kingdom later, began building their state structures in the region between the Kachari and the Sutiya kingdoms.

The Mlechchhas

The Mlechchha dynasty (c. 650 - 900) ruled Kamarupa from their capital at Hadapeshvar in the present-day Tezpur, Assam, after the fall of the Varman dynasty. The rulers were aboriginals (local clan, genetically non-diverse), though their lineage fromNarakasura was constructed to accord legitimacy to their rule. According to historical records, there were twenty one rulers in this dynasty but the line is obscure and the names of some intervening rulers are not known. The Mlechchha dynasty in Kamarupa was followed by the Pala kings.

Salasthamba (650-670)

Vijaya alias Vigrahastambha

Harshadeva alias Harshavarman (725-745)

Balavarman II

Salambha

Harjjaravarman (815-832)

Vanamalavarmadeva (832-855)

Jayamala alias Virabahu (855-860)

Balavarman III (860-880)

Tyagasimha (890-900)

The Palas

Pala dynasty (Kamarupa)

The Pala dynasty of Kamarupa ruled the kingdom from 900. Like the Pala dynasty of Bengal, the first ruler in this dynasty was elected, which probably explains the name of this dynasty "Pala". But unlike the Palas of Bengal, who were Buddhists, the Palas of Kamarupa were Hindus. The Hindu orthodoxy drew their lineage from the earlier Varman dynasty and thus ultimately fromNarakasura.

The Pala dynasty came to an end when Kamarupa was invaded by the Gaur king Ramapala (c. 1072-1126). Timgyadeva was made the governor of Kamarupa who ruled between 1110 to 1126. Timgyadeva threw off the yoke of the Pala king and ruled independently for some years when he was attacked and replaced by Vaidyadeva under Ramapala's son Kumarapala. Vaidyadeva, who ruled between 1126 and 1140, declared independence within four years of his rule after the death of Kumarapala. Both Timgyadeva and Vaidyadeva issued grants in the style of the Kamarupa kings (three copper plates attached to the seal of the Kamarupa kings by a ring).

Rulers

Brahma Pala (900-920)

Ratna Pala (920-960)

Indra Pala (960-990)

Go Pala (990-1015)

Harsha Pala (1015-1035)

Dharma Pala (1035-1060)

Jaya Pala (1075-1100).

The Twipra

Geography

The present political areas which were part of the Tipra Kingdom are:

Sylhet, Dhaka and Chittagong Divisions of Bangladesh

Cachar Valley of Assam

Mizoram and Tripura states of India

The Tipra Kingdom in all its various ages comprised the areas with the borders:

Khasi Hills in the North

Manipur Hills in the North-East

Arakan Hills of Burma in the East

The Bay of Bengal to the South

The Brahmaputra river to the West

History

Early history

A list legendary Tripuri kings is given in the Rajmala chronicle,a 15th-century chronicle in Bengali verse written by the court pandits of Dharma Manikya (r. 1431). The chronicle traces the king's ancestry to the mythological Lunar Dynasty. In the 8th century, the Kingdom shifted its capital eastwards along the Surma river in Sylhet near present Kailasahar town of North Tripura.[citation needed]

The religion of the Tipra had 14 deities known as choddha devta (in Bengali) and is still preserved in the Choddha Devta Mandir inOld Agartala, which is maintained by the Tipra priests known as Chontai's, who oversee the festivals of the Kharchi and Ker according to traditions. It was similar to the Chinese folk religions.

Islamic invasions

The earliest historical records concerning the Twipra kingdom concern the 13th century, when it first came under pressure of the Islamic conquests in India. This is also the time of origin of the Manikya Dynasty, started when Ratna Fa adopted the title Manikya, which was held by all Kings of Tripura until the death of Bir Bikram Kishore Manikya in 1947. Ratna Fa shifted the capital to Rangamati on the banks of the river Gumti now in South Tripura. Twipra was first overrun by the Muslims under Tughril in 1279, but it managed to maintain its independence during the 14th to 17th centuries. Dhanya Manikya (r. 1463 to 1515) expanded Twipra's territorial domain well into Eastern Bengal. Rangamati was renamed Udaipur after Udai Manikya. The kingdom flourished in the 16th and 17th centuries, Kings such as Govinda Manikya putting up a defense against the pressure of the

Muslim kingdoms to the west, until the final conquest by the Mughal Empire in 1733. After this, Twipra was a Mughal client kingdom, with the Mughal rulers taking influence on the appointment of its kings.

British India

In British India, the kings retained an estate in British India, known as Tippera district or Chakla Roshnabad (now the greater Comilla region of Bangladesh), in addition to the independent area known as Hill Tippera, the present-day state of Tripura. Bir Chandra Manikya (1862–1896) modelled his administration on the pattern of British India, and enacted reforms including the formation of Agartala Municipal Corporation. The last king was Kirit Bikram Kishore, son of Bir Bikram Kishore Debbarman, who ruled for two years, 1947-1949. In 1949, Tripura became part of the Republic of India. The Tripuri "heir apparent" is Kirit Pradyot Deb Barman (born 1978), the son of the last king, who is sometimes given the courtesy title of "Maharaja"

The Kings the Twipra (Tripura) kingdom assumed the title of Manikya. The dynasty was founded when Ratna Fa (Ratna Manikya) assumed the title in 1280.

One of the more famous Manikya rulers was Bir Chandra Manikya Bahadur, in the 19th century. Bir Bikram Kishore Manikya (r. 1923–1947) died in 1947, and his infant son Kirit Bikram Kishore Manikya was designated the 185th king even though he was too young to rule for the transitional period until 15 September 1949, when Tripura acceded to the Union of India. Kirit Bikram Kishore Manikya died in 2006, and his son Pradyot Bikram Kishore Manikya (born 1978) would be the pretender as 186th king, sometimes so considered in Tripuri irredentism.

List of kings

The first king of the Manikya Dynasty is the 145th king in the reckoning of the Rajmala, the Chronicle of the Kings, written in the 14th century. The earlier kings are partly mythological and partly legendary or semi-legendary.

145. Ratna Fa (Ratna Manikya) fl. 1280

146. Pratap Manikya

147. Mukut Manikya (Mukunda)

148. Maha Manikya

149. Dharma Manikya fl. 1430

150. Pratap Manikya II

151. Dhanya Manikya

152. Dhwaj Manikya

153. Deb Manikya

154. Indra Manikya

155. Vijay Manikya I (1532-1563)

156. Ananta Manikya

157. Udai Manikya

158. Jai Manikya (Loktor Fa)

159. Amar Manikya (1577-1586)

160. Rajdhar Manikya

161. Jashodhar Manikya

162. Kalyan Manikya

163. Gobinda Manikya (fl. 1660s)

164. Chhatra Manikya (Nakhshatra Rai) (fl. 1660s/1670s)

165. Ramdev Manikya

166. Ratna Manikya II

167. Narendra Manikya

168. Mahendra Manikya

169. Dharma Manikya II (1714-1733)

170. Mukunda Manikya

171. Jai Manikya

172. Indra Manikya II

173. Vijay Manikya II

174. Krishna Manikya

175. Rajdhar Manikya

176. Ramgana Manikya

177. Durga Manikya

178. Kashi Chandra Manikya

179. Krishna Kishore Manikya

180. Ishan Chandra Manikya

181. Bir Chandra Manikya

182. Radha Kishore Manikya

183. Birendra Kishore Manikya

184. Bir Bikram Kishore Manikya (1923 – 1947)

185. Kirit Bikram Kishore Manikya (1947-1949)

(186.) Pradyot Bikram Kishore Manikya

The Deccan plateau and South

In the first half of the millennium the South saw various smalled kingdoms rise and fall mostly independent to the turmoil in the Gangetic plains and the spread of the Buddhismand Jainism to the southern tip of India. During the second half of the millennium after the fall of the Gupta Empire we see a gradual shift of the balance of power both military and cultural from the northern states to the rise of large southern states.

In fact, from the mid-seventh to the mid-13th centuries, regionalism was the dominant theme of political or dynastic history of South Asia. Three features commonly characterize the sociopolitical realities of this period.

First, the spread of Brahmanical religions was a two-way process of Sanskritization of local cults and localization of Brahmanical social order.

Second was the ascendancy of the Brahman priestly and landowning groups that later dominated regional institutions and political developments.

Third, because of the seesawing of numerous dynasties that had a remarkable ability to survive perennial military attacks, regional kingdoms faced frequent defeats but seldom total annihilation.

Peninsular India was involved in an 8th-century tripartite power struggle among the Chalukyas (556–757), the Pallavas (300–888) of Kanchipuram, and the Pandyas. The Chalukya rulers were overthrown by their subordinates, the Rashtrakutas (753-973). Although both the Pallava and Pandya kingdoms were enemies, the real struggle for political domination was between the Pallava and Chalukya realms.

The emergence of the Rashtrakutas heralded a new era in the history of South India. The idiom of a Pan-Indian empire had moved to south. South Indian kingdoms had hitherto ruled areas only up to and south of the Narmada River. It was the Rashtrakutas who first forged north to the Gangetic plains and successfully contested their might against thePalas of Bengal and the Rajput Prathiharas of Gujarat.

Despite interregional conflicts, local autonomy was preserved to a far greater degree in the south where it had prevailed for centuries. The absence of a highly centralized government was associated with a corresponding local autonomy in the administration of villages and districts. Extensive and well-documented overland and maritime trade flourished with the Arabs on the west coast and with Southeast Asia.

Trade facilitated cultural diffusion in Southeast Asia, where local elites selectively but willingly adopted Indian art, architecture, literature, and social customs.

The interdynastic rivalry and seasonal raids into each other's territory notwithstanding, the rulers in the Deccan and South India patronized all three religions - Buddhism,Hinduism, and Jainism. The religions vied with each other for royal favor, expressed in land grants but more importantly in the creation of monumental temples, which remain architectural wonders. The cave temples of Elephanta Island (near Mumbai or Bombay, as it was known formerly), Ajanta, and Ellora (in Maharashtra), and structural temples ofPattadakal, Aihole, Badami in Karnataka and Mahaballipuram and Kanchipuram in Tamil Nadu are enduring legacies of otherwise warring regional rulers.

By the mid-7th century, Buddhism and Jainism began to decline as sectarian Hindu devotional cults of Shiva and Vishnu vigorously competed for popular support.

Although Sanskrit was the language of learning and theology in South India, as it was in the north, the growth of the bhakti (devotional) movements enhanced the crystallization ofvernacular literature in all four major Dravidian languages: Tamil, Telugu, Malayalam, and Kannada; they often borrowed themes and vocabulary from Sanskrit but preserved much local cultural lore. Examples of Tamil literature include two major poems, Cilappatikaram (The Jewelled Anklet) and Manimekalai (The Jewelled Belt); the body of devotional literature of Shaivism and Vaishnavism—Hindu devotional movements; and the reworking of the Ramayana by Kamban in the 12th century. A nationwide cultural synthesis had taken place with a minimum of common characteristics in the various regions of South Asia, but the process of cultural infusion and assimilation would continue to shape and influence India's history through the centuries.

The Sangam Era Kingdoms

History

According to Tamilian legends, there were three Sangam periods, namely Head Sangam, Middle Sangam and Last Sangam period. Historians use the term Sangam period to refer the last of these, the first two being legendary. So it is also called Last Sangam period , or Third Sangam period . The Sangam literature is thought to have been produced in three Sangam academies of each period. The evidence on the early history of the Tamil kingdoms consists of the epigraphs of the region, the Sangam literature, and archaeological data.

Approximately during the period between 400 BC to AD 500, Tamilakam was ruled by the three Tamil dynasties of Pandya, Cholaand Chera, and a few independent chieftains, the Velir.

Literary sources

Main articles: Sources of ancient Tamil history and Sangam literature

There is a wealth of sources detailing the history, socio-political environment and cultural practices of ancient Tamilakam, including volumes of literature and epigraphy.

Tamilakam's history is split into three periods; prehistoric, classical (see Sangam period) and medieval. A vast array of literary, epigraphical and inscribed sources from around the world provide insight into the socio-political and cultural occurrences in the Tamil nation. The ancient Tamil literature consists of the great grammatical work Tolkappiyam,the ten anthologies Patthupattu, the eight anthologies Ettuttogai, the eighteen minor works Pathinenkeelkanaku and the five great epics, Silappadikaram, Manimegalai, Sivaga-Cindamani, Valayapathi and Kundalakesi.

Culture

Further information: Economy of ancient Tamil country, Agriculture in ancient Tamil country and Industry in ancient Tamil country

Religion

The religion of the ancient Tamils closely follow roots of nature worship and

some elements of it can also be found in Tamil Shaiva Siddhanta traditions. In the ancient Sangam literature, Sivan was the supreme God, and Murugan was the one celebrated by the masses; both of them were sung as deified Tamil poets ascending the Koodal academy. The Tamil landscape was classified into five categories, thinais, based on the mood, the season and the land.Tolkappiyam, one of the oldest grammatical works in Tamil mentions that each of these thinai had an associated deity such asKottravai (Mother goddess i.e. Kali) and Sevvael (Murugan) in Kurinji(the hills), Thirumaal (Vishnu) in Mullai(the forests), Vendhan (Wanji-ko or Seyyon i.e. Indra) in Marutham(the plains i.e. Vayu), and Kadaloan (Varuna) in the Neithal(the coasts and the seas). Other ancient works refer to Maayon (Maal) andVaali.

The most popular deity was Murugan, who has from a very early date been identified with Karthikeya, the son of Siva. Kannagi, the heroine of the Silappatikaram, was worshiped as Pathini by many Tamils, particularly in Sri Lanka. There were also many temples and devotees of Thirumaal, Siva, Ganapathi, and the other common Hindu deities.

According to George L. Hart, the legend of the Tamil Sangams or "literary assemblies: was based on the Tamil Jain sangham at Madurai:

There was a permanent Jaina assembly called a Sangha established about 604 A.D. in Madurai. It seems likely that this assembly was the model upon which tradition fabricated the Sangam legend."

Calendar

The ancient Tamil calendar was based on the sidereal year similar to the ancient Hindu solar calendar, except that months were from solar calculations, and originally there was no 60 year cycle as seen in Sanskrit calendar. The year was made up of twelve months and every two months constituted a season. With the popularity of Mazhai vizhavu, traditionally commencement of Tamil year was clubbed on April 14, deviating from the astronomical date of vadavazhi vizhavu.

Festivals

pongal, the festival of harvest and spring, thanking Lord Indiran and Lord El (the sun), comes on January 14/15.

PeruVaenil Kadavizha, the festival for wishing quick and easy passage of the mid-summer months, on the day when the Sun or El stands directly above the head at noon (the start of Agni Natchaththiram) at the southern tip of ancient Tamil land. This day comes on April 14/15 .

Mazhai Vizhavu, aka Indhira Vizha, the festival for want of rain, celebrated for one full month starting from the full moon in Ootrai (later name-Cittirai) சித்திரை and completed on the full moon in Puyaazhi (Vaikaasi) (which coincides with Buddhapurnima). It is epitomised in the epic Cilapatikaram in detail.

Puyaazhi(Vaikaasi) visaagam and Thai poosam, the festivals of Tamil God [Muruga]'s birth and accession to the Thirupparankundram Koodal Academy, coming on the day before the full moons of Puyaazhi and Thai respectively.

Soornavai Vizha, the slaying of legendary Kadamba Asura king Surabadma, by Lord [Muruga], comes on the sixth day after new moon in Itrai (Kaarthigai). It is sung about inThirumurugatrupadai and Purananuru anthology.

Vaadai Vizha or Vadavazhi Vizha, the festival of welcoming the Lord Surya back to home, as He turns northward, celebrated on December 21/22 (Winter Solstice) (the sixth day of Panmizh[Maargazhi]). It is sung about in Akanauru anthology.

Semmeen Ezhumin Vizhavu (Aathi-Iřai Darisanam) or Aruthra Darishanam, the occasion of Lord Siva coming down from the ThiruCitrambalam திருச்சிற்றம்பலம் and taking a look at the vaigarai Thiru Aathirai star in the early morning on the day before the full moon in Panmizh. Aathi Irai min means the star of the God (Siva) on the Bull (Nandi).

Thiruonam or Onam, the birthday of Mayon (Lord Vishnu), thiruonam is group of stars which are bright together and resemble like an eagle. Lord Vishnu's mount is Garuda(eagle), so the day was considered as the birthday of Lord Vishnu by the people of pandya kingdom and was celebrated for 10 days. That was mentioned in '[Maduraikanji]' one of the 'Pathupaatu' book, 'Thirupallandu' by Periyazhwar and from the song of Thirugnanasambandhar in Thevaram.

Arts

Musicians, stage artists and performers entertained the kings, the nobility, the rich and the general population. Groups of performers included:

Thudian, players of the thuda, a small percussion instrument

Paraiyan, who beat maylam(drums) and performed kooththu, a stage drama in dance form, as well as proclaiming the king's announcements

Muzhavan, who blew into a muzhavu, a wind instrument, for the army indicating the start and end of the day and battlefield victories. They also performed in kooththualongside other artists .

Kadamban who beat a large bass-like drum, the kadamparai, and blew a long bamboo, kuzhal, the cerioothuthi (similar to the present naagasuram).

PaaNan, who sang songs in all pann tunes (tunes that are specific for each landscape) and were masters of the yaazh, a stringed instrument with a wide frequency range.

Together with the poets (pulavar) and the academic scholars (saandror), these people of talent appeared to originate from all walks of life, irrespective of their native profession.

People

See also: Tamil people, Sangam literature, Sangam landscape and Chronology of Tamil history

The ancient Tamil land was divided into five types- Kurinji, Mullai, Marutam, Neithal and Palai. The people were divided into five different clans ("kudes") based on their profession. They were;

Mallars- the farmers.

Malavars- the hill people who gather hill products, and the traders.

Nagars- people in charge of border security, who guarded the city walls and distant fortresses.

Kadambars- people who thrive on forests.

Thiraiyars- the seafarers.

All the five kudis constituted a typical settlement, which was called an "uru". Later each clan spread across the land, formed individual settlements of their own and concentrated into towns, cities and countries. Thus the Mallars settled in Tamil Nadu and Sri Lanka, while the Malavars came to live in Kerala, western Tamil Nadu, eastern Andhra Pradeshand southern Sri Lanka. The Nagars inhabited southern and eastern Tamil Nadu, and northern Sri Lanka, while the Kadambars settled in central Tamil Nadu first and later moved to western Karnataka. The Thiraiyars inhabited throughout the coastal regions. Later various subsects were formed based on more specific professions in each of the five landscapes (Kurinji, Mullai, Marutam, Neithal and Palai).

Poruppas (the soldiers), Verpans (the leaders of the tribe or weapon-ists), Silambans (the masters of martial arts or the arts of fighting), Kuravar (the hunters and the gatherers, the people of foothills) and Kanavars (the people of the mountainous forests) in Kurinji.

Kurumporai Nadan-kizhaththis (the landlords of the small towns amidst the forests in the valleys), Thonral-manaivi (the ministers and other noble couples), Idaiyars (the milkmaids and their families), Aiyars (the cattle-rearers) in Mullai.

Mallar or Pallar (the farmers and warriors), Vendans (Chera, Chola and Pandya kings were called as "Vendans"), Urans (small landlords), Magizhnans (successful small scale farmers), Uzhavars (the farm workers), Kadaiyars (the merchants) in Marutham.

Saerppans (the seafood vendors and traders), Pulampans (the vegetarians who thrive on coconut and palm products), Parathars or Paravas (people who lived near the seas-the rulers, sea warriors, merchants and the pirates), Nulaiyars (the

wealthy people who both do fishing and grow palm farms) and Alavars (the salt cultivators) in Neithal.

Palai symbolises the dry arid lands and scorching deserts of Tamil country where nothing except for the hardy and war-like perseverant tribes native to those lands can survive. It is also the only land among all five lands of the Sangam landscape that a female God, fierce mother goddess, Kotravai was worshipped which is synonymous with the common belief that all the other lands of Tamil country emerged out of these original dry arid lands. The tribes existed in these lands were the ruthless and fearsomeMaravars (Noble Warriors, Hunters and Bandits) and Eyinars (Warriors and Bandits). They actively seek out for wars, knowledge, invade far and distant lands and engage in banditry.

The Cheras

Etymology of the word Chera

The word Chera probably derived from Cheral, meaning "declivity of a mountain" in ancient Tamil. The Cheras are referred as Kedalaputho ("Kerala Putra") in the Ashoka's edicts (3rd century BCE). The Graeco-Roman trade map Periplus Maris Erythraeirefers the Cheras as Celobotra.

The term Ceralamdivu or Ceran tivu and its cognates, meaning the "island of the Ceran kings", is a Classical Tamil name of Sri Lanka that takes root from the term Chera, from which the dynasty name is derived.

Early Cheras

Indian literary sources

The primary literary sources available regarding the early Chera Kings are the anthologies of Sangam literature, created between c. 1st and the 4th centuries CE. Pathirruppaththu, the fourth book in the Ettuthokai anthology of Sangam poems, mentions a number of rulers of the Chera dynasty. Each ruler is praised in ten songs sung by the court poet. The rulers (many were heirs-apparent) are mentioned in the following order:

Nedum Cheralathan – Kumatturk Kannanar

Palyane Chel Kezhu Kuttuvan -Palaik Kantamanar

Narmudi Cheral – Kappiyarruk Kappiyanar

Senguttuvan Chera – Paranar

Adu Kottu Pattu Cheralathan – Kakkaipatiniyar Nacellaiyar

Selva Kadumko Valiathan – Kapilar

Perum Cheral Irumporai – Aricil Kilar

Ilam Cheral Irumporai – Perunkunrurk Kilar

Sangam literature is rich in descriptions about a number of Chera kings and princes, along with the poets who extolled them. However, these are not worked into

connected history and settled chronology so far. A chronological device, known as Gajabahu synchronism, is used by historians to help date early Tamil history. Despite its dependency on numerous conjectures, Gajabahu synchronism has wide acceptance among modern scholars and is considered as the sheet anchor for the purpose of dating ancient Tamil literature. The method depends on an event depicted in Silappatikaram, which describes the visit of Kayavaku, the king of Ilankai (Sri Lanka), in the Chera kingdom during the reign of the Chera king, Senguttuvan. The Gajabahu method considers this Kayavaku as Gajabahu, who according Mahavamsa, a historical poem written in Pali language on the kings of Sri Lanka, lived in the latter half of the 2nd century CE. This, in turn, has been used to fix the period Senguttuvan, who ruled his kingdom for 55 years (according to the Pathirruppaththu), in the 2nd century CE.

The Cheras, the Pandyas, and the Cholas are also mentioned as the three ruling dynasties of Southern India in the Hindu epic Ramayana. Cheras are also mentioned in Aitareya Aranyaka, and Mahabharata, where they take the sides with the Pandavas in the famous war at Kurukshetra.

Archaeological sources

Archaeology has found epigraphic evidence of the early Cheras.[29] Two identical inscriptions near Tiruchirappalli, dated to the 2nd century CE, describe three generations of Chera rulers of the Irumporai clan. They record the construction of a rock shelter for Jains on the occasion of the investiture of the crown prince Ilam Kadungo, son of Perum Kadungo, and the grandson of Athan Cheral Irumporai.

Rulers according to the Sangam poems

Uthiyan Cheralathan

The first of the known rulers of the Chera entity was "Vanavaramban" Perumchottu Uthiyan Cheralathan. His capital was at Kuzhumur. Uthiyan Cheralathan was a contemporary of the Chola ruler Karikala Chola. Mamulanar credits him with having conducted a feast in honour of his ancestors. In a battle at Venni, Uthiyan Cheralathan was wounded on the back by Karikala Chola (Pattinappalai). Unable to bear the disgrace, the Chera committed suicide by starvation.

Nedum Cheralathan

Nedum Cheralathan probably consolidated the Chera kingdom, and literature and art developed highly during his period. Nedum Cheralathan is praised in the Second Ten ofPathirruppaththu composed by his court poet Kannanar. Nedum Cheralathan, famous for his hospitality, even gave a part of Umbarkkattu (Anamalai) to Kannanar.

The greatest enemies of Nedum Cheralathan were Kadambas of Banavasi. He also won another victory over the Yavanas (Westerners) on the coast. The chief of the Yavanas was captured and paraded in public with hands pinioned to his back and head poured over with ghee. Mamulanar refers to a sea coast township called Mantai and the exhibition ornaments and diamonds captured by Nedum Cheralathan there. Nedum Cheralathan was killed in a battle with a Chola ruler. The Chola ruler was also killed in the battle by a spear thrown at him by Nedum Cheralathan.

Nedum Cheralathan is claimed to have conquered Bharatavarsha up to the Himalayas and to have inscribed his royal emblem on the face of the mountains.

Palyani Sel Kelu Kuttuvan

"Puzhiyarkon" Palyani Sel Kelu Kuttuvan was the brother of Nedum Cheralathan. He helped his brother in the conquests of northern Malabar. At least a part of northern Malabar came under the Chera rule in this period as is proven by the title "Puzhiyarkon". In the later years of his life, Palyani retired from military life and spent time in arts, letters, gifts and helping Brahmins.

Narmudi Cheral

"Kalangaikkani" Narmudi Cheral (son of Nedum Cheralthan) is praised in the 4th set, written by Kappiyanar. He, famous for his generosity over the defeated, won a series of victories of the enemies. In the battle of Vakai-perum-turai Narmudi Cheral defeated and killed Nannan of Ezhimalai, annexing Puzhinadu.

Selva Kadumko Valiathan

Selva Kadumko Valiathan was the son of Anthuvan Cheral and the hero of the 7th set of poems composed by Kapilar. His residence was at the city of Tondi. He married the sister of the wife of Nedum Cheralathan. Selva Kadumko defeated the combined armies of the Pandyas and the Cholas. He is sometimes identified as the Athan Cheral Irumporai mentioned in the Aranattar-malai inscription of Pugalur.

Vel Kelu Kuttuvan (Senguttuvan)

Vel Kelu Kuttuvan, son of Nedum Cheralathan, ascended to the Chera throne after the death of his father. Vel Kelu Kuttuvan is often identified with the legendary Kadal Pirakottiya "Senguttuvan Chera", the most illustrious ruler of the early Cheras of the Sangam Age. Under his reign, the Chera kingdom extended from Kollimalai in the east to Tondi and Mantai on the western coast. The queen of Senguttuvan was Illango Venmal (the daughter of a Velir chief).

In the early years of his rule, Senguttuvan successfully intervened in a civil war in the Chola Kingdom. The war was among the Chola princes and the Cheras stood on the side of their relative Killi. The rivals of Prince Killi were defeated in a battle at Neriyavil, Uraiyur and he firmly established the Chola throne.

The land and naval expedition against the Kadambas was also successful. The Kadambas had the support of the Yavanas, who were routed in the Battle of Idumbil and Valyur. The Fort Kodukur in the which the Kadamba army took shelter was stormed and the Kadambas was beaten. In the following naval expedition the Yavana-supported Kadamba army was crushed. He is said to have defeated the Kongu people and a warrior called Mogur Mannan.

Ilango Adigal wrote the legendary Tamil epic Silappatikaram, which describes his brother Senguttuvan Chera's decision to propitiate a temple (Virakkallu) for the goddess Pattini (Kannagi) at Vanchi.

Senguttuvan Chera was perhaps a contemporary king Gajabahu of Sri Lanka. King Gajabahu, according to the Sangam poems, visited the Chera country during the Pattini festival at Vanchi. He is mentioned in the context of king Gajabahu's rule in Sri Lanka, which can be dated to either the first or last quarter of the 2nd century CE, depending on whether he was the earlier or the later Gajabahu.[8]

Adu Kottu Pattu Cheralathan

Adu Kottu Pattu Cheralathan was a crown prince for a long 38 years. Trade and commerce flourished in the Chera kingdom during his rule. He is said to have given some villages to Brahmins in Kuttanadu.

Perum Cheral Irumporai

"Tagadur Erinta" Perum Cheral Irumporai defeated the combined armies of the Pandyas, Cholas and that of the chief of Tagadur. He destroyed the famous city of Tagadur which was ruled by the a powerful ruler Adigaman Ezhni. He is also called "the lord of Puzhinad and Kollimala" and "the lord of Puhar". Puhar was the Chola capital. Perum Cheral Irumporai also annexed the territories of a minor chief called Kaluval.

Illam Cheral Irumporai

Illam Cheral Irumporai defeated the Pandyas and the Cholas and brought immense wealth to his capital at a city called Vanchi. He is said to have distributed these treasures among the Pana poets.

Yanaikatchai Mantaran Cheral Irumporai

King Yanaikatchai Mantaran Cheral Irumporai preserved the territorial integrity of the Chera Kingdom under his rule. However, by the time of Mantaran Cheral the decline of the kingdom had begun. The Chera ruled from Kollimalai in the east to Tondi and Mantai on the western coast. He defeated his enemies in a battle at Vilamkil.

The famous Pandya ruler Nedum Chezhian captured Mantaran Cheral as a prisoner. However, he managed to escape and regain the lost kingdom.

Kanaikkal Irumporai

Kanaikkal Irumporai is said to have defeated a local chief called Muvan. The Chera then brutally pulled out the teeth of his prisoner and planted them on the gates of the city of Tondi. The later Kanaikkal Irumporai was captured by the Chola ruler Sengannan and he later committed suicide by starvation.

Government and society during the Sangam era

Monarchy was the most important political institution of the Chera kingdom. There was a high degree of pomp and pageantry associated with the person of the king. The king wore a gold crown studded with precious stones. The king was an autocrat, but his powers were limited by a counsel of ministers and scholars. The king held daily durbar to hear the problems of the common men and to redress them on the spot. The royal queen had a very important and privileged status and she took her seat by the side of the king in all religious ceremonies.

Another important institution was the manram which functioned in each village of the Chera kingdom. Its meetings were usually held by the village elders under a banyan tree, and helped in the local settlement disputes. The manrams were the venues for the village festivals as well. In the course of the imperial expansion of the Cheras the members of the royal family set up residence at several places of the kingdom. They followed the collateral system of succession according to which the

eldest member of the family, wherever he lived, ascended the throne. Junior princes and heir-apparents (crown princes) helped the ruling king in the administration.

The Cheras had a well-equipped army which consisted of infantry, cavalry, elephants and chariots. There was also an efficient navy. The Chera soldiers made offering to the war goddess Kottavai before any military operation. It was traditional when the Chera rulers were victorious in a battle to wear anklets made out of the crowns of the defeated rulers.

Foreign trade

Chera trade with foreign countries around the Mediterranean sea can be traced back to before the Common Era. In the 1st century of the Common Era, the Romans conquered Egypt, which helped them to establish dominance in the Arabian sea trade. ThePeriplus of the Erythraean Sea portrays the trade in the kingdom of Cerobothras in detail. Muziris was the most important port in the Malabar coast, which according to the Periplus, abounded with large ships of Romans, Arabs and Greeks. Bulk spices, ivory, timber, pearls and gems were exported from the Chera ports to Mesopotamia, Egypt, Greece, Rome, Phoenicia and Arabia. The Romans brought vast amounts of gold in exchange for pepper.

Society and religion

Most of the Chera population followed native Dravidian practices. The worship of departed heroes was a common practice in the Chera kingdom along with tree worship and other kinds of ancestor worships. The war goddess Kottavai was propitiated with complex sacrifices. The Cheras probably worshiped this mother goddess. Kottavai was later assimilated into the present day form of the goddess Devi.[36][full citation needed] There is no evidence of snake worship in the Chera realms during the Sangam Age. Perhaps the Brahmins came to the Chera kingdom in the 3rd century BCE following the Jains and Buddhists. It was only in the 8th century CE that the Aryanisation of the Chera country reached its climax.

A small percentage of the population followed Jainism, Buddhism and Brahmanism. These three philosophies came from northern India to the Chera kingdom. A small Jewish and Christian population also lived in the Chera territories.

Decline of early Cheras

The 4th and 5th centuries witnessed the decline and fall of the Western Roman Empire. Also in the post-Sangam era, the Chera kingdom was invaded by a number of northern powers. A Kadamba record of the 5th century at the Edakkal cave in Wayanad bears testimony to the Kadamba presence in the deep south. Chera kingdom seems to have been affected by the Kalabhra upheaval in the 5th and 6th centuries CE. According toBuddhist works, Kalabhra ruler Achuta Vikkanta kept the Chera, Chola and Pandya rulers in his confinement and established control over a large portion of southern India. The Kalabhras were defeated around the 6th century with the revival of Pallava and Pandya power.

The Chalukyas of Badami must have conducted temporary conquests of Malabar. An inscription of Pulakeshin I claims that he conquered the Chera ruler. A number of other inscriptions mentions their victories over the kings of Chera kingdom and Ezhil Malai rulers. Pulakeshin II (610–642) is also said to have conquered

Chera, Pandya and Chola kingdoms. Soon the three rulers made an alliance and marched against the Chalukyas. But the Chalukyas defeated the confederation. Vinayaditya also subjugated the Chera king and made him pay tribute to the Chalukyas. King Vikramaditya is also said to have defeated the Cheras.

King Simhavishnu and Mahendra Varman are the first Pallava rulers to claim sovereignty over the Chera kingdom. Narasimha Varman and the Pandya ruler Sendan (654–670) also won victories over the Cheras. King Nandivarman II of the Pallavas allied with the Cheras in a fight against the Pandyas under Varaguna I. Rashtrakutas also claimed control over Cheras. Antidurga and Govinda III is said to have defeated the Cheras.

The Ay kingdom, south of the Chera kingdom, long functioned as an effective buffer state between a declining Chera kingdom and an emerging Pandya kingdom. Later the Pandyas conquered the Ays and a made it a tributary state. As late as 788 CE, the Pandyas under Maranjadayan or Jatilavarman Parantaka invaded the Ay kingdom and took the port city of Vizhinjam. However, the Ays did not seem to have submitted to the Pandyas, as they fought against them for almost a century.

Second/Later Cheras

Second/Later Cheras, formerly known as Kulasekharas were the nominal rulers of the Chera kingdom, a loose federation of regional chiefs, which existed between the 9th and 12th centuries CE.

The rule of later Cheras was based at the city of Mahodayapuram near the present day Kodungalloor, Kerala. The Perumal government was described by historian MGS Narayanan as a "Brahmin oligarchy with ritual sovereignty".

The Chera kingdom of the Perumals was the only large state that existed in pre-modern Kerala. It was a loose federation of Aryan-Brahmin settlers ("Naduvazhis") nominally acknowledging the sovereignty of the Cheraman Perumal and supporting him in defensive wars against the other Tamil powers. There was a Brahmin oligarchy which supported the Perumal. Most of the Perumals were saintly scholars who remained influenced by the power of Brahmin councillors ("Tali Adhikaris"). State formation was weak and state military enterprise in the imperial Chola style was out of the question.[44] In the Chera period the quasi-autonomous Brahmin settlements were administered by the "Sabha" under the supervision of the Naduvazhis. Naduvazhis were mostly the sons of Brahmins because of the Marumakkathayam system which promoted sambandham, a form of Brahmin-Sudra (Aryan-non-Aryan) matrimonial alliance.

The Chera state had only a precarious existence for three centuries, within which the Perumals were subordinate to the neighboring Cholas for more than half a century. The Cholas often controlled the Chera state during the 11th century. The Cholas had conquered the Cheras but the latter continued to rule as feudatories of the Cholas for well over a hundred years. It was only in the last decades of the 11th century, when the power of the Chola kingdom had weakened, that the Perumal of Mahodayapuram asserted his sovereignty. But this did not last long. The reign of the last Perumal, Rama Varma Kulashekhara|Rama Kulasekhara, was disturbed by internecine quarrels which led to his abdication of throne in favour of his Son Kotha Varma[45] Subsequent to the disappearance of Rama Kulasekhara at the beginning of the 12th century, the land of Kerala was governed by dozens of Naduvazhis under

a feudal system which went by the Brahminical codes of morality, precedents and traditions.

The Chera state had extensive trade relations with countries of the outside world. Sulaiman and al-Mas'udi, the Arab travellers who visited Malabar Coast during the period, have testified to the high degree of economic prosperity achieved by the state from its foreign trade. Sulaiman makes specific mention of the brisk trade with China. Malayalam emerged as a distinct language during the Kollam era, and Hinduism became the prominent religion of the state.

Second/Later Cheras; According to

Prof. Elamkulam Kunjan Pillai	Prof. M. G. S. Narayanan
Kulashekhara Varman (800–820 CE) Rajashekhara Varman (820- 844 CE) Sthanu Ravi Varman (844- 885 CE) Rama Varma Kulashekhara (885-917 CE) Goda Ravi Varma (917- 944 CE) Indu Kotha Varma (944- 962 CE) Bhaskara Ravi Varman I (962- 1019 CE) Bhaskara Ravi Varman II (1019-1021 CE) Vira Kerala (1021- 1028 CE) Rajasimha (1028- 1043 CE) Bhaskara Ravi Varman III (1043–1082 CE) Ravi Rama Varma (1082-1090 CE) Rama Varma Kulashekhara (1090-1102 CE)	Rama Rajasekhara (800-844 CE) Sthanu Ravi Kulasekhara (844-883 CE) Kota Ravi Vijayaraga (883-913) Kota Kota Kerala Kesari (913-943 CE) Indu Kota (943-962 CE) Bhaskara Ravi Manukuladilya (962-1021) Ravi Kota Rajasimha (1021-1036 CE) Raja Raja (1036-1089 CE) Ravi Rama Rajaditya (1036-1089 CE) Aditya Kota Ranaditya (1036-1089 CE) Rama Kulasekhara (1089-1122 CE)

Cheras of Venadu

In the absence of a central power at Makkotai, the divisions of the Chera kingdom soon emerged as principalities under separate chieftains. The post-Chera period witnessed a gradual decadence of the Nambudiri-Brahmans and rise of the Nairs. The original Chera dynasty migrated to Kollam (Quilon) and merged with the Ay kingdom.[citation needed]Ramavarma Kulasekhara, the last Chera King of Makotaiya Puram (Kodungaloor), became the first ruler of the Chera-Ai Dynasty and was called Ramar Thiruvadi. The rulers of the kingdom of Venadu, based at port Quilon in southern Kerala, trace their relations to the Perumals of Makkotai. Venadu ruler Kotha Varma (1102–1125) probably conquered Kottar and portions of Nanjanadu from the Pandyas. Under the reign of Vira Ravi Varma the system of government became very efficient, and village assemblies functioned vigorously. Udaya Marthanda Varma's tenure was noted for the close relationship between the Venadu and Pandyas. By the time of Ravi Kerala Varma (1215–1240),Odanadu kingdom had acknowledged the authority of the Venadu rulers. The next Venadu

ruler Padmanabha Marthanda Varma is alleged to have been killed by Vikrama Pandya in 1264 CE.

The Pandyas probably led a successful military expedition to Venadu and captured the capital city of Quilon between 1250 to 1300 CE. The records of Jatavarman Sundara Pandya and Maravarman Kulasekhara Pandya testify the establishment of Pandya rule over Venadu Cheras. The Chera-Ai Dynasty was a vassal country under the Pandyan dynasty. After the invasion of Malik Kafur in 1311 CE the Pandyan dynasty was defeated and the last Tamil Chera-Ai ruler Veera Udaya Marthanda Varma was forced to abdicate in favour of two Matriarchal princess from the Tulu Kolathiri kingdom called Attingal and Kunnumel Ranis.

Ravi Varma Kulasekhara

The death of the celebrated Pandyan king Jayasimha initiated a civil war in Venadu. Ravi Varma Kulasekhara, the last of the Venadu kings, came to throne according to the patrilineal system, and came out successful in this battle. Ravi Varma ruled Venadu as a vassal of the Pandyas till the death of king Maravarman Kulasekhara. After the death of the king he became independent and even claimed the throne of the Pandyas (Ravi Varma had married the daughter of the deceased Pandya ruler). He later annexed large parts of southern India and raised Venadu Cheras to the position of a powerful military state for a short time. The chaotic situation in the Pandya kingdom helped his conquests. The Venadu ruler invaded Pandya kingdom and defeated the prince Vira Pandya. After annexing the entire Pandya state, he was crowned as "Emperor of South India" in 1312 atMadurai. He later annexed Tiruvati and Kanchi (the Chola kingdom). Under Ravi Varma Venadu attained a high degree of economic prosperity.

The success of Ravi Varma was short lived and soon after his the death the region became a conglomeration of warring states. Venadu itself transformed into one these states. The line of Venadu kings after Ravi Varma continued through the law of matrilineal succession.

Aditya Varma Sarvanganatha (1376–1383) is known have defeated the Muslim raiders of the south and checked the tide of Islamic advance. Under the rule of Chera Udaya Marthanda Varma, the Venadu gradually extended their sway over the Tirunelveli region. Ravi Ravi Varma (1484–1512) was the ruler of Venad during the arrival of the Portuguese in India.

Copper-plate grants

The Vazhapalli Plates are a set of copper-plate grants issued by Kulasekhara Mahodayapuram King Rajashekhara Varman (820-844).

The Tharisapalli plates are a set of copper-plate grants issued to Mar Sapir Iso, the leader of the Saint Thomas Christians by Ayyanadikal Thiruvadikal in 849, conferring on the Palli and Palliyar a large number of privileges, including the 72 royal rights. These copper-plates are still present at Devalokam Aramana Kottayam, the headquarters of Malankara Orthodox Syrian Church (successor to the Saint Thomas Christians).

The Jewish copper plate was given to the Cochin Jews by Kulasekhara (Later Chera dynasty) king Bhaskara Ravi Varman I (962-1019 CE). This inscription

conferred on a Jewish leader Ousep Rabban the rights of the Anjuvannam and 72 other proprietary rights.

Mahodayapuram

Mahodaya Puram or Mahodaya Pattanam, Makotai was the capital city of Chera dynasty between 8th and 12th centuries CE. It was spread around present day Kodungallur (Cranganore), Thrissur district, and Kerala.[11]

The city was built around Tiruvanchikkulam temple (10°12′37″N 76°12′23″ECoordinates: 10°12′37″N 76°12′23″E) and was protected by high fortresses on all sides and had extensive pathways and palaces. The temple was a centre of Saivite cult in the early years of the later Chera age. The royal palace was at Gotramalleswaram, now known as Cheraman Parambu. The city administration was controlled by a special representative body, theKuttam. Mahodaya Puram was also called Vanchi by the later Chera rulers after their former capital.

The Chera rulers shifted their capital to Mahodayapuram from Vanchi. Chera ruler Kulashekhara Varman (9th century) styles himself in his works as the "Lord of Mahodayapuram". The famous Jewish Copper Plate grant (1000 CE) was issued by Muyirikkode (Mahodayapuram).

Mahodayapuram was famous throughout South India in the 9th and 10th centuries as great centre of learning and science. A well-equipped observatory functioned there under the charge of Sankaranarayana (c. 840 – c. 900), the Chera court astronomer.[49] It functioned in accordance with the rules of astronomy laid down by Aryabhata. Chera ruler Sthanu Ravi equipped a section of the observatory with some special machines (the yantras; Rasi Chakra, Jalesa Sutra, Golayantra etc.) and hence it came to be called Ravi Varma Yantra Valayam. It seems that that arrangements had been made in the city for recording correct time and announcing it to the public from different centres by the tolling of bells at regular intervals of a Ghatika (25 minutes). IThis practice (Nazhikakkottu) continued until the early 15th century.

The districts of the city were

Senamugham

Kottakkakam

Gotramalleswaram

Kodungallur

Balakrideswaram, etc.

Decline and fall[edit]

In the 11th and 12th centuries, the Cholas attacked the Chera state from the west. The Chola ruler Raja Raja made a number of successful military campaigns to the Chera kingdom during the rule of Bhaskara Ravi. The Cholas attacked the capital from the north and ravaged the city. Chola records suggests the fall of the fort at Udagai (Makotai, Mahodayapuram) sometime before 1008 CE. Other records suggests the Chola ruler's long journey through forests for burning down Udagai.

The Chola ruler Rajendra Chola probably surrounded the capital and killed the Chera king Bhaskara Ravi II in a decisive battle at Mahodayapuram in 1019 CE. The number of Chera generals and chieftains were also killed in the battle.

During the long war during the rule of Rama Varma, Mahodayapuram and neighboring places were completely burnt down and destroyed by the Cholas.The prolonged wars had weakened the Chera power considerably and some chiefs ("Naduvazhis") took advantage of the chaotic opportunity and asserted their independence. The royal palace at Gotramalleswaram was probably also burnt down and the king is known to have stayed at multiple locations such as Nediatali in Kodungallur and at Kollam (1102 CE). Later the Rama Varma shifted his capital to Kollam.

After the end of the Chera state, Mahodayapuram fell into the hands of the Kingdom of Perumpadappu. Traditionally, the rulers of Perumpadappu are regarded as descendants of the Chera rulers in the maternal line. In 1225 CE, the Perumpadappu ruler Vira Raghava issued the famous Syrian Christian Copper Plate grant to Iravi Kortanan from Mahodayapuram. Mahodayapuram served as the capital of Kingdom of Perumpadappu between the 13th and 15th centuries.

The Kalabhras

Identification

The identification of the Kalabhras is difficult. The chieftains of this tribe mentioned in Sangam literature are Tiraiyan of Pavattiri and Pulli of Vengadam. Romila Thapar claimed to have proved that Kalabhras were from Karnataka. The Kalavar must have been dislodged from their habitat near Tirupati by political events of the 3rd century, viz. the fall of the Satavahanas and the rise ofPallavas, resulting in political confusion in Tondaimandalam. P.T Srinivasa Iyengar identifies them with the Tamil Kalappalar clan.

Evidence from Literature

The history of Cholas of Uraiyur (Tiruchirappalli) is exceedingly obscure from 4th to the 9th century, chiefly owing to the occupation of their country by the Kalabhras.Buddhadatta, the great writer in Pali, belonged to Uraiyur. He mentions his contemporary, King Achchutavikranta of the Kalabharakula, as ruling over the Chola country fromKaveripattinam. He was a Buddhist. Tamil literary tradition refers to an Achchuta who kept the Chera, Chola and Pandya rulers in captivity. On the basis of the contemporaneity of Buddhadatta with Buddhaghosha, Achchuta may be assigned to the 5th century. Thus, after the Sangam age, the Cholas were forced into obscurity by the Kalabhras, who disturbed the placid political conditions of the Tamil country.

Reasons for the Unpopularity

Kalabhras, by ruling the Tamil country, disturbed the prevailing order. The Velvikudi inscriptions of the third regnal year of Pandya ruler Nedunjadaiyan (c. 765 – c. 815) say that Pandya ruler Mudukudumi Peruvaludi gave the village of Velvikudi as brahmadeya (gift to a

Brahmins). It was enjoyed for a long time. Then a Kali king named Kalabhran took possession of the extensive earth, driving away numberless great kings.

Patrons of Literature

The period of Kalabhras was marked by the ascendancy of Buddhism, and probably also of Jainism. It was characterized by considerable literary activity in Tamil. Most of the works grouped under the head, 'The Eighteen Minor works' might have been written during this period as also the Cilappadhikaram, Manimekalai and other works. Many of the authors were characterised as belonging to the `heretical' sects (meaning Buddhists and Jains). However, the great Tamil lexicographer Vaiyapuri Pillai had ascribed later dates to many of these works. This theory would undermine the link between the Kalabhras and the Eighteen Minor works.

Religion

It is known that the Kalabhras as patronized Hinduism, Buddhism and Jainism.

The late Kalabras appear to have been Shaivite and Vaishnavite. Scholar F.E. Hardy traced the palace ceremony to a Vishnu or Mayon temple to the rule of the Kalabras. Scholar Alice Justina Thinakaran writes that perhaps they were Shaivite Hindu, Jain or Buddhist.

They are known for patronizing Skanda or Subramanya, the Hindu god. They imprinted his image on their 5th-century coins, especially from Kaveripumpapattinam rulers.

King Achuta had worshiped Vaisnava Tirumal, and some scholars believe this means that the Kalabhras patronized Hinduism.

Fall of Kalabhras

The rule of Kalabhras of South India was ended by the counter invasions of Pandyas, Chalukyas and Pallavas. There are other references to the Kalabhras in Pallava and Chalukya inscriptions. They were conquered by Pallava Simhavishnu and Pandya Kadungon.

The Western Gangas

History

Multiple theories have been proposed regarding the ancestry of the founders of the Western Ganga dynasty (prior to the 4th century). Some mythical accounts point to a northern origin, while theories based on epigraphy suggest a southern origin. Historians who propose the southern origin have further debated whether the early petty chieftains of the clan (prior to their rise to power) were natives of the southern districts of modern Karnataka, the Kongu region in modern Tamil Nadu or of the southern districts of modern Andhra Pradesh. These regions encompass an area of the southern Deccan where the three modern states merge geographically. It is theorised that the Gangas may have taken advantage of

the confusion caused by the invasion of southern India by the northern king Samudra Gupta prior to 350, and carved out a kingdom for themselves. The area they controlled was called Gangavadi and included regions of the modern districts of Mysore, Hassan Chamarajanagar, Tumkur,Kolar, Mandya and Bangalore in Karnataka state. At times, they also controlled some areas in modern Tamil Nadu (Kongu region starting from the 6th century rule of King Avinita) and Andhra Pradesh (Ananthpur region starting from the middle of the 5th century). The founding king of the dynasty was Konganivarma Madhava who made Kolar his capital around 350 and ruled for about twenty years.

By the time of Harivarma in 390, the Gangas had consolidated their kingdom with Talakad as their capital. Their move from the early capital Kolar may have been a strategic one with the intention of containing the growing Kadamba power. By 430 they had consolidated their eastern territories comprising modern Bangalore, Kolar and Tumkur districts and by 470 they had gained control over Kongu region in modern Tamil Nadu, Sendraka (modern Chikkamagaluru and Belur), Punnata and Pannada regions (comprising modern Heggadadevanakote and Nanjangud) in modern Karnataka. In 529, King Durvinita ascended the throne after waging a war with his younger brother who was favoured by his father, King Avinita. Some accounts suggest that in this power struggle, the Pallavas of Kanchi supported Avinita's choice of heir and the Badami Chalukya King Vijayaditya supported his father-in-law, Durvinita. From the inscriptions it is known that these battles were fought in Tondaimandalam and Kongu regions (northern Tamil Nadu) prompting historians to suggest that Durvinita fought the Pallavas successfully. Considered the most successful of the Ganga kings, Durvinita was well versed in arts such as music, dance, ayurveda and taming wild elephants. Some inscriptions sing paeans to him by comparing him to Yudhishthira and Manu – figures from Hindu mythology known for their wisdom and fairness.

Politically, the Gangas were feudatories and close allies who also shared matrimonial relations with the Chalukyas. This is attested by inscriptions which describe their joint campaigns against their arch enemy, the Pallavas of Kanchi. From the year 725 onwards, the Gangavadi territories came to be called as the "Gangavadi-96000" (Shannavati Sahasra Vishaya) comprising the eastern and western provinces of modern south Karnataka. King Sripurusha fought the Pallava King Nandivarman Pallavamalla successfully, bringing Penkulikottai in northArcot under his control temporarily for which he earned the title Permanadi. A contest with the Pandyas of Madurai over control of Kongu region ended in a Ganga defeat, but a matrimony between a Ganga princess and Rajasimha Pandya's son brought peace helping the Gangas retain control over the contested region.

In 753, when the Rashtrakutas replaced the Badami Chalukyas as the dominant force in the Deccan, the Gangas offered stiff resistance for about a century. King Shivamara II is mostly known for his wars with the Rashtrakuta Dhruva Dharavarsha, his subsequent defeat and imprisonment, his release from prison and eventually his death on the battle field. The Ganga resistance continued through the reign of Rashtrakuta Govinda III and by 819, a Ganga resurgence gained them partial control over Gangavadi under King Rachamalla. Seeing the futility of waging war with the Western Ganga, Rashtrakuta Amoghavarsha I gave his daughter Chandrabbalabbe in marriage to Ganga prince Butuga I, son of King Ereganga Neetimarga. The Gangas thereafter became staunch allies of the Rashtrakutas, a position they maintained till the end of the Rashtrakuta dynasty of Manyakheta.

After an uneventful period, Butuga II ascended the throne in 938 with the help of Rashtrakuta Amoghavarsha III (whose daughter he married). He helped the Rashtrakutas win decisive victories in Tamilakam in the battle of Takkolam against the Chola Dynasty. With this victory, the Rashtrakutas took control of modern northern Tamil Nadu. In return for their valour, the Gangas were awarded extensive territories in the Tungabhadra river valley. King Marasimha II who came to power in 963 aided the Rashtrakutas in victories against the Gurjara Pratihara King Lalla and the Paramara kings of Malwa in Central India. Chavundaraya, a minister in the Western Ganga court was a valiant commander, able administrator and an accomplished poet in Kannada and Sanskrit. He served King Marasimha II and his successors ably and helped King Rachamalla IV suppress a civil war in 975. Towards the end of the 10th century, the Rashtrakutas had been supplanted by the Western Chalukya Empire in Manyakheta. In the south, the Chola Dynasty who were seeing a resurgence of power under Rajaraja Chola I conquered Gangavadi around the year 1000, bringing the Western Ganga dynasty to an end. Thereafter, large areas of south Karnataka region came under Chola control for about a century.

Western Ganga kings (350–999)	
Konganivarman Madhava	(350–370)
Madhava	(370–390)
Harivarman	(390–410)
Vishnugopa	(410–430)
Madhava III Tandangala	(430–469)
Avinita	(469–529)
Durvinita	(529–579)
Mushkara	(579–604)
Polavira	(604–629)
Srivikrama	(629–654)
Bhuvikarma	(654–679)
Shivamara I	(679–726)
Sripurusha	(726–788)
Shivamara II	(788–816)
Rachamalla I	(816–843)
Ereganga Neetimarga	(843–870)
Rachamalla II	(870–907)

Ereganga Neetimarga II	(907–921)
Narasimha	(921–933)
Rachamalla III	(933–938)
Butuga II	(938–961)
Marulaganga Neetimarga	(961–963)
Marasimha II Satyavakya	(963–975)
Rachamalla IV Satyavakya	(975–986)
Rachamalla V (Rakkasaganga)	(986–999)
Neetimarga Permanadi	(999)
Raja Raja Chola I (Chola)	(985–1014)

Administration

The Western Ganga administration was influenced by principles stated in the ancient text arthashastra. The praje gavundas mentioned in the Ganga records held responsibilities similar to those of the village elders (gramavriddhas) mentioned by Kautilya. Succession to the throne was hereditary but there were instances when this was overlooked. The kingdom was divided into Rashtra (district) and further into Visaya (consisting of possibly 1000 villages) and Desa. From the 8th century, the Sanskrit term Visaya was replaced by the Kannada termNadu. Examples of this change are Sindanadu-8000 and Punnadu-6000, with scholars differing about the significance of the numerical suffix. They opine that it was either the revenue yield of the division computed in cash terms or the number of fighting men in that division or the number of revenue paying hamlets in that division or the number of villages included in that territory.

Inscriptions have revealed several important administrative designations such as prime minister (sarvadhikari), treasurer (shribhandari), foreign minister (sandhivirgrahi) and chief minister (mahapradhana). All of these positions came with an additional title of commander (dandanayaka). Other designations were royal steward (manevergade), master of robes (mahapasayita), commander of elephant corps (gajasahani), commander of cavalry (thuragasahani) etc. In the royal house, Niyogis oversaw palace administration, royal clothing and jewellery etc. and the Padiyarawere responsible for court ceremonies including door keeping and protocol.

Officials at the local level were the pergade, nadabova, nalagamiga, prabhu and gavunda. The pergades were

superintendents from all social classes such as artisans, gold smiths, black smiths etc. The pergades dealing with the royal household were called manepergade (house superintendent) and those who collected tolls were called Sunka vergades. The nadabovas were accountants and tax collectors at the Nadu level and sometimes functioned as scribes. The nalagamigas were officers who organized and maintained defence at the Nadu level. The prabhu constituted a group of elite people drawn together to witness land grants and demarcation of land boundaries. Thegavundas who appear most often in inscriptions were the backbone of medieval polity of the southern Karnataka region. They were landlords and local elite whom the state utilized their services to collect taxes, maintain records of landownership, bear witness to grants and transactions and even raise militia when required.

Inscriptions that specify land grants, rights and ownership were descriptive of the boundaries of demarcation using natural features such as rivers, streams, water channels, hillocks, large boulders, layout of the village, location of forts (kote) if any in the proximity, irrigation canals, temples, tanks and even shrubs and large trees. Also included was the type of soil, the crops meant to be grown and tanks or wells to be excavated for irrigation. Inscriptions mention wet land, cultivable land, forest and waste land. There are numerous references to hamlets (palli) belonging to the hunter communities who resided in them (bedapalli). From the 6th century onwards, the inscriptions refer to feudal lords by the title arasa. The arasas were either brahmins or from tribal background who controlled hereditary territories paying periodic tribute to the king.[58] The velavali who were loyal bodyguards of the royalty were fierce warriors under oath (vele). They moved with the royal family and were expected to fight for the master and be willing to lay down their lives in the process. If the king died, the velavali were required to self immolate on the funeral pyre of the master.

Economy

The Gangavadi region consisted of the malnad region, the plains (Bayaluseemae) and the semi-malnad with lower elevation and rolling hills. The main crops of the malnad region were paddy, betel leaves, cardamom and pepper and the semi-malnad region with its lower altitude produced rice, millets such as ragi and corn, pulses, oilseeds and it was also the base for cattle farming.[60] The plains to the east were the flat lands fed by Kaveri, Tungabhadra and Vedavati rivers where cultivations of sugarcane, paddy, coconut, areca nut (adeka totta), betel leaves, plantain and flowers (vara vana) were common. Sources of irrigation were excavated tanks, wells, natural ponds and water bodies in the catchment area of dams (Katta). Inscriptions attesting to irrigation of previously uncultivated lands seem to indicate an expanding agrarian community.

Soil types mentioned in records are black soil (Karimaniya) in the Sinda-8000 territory and to red soil (Kebbayya mannu) Cultivated land was of three types; wet land, dry land and to a lesser extent garden land with paddy being the dominant crop of the region. Wet lands were called kalani, galde, nir mannu or nir panya and was specifically used to denote paddy land requiring standing water. The fact that pastoral economies were spread throughout Gangavadi region comes from references to cowherds in many inscriptions. The termsgosahasra (a thousand cows), gasara (owner of cows), gosasi (donor of cows), goyiti (cowherdess), gosasa (protector of cows) attest to this. Inscriptions indicate ownership of cows may have been as important as cultivable land and that

there may have existed a social hierarchy based on this. Inscriptions mention cattle raids attesting to the importance of the pastoral economy, destructive raids, assaults on women (pendir-udeyulcal), abduction of women by bedas (hunter tribes); all of which indicate the existing militarism of the age.

Lands that were exempt from taxes were called manya and sometimes consisted of several villages. They were granted by local chieftains without any reference to the overlord, indicating a de-centralised economy. These lands, often given to heroes who perished in the line of duty were called bilavritti or kalnad. When such a grant was made for the maintenance of temples at the time of consecration, it was called Talavritti. Some types of taxes on income were kara or anthakara (internal taxes), utkota (gifts due to the king), hiranya (cash payments) and sulika (tolls and duties on imported items). Taxes were collected from those who held the right to cultivate land; even if the land was not actually cultivated.

Siddhaya was a local tax levied on agriculture and pottondi was a tax levied on merchandise by the local feudal ruler. Based on context, pottondialso meant 1/10, aydalavi meant 1/5 and elalavi meant 1/7. Mannadare literally meant land tax and was levied together with shepherds tax (Kurimbadere) payable to the chief of shepherds. Bhaga meant a portion or share of the produce from land or the land area itself. Minor taxes such as Kirudere (due to the landlords) and samathadere (raised by the army officers or samantha) are mentioned. In addition to taxes for maintenance of the local officer's retinue, villages were obligated to feed armies on the march to and from battles. Bittuvatta or niravari taxes comprised usually of a percentage of the produce and was collected for constructing irrigation tanks.

Culture

Religion

The Western Gangas gave patronage to all the major religions of the time; Jainism and the Hindu sects of Shaivism, Vedic Brahminism andVaishnavism. However scholars have argued that not all Gangas kings may have given equal priority to all the faiths. Some historians believe that the Gangas were ardent Jains. However, inscriptions contradict this by providing references to kalamukhas (staunch Shaiva ascetics),pasupatas and lokayatas (followers of Pasupatha doctrine) who flourished in Gangavadi, indicating that Shaivism was also popular. King Madhava and Harivarma were devoted to cows and brahmins, King Vishnugopa was a devout Vaishnava, Madhava III's and Avinita's inscriptions describe lavish endowments to Jain orders and temples and King Durvinita performed Vedic sacrifices prompting historians to claim he was aHindu.

Jainism became popular in the dynasty in the 8th century when the ruler King Shivamara I constructed numerous Jain basadis. King Butuga II and minister Chavundaraya were staunch Jains which is evident from the construction of the Gommateshwara monolith. Jains worshipped the twenty four tirthankars (Jinas) whose images were consecrated in their temples. The worship of the footprint of spiritual leaders such as those of Bhadrabahu in Shravanabelagola from the 10th century is considered a parallel to Buddhism. Some brahminical influences are seen in the consecration of the Gomateshwara monolith which is the statue of Bahubali, the son of Tirthankar Adinatha (just as Hindus worshipped the sons of Shiva). The worship of subordinate deities such as yaksa and yaksi, earlier considered as mere attendants of the tirthankars was seen from the 7th century to the 12th century.

Vedic Brahminism was popular in the 6th and 7th centuries when inscriptions refer to grants made to SrotriyaBrahmins. These inscriptions also describe the gotra (lineage) affiliation to royal families and their adherence of such Vedic rituals as asvamedha (horse sacrifice) and hiranyagarbha. Brahmins and kings enjoyed a mutually beneficial relationship; rituals performed by the brahmins gave legitimacy to kings and the land grants made by kings to brahmins elevated them in society to the level of wealthy landowners.[88] Vaishnavism however maintained a low profile and not many inscriptions describe grants towards its cause. Some Vaishnava temples were built by the Gangas such as the Narayanaswami temples atNanjangud, Sattur and Hangala in modern Mysore district. The deity Vishnu was depicted with four arms holding a conch (sanka), discus (cakra), mace (gada) and lotus (padma).

From the beginning of the 8th century, patronage to Shaivism increased in every section of the society; the landed elite, landlords, assemblies (samaya), schools of learning (aghraharas) and minor ruling families such as the Bana, Nolamba and Chalukya clans. The Shaiva temples contained a Shiva linga (phallus) in the sanctum sanctorum along with images of the mother goddess, Surya (Sun god) and Nandi (a bull and attendant of Shiva) which was normally enshrined in a separate pavilion facing the sanctum. The linga was man made and in some cases had etchings of Ganapati (son of Shiva) and Parvati (consort and wife of Shiva) on it. Due to the vigorous efforts of priests and ascetics, Shaiva monastic orders flourished in many places such as Nandi Hills, Avani and Hebbata in modern Kolar district.

Society

The Western Ganga society in many ways reflected the emerging religious, political and cultural developments of those times. Women became active in local administration because Ganga kings distributed territorial responsibility to their queens such as the feudal queen Parabbaya-arasi of Kundattur and the queens of King Sripurusha, Butuga II and feudal king Permadi. Inheritance of fiscal and administrative responsibility by the son-in-law, the wife or by the daughter is evident. The position of prime minister of King Ereganga II and position of nalgavunda (local landlord) bestowed upon Jakkiabbe, the wife of a fallen hero are examples. When Jakkiabbe took to asceticism, her daughter inherited the position.

The devadasi system (sule or courtesan) in temples was prevalent and was modelled after the structures in the royal palace. Contemporaneous literature such a Vaddaradhane makes a mention of the chief queen (Dharani Mahadevi) accompanied by lower ranking queens (arasiyargal) and courtesans of the women's royal quarter (pendarasada suleyargal). Some of the courtesans and concubines employed in the harem of the kings and chieftains were well respected, examples being Nandavva at whose instance a local chief made land grant to a Jain temple. Education in the royal family was closely supervised and included such subjects as political science, elephant and horse riding, archery, medicine, poetry, grammar, drama, literature, dance, singing and use of musical instruments. Brahmins enjoyed an influential position in society and were exempt from certain taxes and customs due on land. In turn they managed public affairs such as teaching, local judiciary, functioned as trustees and bankers, managed schools, temples, irrigation tanks, rest houses, collected taxes due from villages and raised money from public subscriptions.

By virtue of a Hindu belief that killing of a brahmin (Bramhatya) was a sin, capital punishment was not applicable to them. Upper caste kshatriyas(satkshatriya) were also exempt from capital punishment due to their higher position in the caste system. Severe crimes committed were punishable by the severing of a foot or hand. Contemporary literary sources reveal up to ten castes in the Hindu caste system; three among kshatriya, three among brahmin, two among vaishya and two among shudras. Family laws permitted a wife or daughter or surviving relatives of a deceased person to claim properties such as his home, land, grain, money etc. if there were no male heirs. If no claimants to the property existed, the state took possession of these properties as Dharmadeya (charitable asset). Intercaste marriage, child marriage, marriage of a boy to maternal uncles daughter, Svayamvara marriage (where the bride garlands her choice of a groom from among many aspirants) were all in vogue. Memorials containing hero stones (virkal) were erected for fallen heroes and the concerned family received monetary aid for maintenance of the memorial.

The presence of numerous Mahasatikals (or Mastikal – hero stones for a woman who accepted ritual death upon the demise of her husband) indicates the popularity of Satiamong royalty. Ritual death by sallekhana and by jalasamadhi (drowning in water) were also practiced. Popular clothing among men was the use of two unrestricted garments, a Dhoti as a lower garment and a plain cloth as upper garment while women wore Saris with stitched petticoats. Turbans were popular with men of higher standing and people used umbrellas made with bamboo or reeds. Ornaments were popular among men and women and even elephants and horses were decorated. Men wore finger rings, necklaces (honnasara and honnagala sara), bracelets (Kaduga) and wristlets (Kaftkina). Women wore a nose jewel (bottu), nose ring (mugutti), bangles (bale or kankana) and various types of necklaces (honna gante sara and kati sutra). During leisure, men amused themselves with horse riding, watching wrestling bouts, cock fights and ram fights. There existed a large and well organised network of schools for imparting higher education and these schools were known by various names such as agraharas,ghatikas, brahmapura or matha. Inscriptions mention schools of higher education at Salotgi, Balligavi, Talagunda, Aihole, Arasikere and other places.

Literature

The Western Ganga rule was a period of brisk literary activity in Sanskrit and Kannada, though many of the writings are now considered extinct and are known only from references made to them. Chavundaraya's writing, Chavundaraya Purana (or Trishashtilakshana mahapurana) of 978 CE, is an early existing work in prose style in Kannada and contains a summary of the Sanskrit writings, Adipurana and Uttarapurana which were written a century earlier by Jinasena and Gunabhadra during the rule of Rashtrakuta Amoghavarsha I. The prose, composed in lucid Kannada, was mainly meant for the common man and avoided any reference to complicated elements of Jain doctrines and philosophy. His writings seem to be influenced by the writings of his predecessor Adikavi Pampa and contemporary Ranna. The work narrates the legends of a total of 63 Jain proponents including twenty-four Jain Tirthankar, twelve Chakravartis, nine Balabhadras, nine Narayanas and ninePratinarayanas.

The earliest postulated Kannada writer from this dynasty is King Durvinita of the 6th century. Kavirajamarga of 850 CE, refers to a Durvinita as an early writer of Kannada prose. Around 900 CE, Gunavarma I authored the Kannada

works, Sudraka and Harivamsa. His writings are considered extinct but references to these writings are found in later years. He is known to have been patronised by King Ereganga Neetimarga II. In Sudraka, he has favourably compared his patron to King Sudraka of ancient times. The great Kannada poet Ranna was patronised by Chavundaraya in his early literary days. Ranna's classic Parashurama charite is considered a eulogy of his patron who held such titles asSamara Parashurama.

Nagavarma I, a brahmin scholar who came from Vengi in modern Andhra Pradesh (late 10th century) was also patronised by Chavundaraya. He wrote Chandombudhi (ocean of prosody) addressed to his wife. This is considered the earliest available Kannada writing in prosody. He also wrote one of the earliest availableromance classics in Kannada called Karnataka Kadambari in sweet and flowing champu (mixed verse and prose) style. It is based on an earlier romantic work in Sanskrit by poet Bana and is popular among critics. Gajashtaka (hundred verses on elephants), a rare Kannada work on elephant management was written by King Shivamara II around 800 CE but this work is now considered extinct. Other writers such as Manasiga and Chandrabhatta were known to be popular in the 10th century.

In an age of classical Sanskrit literature, Madhava II (brother of King Vishnugopa) wrote a treatise Dattaka Sutravritti which was based on an earlier work on erotics by a writer called Dattaka. A Sanskrit version of Vaddakatha, a commentary on Pāṇini's grammar called Sabdavathara and a commentary on the 15th chapter of a Sanskrit work called Kiratarjunneya by poet Bharavi (who was in Durvinita's court) are ascribed to Durvinita. King Shivamara II is known to have written Gajamata Kalpana. Hemasena, also known as Vidya Dhananjaya authored Raghavapandaviya, a narration of the stories of Rama and the Pandavassimultaneously through puns. Gayachintamani and Kshatrachudamini which were based on poet Bana's work Kadambari were written by Hemasena's pupil Vadeebhasimha in prose style. and Chavundaraya wrote Charitarasara.

Architecture

The Western Ganga style of architecture was influenced by the Pallava and Badami Chalukya architectural features, in addition to indigenous Jain features. The Ganga pillars with a conventional lion at the base and a circular shaft of the pillar on its head, the stepped Vimana of the shrine with horizontal mouldings and square pillars were features inherited from the Pallavas. These features are also found in structures built by their subordinates, the Banas and Nolambas.

The monolith of Gomateshwara commissioned by Chavundaraya is considered the high point of the Ganga sculptural contribution in ancient Karnataka. Carved from fine-grained white granite, the image stands on a lotus. It has no support up to the thighs and is 60 feet (18 m) tall with the face measuring 6.5 feet (2.0 m). With the serene expression on the face of the image, its curled hair with graceful locks, its proportional anatomy, the monolith size, and the combination of its artistry and craftsmanship have led it to be called the mightiest achievement in sculptural art in medieval Karnataka. It is the largest monolithic statue in the world. Their free standing pillars called Mahasthambha orBhrahmasthambha are also considered unique, examples of which are the Brahmadeva pillar and Tyagada Brahmadeva Pillar. At the top of the pillar whose shaft (cylindrical or octagonal) is

decorated with creepers and other floral motifs is the seated Brahma and the base of the pillar normally has engravings of important Jain personalities and inscriptions.

Other important contributions are the Jain basadis' whose towers have gradually receding stories (talas) ornamented with small models of temples. These tiny shrines have in them engravings of tirthankars (Jain saints). Semicircular windows connect the shrines and decorativeKirtimukha (demon faces) are used at the top. The Chavundaraya basadi built in the 10th or 11th century, Chandragupta basadi built in the 6th century and the monolithic of Gomateshwara of 982 are the most important monuments at Shravanabelagola. Some features were added to the Chandragupta basadi by famous Hoysala sculptor Dasoja in the 12th century. The decorative doorjambs and perforated screen windows which depict scenes from the life of King Chandragupta Maurya are known to be his creation. The Panchakuta Basadi at Kambadahalli (five towered Jan temple) of about 900 with a Brahmadeva pillar is an excellent example of Dravidian art. The wall niches here are surmounted by torana (lintel) with carvings of floral motifs, flying divine creatures (gandharva) and imaginary monsters (makara) ridden by Yaksas (attendants of saints) while the niches are occupied by images of tirthankars themselves.

The Gangas built many Hindu temples with impressive Dravidian gopuras containing stucco figures from the Hindu pantheon, decorated pierced screen windows which are featured in the mantapa (hall) along with saptamatrikacarvings (seven heavenly mothers). Some well known examples are the Arakeshvara Temple at Hole Alur, Kapileswara temple at Manne, Kolaramma temple at Kolar, Rameshvara temple at Narasamangala, Nagareshvara temple at Begur and the Kallesvara temple at Aralaguppe. At Talakad they built the Maralesvara temple, the Arakesvara temple and the Patalesvara temple. Unlike the Jain temples where floral frieze decoration is common, Hindu temples were distinguished by friezes (slab of stone with decorative sculptures) illustrating episodes from the epics and puranas. Another unique legacy of the Gangas are the number of virgal (hero stones) they have left behind; memorials containing sculptural details in relief of war scenes, Hindu deities, saptamatrikas, Jain tirthankars and ritual death (such as the Doddahundi hero stone).

Language

The Western Gangas used Kannada and Sanskrit extensively as their language of administration. Some of their inscriptions are also bilingual in these languages. In bilingual inscriptions the formulaic passages stating origin myths, genealogies, titles of Kings and benedictions tended to be in Sanskrit, while the actual terms of the grant such as information on the land or village granted, its boundaries, participation of local authorities, rights and obligations of the grantee, taxes and dues and other local concerns were in the local language. The usage of these two languages showed important changes over the centuries. During the first phase (350–725), Sanskrit copper plates dominated, indicating the initial ascendancy of the local language as a language of administration and the fact that majority of the records from this phase were brahmadeya grants (grants to Brahmin temples). In the second phase (725–1000), lithic inscriptions in Kannada outnumbered Sanskrit copper plates, consistent with the patronage Kannada received from rich and literate Jains who used Kannada as their medium to spread the Jain faith. Recent excavations at Tumbula near Mysore have revealed a set of early copper plate bilingual inscriptions dated 444. The genealogy of the kings of the dynasty is described in Sanskrit while Kannada was used to describe the boundary of the

village. An interesting inscription discovered at Beguru near modern Bangalore that deserves mention is the epigraph dated 890 that refers to a Bengaluru war. This is in Hale Kannada (old Kannada) language and is the earliest mention of the name of Bangalore city. The Western Gangas minted coins with Kannada and Nagari legends, the most common feature on their coins was the image of an elephant on the obverse and floral petal symbols on the reverse. The Kannada legend Bhadr, a royal umbrella or a conch shell appeared on top of the elephant image. The denominations are the pagoda (weighing 52 grains), the fanam weighting one tenth or one half of thepagoda and the quarter fanams.

The Pallavas

Origins

A Sangam Period classic, Manimekhalai, attributes the origin of the first Pallava King from a liaison between the daughter of a Naga king of Manipallava named Pilli Valai (Pilivalai) with a Chola king, Killivalavan, out of which union was born a prince, who was lost in ship wreck and found with a twig (pallava) of Cephallandra indica (Tondai) around his ankle and hence named Tondai-man. Another version states "Pallava" was born from the union of the Brahmin Asvathama with a Naga Princess also supposedly supported in the sixth verse of the Bahur plates which states "From Asvathama was born the king named Pallava". The Pallavas themselves claimed to descend from Brahma and Asvathama.

Though Manimekhalai posits Ilam Tiriyan as a Chola, not a Pallava, the Velurpalaiyam Plates dated to 852, do not mention the Cholas. Instead they credit the Naga liaison episode, and creation of the Pallava line, to a different Pallava king named Virakurcha, while preserving its legitimising significance:

...from him (Aśvatthāman) in order (came) Pallava, the lord of the whole earth, whose fame was bewildering. Thence, came into existence the race of Pallavas... [including the son of Chūtapallava] Vīrakūrcha, of celebrated name, who simultaneously with (the hand of) the daughter of the chief of serpents grasped also the complete insignia of royalty and became famous.

Historically, early relations between Nagas and Pallavas became well-established before the myth of Pallava's birth to Ashwatthama took root. A praśasti (literally "praise"), composed in 753 on the dynastic eulogy in the Kasakadi (Kasakudi) plates, by the Pallava Trivikrama, traces the Pallava lineage from creation through a series of mythic progenitors, and then praises the dynasty in terms of two similes hinged together by triple use of the word avatara ("descent"), as below

From [them] descended the powerful, spotless Pallava dynasty [vaṁśāvatāra], which resembled a partial incarnation [aṃśāvatāra] of Visnu, as it displayed unbroken courage in conquering the circle of the world...and which resembled the descent of the Ganges [gaṅgāvatāra] as it purified the whole world.

The Proceedings of the First Annual Conference of South Indian History Congress also notes: The word Tondai means a creeper and the term Pallava conveys a similar meaning. Since the Pallavas ruled in the territory extending from Bellary to Bezwada, it led to the theory that they were a northern dynasty who contracted marriages with princesses of the Andhra Dynasty and so inherited a portion of southern Andhra Pradesh.

Historian K. R. Subramanian says the Pallavas were originally a Telugu power rather than a Tamil one. Telugu sources know of a Trilochana Pallava as the earliest Telugu king and they are

confirmed by later inscriptions. The first Chalukya king is said to have been met, repulsed and killed by the same Trilochana near Mudivemu (Cuddappah district). A Buddhist story describes Kala the Nagaraja, resembling the Pallava Kalabhartar as a king of the region near Krishna district. The Pallava Bogga may be identified with the kingdom of Kala in Andhra which had close and early maritime and cultural relations with Ceylon.

While K. A. Nilakanta Sastri postulated that Pallavas were descendants of a North Indian dynasty of Indian origin who moved southwards, adopted local traditions to their own use, and named themselves as Tondaiyar after the land called Tondai. K. P. Jayaswal also proposed a North Indian origin, putting forward the theory that the Pallavas were a branch of the Vakatakas.

The earliest inscriptions of the Pallavas were found in the districts of Bellary, Guntur and Nellore and all the inscriptions of the dynasty till the rise of Simhavishnu were found in the latter two of those.

Rivalries

With Cholas

The Pallavas captured Kanchi from the Cholas as recorded in the Velurpalaiyam Plates, around the reign of the fifth king of the Pallava line Kumaravishnu I. Thereafter Kanchi figures in inscriptions as the capital of the Pallavas. The Cholas drove the Pallavas away from Kanchi in the mid-4th century, in the reign of Vishugopa, the tenth king of the Pallava line. The Pallavas re-captured Kanchi in the mid-6th century, possibly in the reign of Simhavishnu, the fourteenth king of the Pallava line, whom the Kasakudi plates state as "the lion of the earth". Thereafter the Pallavas held on to Kanchi until the 9th century, until the reign of their last king, Vijaya-Nripatungavarman.

With kadambas

The Pallavas were in conflict with major kingdoms at various periods of time. A contest for political supremacy existed between the early Pallavas and the Kadambas. Numerous Kadamba inscriptions provide details of Pallava-Kadamba hostlities.

With Kalabhras

During the reign of Vishnugopavarman II (approx. 500-525), political convulsion engulfed the Pallavas due to the Kalabhra invasion of the Tamil country. Towards the close of the 6th century, the Pallava Simhavishnu stuck a blow against the Kalabhras. The Pandyas followed suit. Thereafter the Tamil country was divided between the Pallavas in the north with Kanchipuram as their capital, and Pandyas in the south withMadurai as their capital.

Birudas

The royal custom of using a series of descriptive honorific titles, birudas, was particularly prevalent among the Pallavas. The birudas of Mahendravarman I are in Sanskrit, Tamil and Telugu. The Telugu birudas show Mahendravarman's involvement with the Andhra region continued to be strong at the time he was creating his cave-temples in the Tamil region. The suffix "Malla" was used by the Pallava rulers. Mahendravarman I used the biruda, Satrumalla, "a warrior who overthrows his enemies", and his grandson Paramesvara I was calledEkamalla "the sole warrior or wrestler". Pallava kings, presumably exalted ones, were known by the title Mahamalla ("great wrestler").

Languages used

All the early Pallava royal inscriptions are either in Sanskrit or in Prakrit language, considered the official languages of the dynasty while the official script was Pallava grantha. Similarly, inscriptions found in Andhra Pradesh and Karnataka State are in Sanskrit and Prakrit. The phenomenon of using Prakrit as official languages in which rulers left their inscriptions and

epigraphies continued till the 6th century. It would have been in the interest of the ruling elite to protect their privileges by perpetuating their hegemony of Prakrit in order to exclude the common people from sharing power (Mahadevan 1995a: 173-188). The Pallavas in their Tamil country used Tamil and Sanskrit in their inscriptions.

Tamil came to be the main language used by the Pallavas in their inscriptions, though a few records continued to be in Sanskrit. This language was first adopted by Mahendravarman I himself in a few records of his; but from the time of Paramesvaravarman I, the practice came into vogue of inscribing a part of the record in Sanskrit and the rest in Tamil. Almost all the copper plate records, viz., Kasakudi, Tandantottam, Pattattalmangalm, Udayendiram and Velurpalaiyam are composed both in Sanskrit and Tamil.

Writing system

Under the Pallava dynasty, a unique form of Grantha script , a type of Brahmic script developed. Around the 6th century, it was exported eastwards and influenced the genesis of almost all Southeast Asian scripts.

Language of the Pallavas: It appears that the language of the Pallavas was known as Pahalvi or Pehalvi. The biography OF Lord Buddha was written in this language during the reign of the Pallavas (6th or 7th century). Initially the book is reported to have been translated to Arabic and the Syrian language. Still later the book had been translated into Georgian, Greek. Hebrew, Ethiopian, Armenian, and Latin. There have been adaptations of the story of the book in German during 1220. Ref: Hindu America,P.246 by Sri Chamanlal, Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan,Bombay,1960.

Chronology

Sastri chronology

The earliest documentation on the Pallavas is the three copper-plate grants, now referred to as the Mayidavolu, Hirahadagalli and the British Museum plates (Durga Prasad, 1988) belonging to Skandavarman I and written in Prakrit. Skandavarman appears to have been the first great ruler of the early Pallavas, though there are references to other early Pallavas who were probably predecessors of Skandavarman. Skandavarman extended his dominions from the Krishna in the north to the Pennar in the south and to theBellary district in the West. He performed the Aswamedha and other Vedic sacrifices and bore the title of 'Supreme King of Kings devoted to dharma'.

In the reign of Simhavarman IV, who ascended the throne in 436, the territories lost to the Vishnukundins in the north up to the mouth of the Krishna were recovered.[citation needed]The early Pallava history from this period onwards is furnished by a dozen or so copper-plate grants in Sanskrit. They are all dated in the regnal years of the kings.

The following chronology was composed from these charters by Nilakanta Sastri in his A History of South India:

Early Pallavas

Simhavarman I 275–300

Skandavarman

Visnugopa 350 – 355

Kumaravishnu I 350–370

Skandavarman II 370–385

Viravarman 385–400

Skandavarman III 400–436

Simhavarman II 436–460

Skandavarman IV 460–480

Nandivarman I 480–510

Kumaravishnu II 510–530

Buddhavarman 530–540

Kumaravishnu III 540–550

Simhavarman III 550–560

Later Pallavas

The incursion of the Kalabhras and the confusion in the Tamil country was broken by the Pandya Kadungon and the PallavaSimhavishnu. Mahendravarman I extended the Pallava Kingdom and was one of the greatest sovereigns. Some of the most ornate monuments and temples in southern India, carved out of solid rock, were introduced under his rule. He also wrote the play Mattavilasa Prahasana.

The Pallava kingdom began to gain both in territory and influence and were a regional power by the end of the 6th century, defeating kings of Ceylon and mainland Tamilakkam. Narasimhavarman I and Paramesvaravarman I were the kings who stand out with glorious achievements in both military and architectural spheres. Narasimhavarman II built the Shore Temple.

Simhavishnu 575–600

Mahendravarman I 600–630

Narasimhavarman I (Mamalla) 630–668

Mahendravarman II 668–672

Paramesvaravarman I 670–695

Narasimhavarman II (Raja Simha) 695–722

Paramesvaravarman II 705–710

Nandivarman II (Pallavamalla) 730–795

Dantivarman 795–846

Nandivarman III 846–869

Aparajitavarman 879–897

Aiyangar chronology

According to the available inscriptions of the Pallavas, historian S. Krishnaswami Aiyangar proposes the Pallavas could be divided into four separate families or dynasties; some of whose connections are known and some unknown. Aiyangar states

We have a certain number of charters in Prakrit of which three are important ones. Then follows a dynasty which issued their charters in Sanskrit; following this came the family of the great Pallavas beginning with Simha Vishnu; this was followed by a dynasty of the usurper Nandi Varman, another great Pallava. We are overlooking for the present the dynasty of the Ganga-Pallavas postulated by the Epigraphists. The earliest of these Pallava charters is the one known as the Mayidavolu 1 (Guntur district) copper-plates.

Based on a combination of dynastic plates and grants from the period, Aiyangar proposed their rule thus:

Early Pallavas

Bappadevan (250-275)— married a Naga of Mavilanga (Kanchi) - The Great Founder of a Pallava lineage

SivhaskandaVarman I (275–300)

Simhavarman (300-320)

Bhuddavarman (320-335)

Bhuddyankuran (335-340)

Middle Pallavas[edit]

Visnugopa (340–355) (Yuvamaharaja Vishnugopa)

Kumaravisnu I (355–370)

Skanda Varman II (370–385)

Vira Varman (385–400)

Skanda Varman III (400–435)

Simha Varman II (435–460)

Skanda Varman IV (460–480)

Nandi Varman I (480–500)

Kumaravisnu II (c. 500–510)

Buddha Varman (c. 510–520)

Kumaravisnu III (c. 520–530)

Simha Varman III (c. 530–537)

Later Pallavas

Simhavishnu (537-570)

Mahendravarman I 571–630

Narasimhavarman I (Mamalla) 630–668

Mahendravarman II 668–672

Paramesvaravarman I 672–700

Narasimhavarman II (Raja Simha) 700–728

Paramesvaravarman II 705–710

Nandivarman II (Pallavamalla) 732–796

Dantivarman 775–825

Nandivarman III 825–869

Nirupathungan (869–882)

Aparajitavarman 882–897

Genealogy

The genealogy of Pallavas mentioned in the Māmallapuram Praśasti is as follows:[6]

Vishnu

Brahma

Unknown / undecipherable

Unknown / undecipherable

Bharadvaja

Drona

Ashvatthaman

Pallava

Unknown / undecipherable

Unknown / undecipherable

Simhavarman I (c. 275)

Unknown / undecipherable

Unknown / undecipherable

Simhavarman IV (436 — c. 460)

Unknown / undecipherable

Unknown / undecipherable

Skandashishya

Unknown / undecipherable

Unknown / undecipherable

Simhavisnu (c. 550-585)

Mahendravarman I (c. 571-630)

Maha-malla Narasimhavarman I (630-668)

Unknown / undecipherable

Paramesvaravarman I (669-690)

Rajasimha Narasimhavaram II (690-728)

Unknown / undecipherable

Pallavamalla Nandivarman II (731-796)

Unknown / undecipherable

Nandivarman III (846-69)

Other relationships

Pallava royal lineages were influential in the old kingdom of Kedah of the Malay Peninsula under Rudravarman I, Champa under Bhadravarman I and the Kingdom of the Funanin Cambodia.

Religion

Pallavas were followers of Hinduism and made gifts of land to gods and Brahmins. In line with the prevalent customs, some of the rulers performed the Aswamedha and otherVedic sacrifices.[18] They were, however, tolerant of other faiths. The Chinese monk Xuanzang who visited Kanchipuram during the reign of Narasimhavarman I reported that there were 100 Buddhist monasteries, and 80 temples in Kanchipuram.

Pallava architecture

The Pallavas were instrumental in the transition from rock-cut architecture to stone temples. The earliest examples of Pallava constructions are rock-cut temples dating from 610–690 and structural temples between 690–900. A number of rock-cut cave temples bear the inscription of the Pallava king, Mahendravarman I and his successors.

Among the accomplishments of the Pallava architecture are the rock-cut temples at Mahabalipuram. There are excavated pillared halls and monolithic shrines known as rathas in Mahabalipuram. Early temples were mostly dedicated to Shiva. The Kailasanatha temple inKanchipuram and the Shore Temple built by Narasimhavarman II, rock cut temple in Mahendravadi by Mahendravarman are fine examples of the Pallava style temples.[26] The temple of Nalanda Gedige in Kandy, Sri Lanka is another. The famous Tondeswaram temple of Tenavarai and the ancient Koneswaram temple of Trincomalee were patronized and structurally developed by the Pallavas in the 7th century.[citation needed]

The Eastern Chalukyas

Origin of Eastern Chalukyas

Pulakesin II (608–644 C.E), the greatest Badami(Karnataka) Chalukya king, conquered the eastern Deccan, corresponding to the coastal districts of Andhra Pradesh 616 C.E., defeating the remnants of the Vishnukundina Empire. He appointed his brother Kubja Vishnu Vardhana as Viceroy. On the death of Pulakesin II, the Vengi Viceroyalty developed into an independent kingdom. Eastern Chalukyas of Vengi outlived the main Vatapi dynasty by many generations.

Between 641 C.E. and 705 C.E. some kings, except Jayasimha I and Mangi Yuvaraja, ruled for very short durations. Then followed a period of unrest characterised by family feuds and weak rulers. Meanwhile, the Rashtrakutas of Malkhed ousted Western Chalukyasof Badami. The weak rulers of Vengi had to meet the challenge of the Rashtrakutas, who overran their kingdom more than once. There was no Eastern Chalukya ruler who could check them until Gunaga Vijayaditya III came to power in 848 C.E. The then Rashtrakuta ruler Amoghavarsha treated him as his ally and after Amoghavarsha's death, Vijayaditya proclaimed independence.

Rulers

Kubja Vishnu Vardhana I (624 – 641 C.E.)

Jayasimha I (641 – 673 C.E.)

Indra Bhattaraka (673 C.E.,seven days)

Vishnu Vardhana II (673 – 682 C.E.)

Mangey Yuvaraja (682 – 706 C.E.)

Jayasimha II (706 – 718 C.E.)

Kokkili (718-719 C.E., six months)

Vishnu Vardhana III (719 – 755 C.E.)

Vijaya Aditya I (755 – 772 C.E.)

Vishnu Vardhana IV (772 – 808 C.E.)

Vijay Aditya II (808 – 847 C.E.)

Vishnu Vardhana V (847– 849 C.E.)

Vijay Aditya III (849 – 892 C.E.) with his two brothers : Vikram Aditya I and Yuddha Malla I

Chalukya Bhima I (892 – 921 C.E.)

Vijay Aditya IV (921 C.E., six months)

Amma I and Vishnu Vardhana VI (921 – 927 C.E.)

Vijay Aditya V (927 C.E., fifteen days)

Tadapa (927 C.E., one month)

Vikram Aditya II (927 – 928 C.E.)

Chalukya Bhima II (928 - 929 C.E.)

Yuddha Malla II (929 – 935 C.E.)

Chalukya Bhima III and Vishnu Vardhana VII (935 – 947 C.E.)

Amma II (947 – 970 C.E.)

Danarnava (970 – 973 C.E.)

Jata Choda Bhima (973 - 999 C.E.)

Sakti Varman I (999 - 1011 C.E.)

Vimaladitya (1011 – 1018 C.E.)

Raja Raja I Narendra Vishnu Vardhana VIII (1018 – 1061 C.E.)

Sakti Varman II (1062 C.E.)

Vijay Aditya VI (1063 – 1068 C.E., 1072 – 1075 C.E.)

Raja Raja II (1075 - 1079)

Vira Chola Vishnu Vardhana IX (1079 - 1102)

Administration

In its early life, the Eastern Chalukya court was essentially a republic of Badami, and as generations passed, local factors gained in strength and the Vengi monarchy developed features of its own. External influences still continued to be present as the Eastern Chalukyas had long and intimate contact, either friendly or hostile, with the Pallavas, theRashtrakutas, the Cholas and the Chalukyas of Kalyani.

Type of Government

The Eastern Chalukyan government was a monarchy based on the Hindu philosophy. The inscriptions refer to the traditional seven components of the state (Saptanga), and the eighteen Tirthas (Offices), such as:

Mantri (Minister)

Purohita (Chaplain)

Senapati (Commander)

Yuvaraja (Heir-apparent)

Dauvarika (Door keeper)

Pradhana (Chief)

Adhyaksha (Head of department) and so on.

No information is available as to how the work of administration was carried out. The Vishaya and Kottam were the administrative subdivisions known from records. TheKarmarashtra and the Boya-Kottams are examples of these. The royal edicts (recording gifts of lands or villages) are addressed to all Naiyogi Kavallabhas, a general term containing no indication of their duties, as well as to the Grameyakas, the residents of the village granted. The Manneyas are

also occasionally referred in inscriptions. They held assignments of land or revenue in different villages.

Fratricidal wars and foreign invasions frequently disturbed the land. The territory was parcelled out into many small principalities (estates) held by the nobility consisting of collateral branches of the ruling house such as those of Elamanchili, Pithapuram and Mudigonda, and a few other families such as the Kona Haihayas (Heheya, Kalachuris), Kolanu Saronathas, Chagis, Parichedas, Kota Vamsas, Velanadus and Kondapadamatis, closely connected by marriage ties with the Eastern Chalukyas and families who were raised to high position for their loyal services. When the Vengi ruler was strong, the nobility paid allegiance and tribute to him, but when the weakness was apparent, they were ready to join hands with the enemies against the royal house.

Society

The population in the Vengi country was heterogeneous in character. Xuanzang, who travelled in the Andhra country after the establishment of the Eastern Chalukya kingdom, noted that the people were of a violent character, were of a dark complexion and were fond of arts. The society was based on hereditary caste system. Even the Buddhists andJains who originally disregarded caste, adopted it. Besides the four traditional castes, minor communities like Boyas and Savaras (Tribal groups) also existed.

The Brahmins were held in high esteem in the society. They were proficient in Vedas and Shastras and were given gifts of land and money. They held lucrative posts such as councillors, ministers and members of civil service. They even entered the army and some of them rose to positions of high command. The Kshatriyas were the ruling class. Their love of intrigue and fighting was responsible for civil war for two centuries. The Komatis (Vaisyas) was flourishing trading community. Their organisation into a powerful guild (Nakaram) which had its headquarters in Penugonda (West Godavari) and branches in seventeen other centres had its beginnings in this period. It seems there used to be a minister for communal affairs (Samaya Mantri) in the government. The Sudras constituted the bulk of the population and there were several sub-castes among them. The army furnished a career for most of them and some of them acquired the status of Samanta Raju and Mandalika.

Religion

Buddhism, which was dominant during the Satavahanas was in decline. Its monasteries were practically deserted. Due to their love of sacred relics in stupas, a few might have lingered on, Yuan Chwang noticed some twenty or more Buddhist monasteries in which more than three thousand monks lived. Jainism, unlike Buddhism, continued to enjoy some support from the people. This is evident from the several deserted images in ruined villages all over Andhra. The inscriptions also record the construction of Jain temples and grants of land for their support from the monarchs and the people. The rulers like Kubja Vishnuvardhana, Vishnuvardhana III and Amma II patronised Jainism. Vimaladityaeven became a declared follower of the doctrine of Mahavira. Vijayawada, Jenupadu, Penugonda (West Godavari) and Munugodu were the famous Jain centres of the period.Hinduism was the official religion throughout the Chalukya period. Of the Hindu sects, Saivism was more popular than Vaishnavism.

Some of the rulers, declared themselves as Parama Maheswaras (Emperors). The Buddhist religious centres eventually attained great celebrity as Siva pilgrim centres. Eastern Chalukya rulers like Vijayaditya II, Yuddhamalla I, Vijayaditya III and Bhima I took active interest in the construction of many temples. The temple establishments like dancers and musicians show that during this period, temples were not only a centre of religious worship but a fostering ground for fine arts.

Literature

Telugu literature owes its origin to the Eastern Chalukyas. Poetry makes its first appearance in the Addanki and Kandukur inscriptions of Panduranga in the time of Vijayaditya IIin the later half of the 9th century. However, literary compositions dating earlier than 11th century C.E are not clearly known. Nannaya Bhatta's Mahabharata is the earliest extant work of Telugu literature. Nannaya was the poet-laureate of Rajaraja Narendra in the middle of the 11th century. An erudite scholar, he was well-versed in the Vedas, Sastrasand the ancient epics, he undertook to translation of the Mahabharata into Telugu. The fact that Narayana Bhatta who was proficient in eight languages assisted him in his endeavour. Though incomplete, his work is universally acclaimed as a masterpiece of Telugu literature. It remains unrivaled for its graceful and dignified diction and sweet and elegant verses.

Architecture

Due to the widely spread Siva devotional cult in the kingdom the Eastern Chalukyan kings undertook construction of temples on a large scale. Vijayaditya II is credited with the construction of 108 temples. Yuddhamalla I erected a temple to Kartikeya at Vijayawada. Bhima I constructed the famous Draksharama and Chalukya Bhimavaram (Samalkot) temples. Rajaraja Narendra erected three memorial shrines at Kalidindi (West Godavari). The Eastern Chalukyas, following the Pallava and Chalukya traditions, developed their own independent style of architecture, which is visible in the Pancharama shrines (especially the Draksharama temple) and Biccavolu temples. The Golingeswara temple at Biccavolu contains some richly carved out sculptures of deities like Arthnariswara, Siva, Vishnu, Agni, Chamundi and Surya.

The Pandyas

Etymology

The word Pandya is derived from the Tamil word "Pandu" meaning very old.

According to the Epic Mahabharatha the legendary Malayadwaja Pandya, who sided with the Pandavas and took part in the Kurukshetra War of the Mahabharata, is described as follows in Karna Parva

"Although knowing that the shafts (arrows) of the high souled son of Drona employed in shooting were really inexhaustible, yet Pandya, that bull among men, cut them all into pieces".

Malayadwaja Pandya and his queen Kanchanamala had one daughter Thataathagai alias Meenakshi who succeeded her father and reigned the kingdom successfully. The Madurai Meenakshi Amman temple was built after her. The city of Madurai was built around this temple. It is also notable that the etymology of the name Meenakshi came from two Tamil words Meen(Fish) and Akshi(Eye) which collectively means 'Fish Eyed'

Another theory suggests that in Sangam Tamil lexicon the word Pandya means old country in contrast with Chola meaning new country, Chera meaning hill country and Pallava meaning branch in Sanskrit. The Chera, Chola and Pandya are the traditional Tamilsiblings and together with the Pallavas are the major Kings that ruled ancient Tamilakam.

Historians have used several sources to identify the origins of the early Pandyan dynasty with the pre-Christian Era and also to piece together the names of the Pandyan kings. Pandyas were the longest ruling dynasty of Indian history. Unfortunately, the exact genealogy of these kings has not been authoritatively established yet.

Sources

Sangam literature

Pandya kings find mention in a number of poems in the Sangam Literature. Among them Nedunjeliyan, 'the victor of Talaiyalanganam', and Mudukudimi Peruvaludi 'of several sacrifices' deserve special mention. Beside several short poems found in the Akananuru and thePurananuru collections, there are two major works — Mathuraikkanci and the Netunalvatai (in the collection of Pattupattu) — which give a glimpse into the society and commercial activities in the Pandyan kingdom during the Sangam age.

It is difficult to estimate the exact dates of these Sangam age Pandyas. The period covered by the extant literature of the Sangam is unfortunately not easy to determine with any measure of certainty. Except the longer epics Silapathikaram and Manimekalai, which by common consent belong to an age later than the Sangam age, the poems have reached us in the forms of systematic anthologies. Each individual poem has generally attached to it a colophon on the authorship and subject matter of the poem. The name of the king or chieftain to whom the poem relates and the occasion which called forth the eulogy are also found.

It is from these colophons, and rarely from the texts of the poems themselves, that we gather the names of many kings and chieftains and the poets and poetesses patronised by them. The task of reducing these names to an ordered scheme in which the different generations of contemporaries can be marked off one another has not been easy. To add to the confusions, some historians have even denounced these colophons as later additions and untrustworthy as historical documents.

Any attempt at extracting a systematic chronology from these poems should take into consideration the casual nature of these poems and the wide differences between the purposes of the anthologist who collected these poems and the historian’s attempts to arrive at a continuous history. Pandyas are also mentioned by Greek Megesthenes where he writes about southern kingdom being ruled by women.Hiuen Tsang also mentions about it citing his Buddhist friend at Kanchi and callas it Malakutta or Malakotta but the capital city is not mentioned.

Epigraphy

The earliest Pandya to be found in epigraph is Nedunjeliyan, figuring in the Minakshipuram record assigned from the 2nd to the 1st centuries BCE. The record documents a gift of rock-cut beds, to a Jain ascetic. Punch marked coins in the Pandya country dating from around the same time have also been found.

Pandyas are also mentioned in the Pillars of Ashoka (inscribed 273 – 232 BCE). In his inscriptions Ashoka refers to the peoples of south India – the Cholas, Cheras, Pandyas andSatiyaputras — as recipients of his Buddhist proselytism.[14][15] These kingdoms, although not part of the Mauryan Empire, were on friendly terms with Ashoka:

The conquest by Dharma has been won here, on the borders, and even six hundred yojanas (5,400–9,600 km) away, where the Greek king Antiochos rules, beyond there where the four kings named Ptolemy, Antigonos, Magas and Alexander rule, likewise in the south among the Cholas, the Pandyas, and as far as Tamraparni(Sri Lanka).

Kharavela, the Kalinga king who ruled during the 2nd century BCE, in his Hathigumpha inscription, claims to have destroyed a confederacy of Tamil states (''Tamiradesasanghatam'') which had lasted 132 years, and to have acquired a large quantity of pearls from the Pandyas.

Foreign sources

Megasthenes knew of the Pandyan kingdom around 300 BCE. He described it in Indika as occupying the portion of India which lies southward and extends to the sea. According to his account, it had 365 villages, each of which was expected to meet the needs of the royal household for one day in the year. He described the Pandyan queen at the time, Pandaia as a daughter of Heracles.

The Periplus of the Erythraean Sea (c. 60 – 100 CE) describes the riches of a 'Pandian Kingdom':

...Nelcynda is distant from Muziris by river and sea about five hundred stadia, and is of another Kingdom, the Pandian. This place also is situated on a river, about one hundred and twenty stadia from the sea....

The Chinese historian Yu Huan in his 3rd-century text, the Weilüe, mentions The Kingdom of Panyue:

...The kingdom of Panyue is also called Hanyuewang. It is several thousand li to the southeast of Tianzhu (Northern India)...The inhabitants are small; they are the same height as the Chinese...

The Roman emperor Julian received an embassy from a Pandya about 361. A Roman trading centre was located on the Pandyan coast at the mouth of the Vaigai river, southeast of Madurai.

Pandyas also had trade contacts with Ptolemaic Egypt and, through Egypt, with Rome by the 1st century, and with China by the 3rd century. The 1st-century Greek historian Nicolaus of Damascus met, at Antioch, the ambassador sent by a king from India "named Pandion or, according to others, Porus" to Caesar Augustus around 13 CE (Strabo XV.4 and 73).

According to Xuanzang, the Pandya country was a depot for sea pearls, its people were harsh and of different religions. They were very good at trade.

In the later part of the 13th century Venetian traveller Marco Polo visited the Pandyan kingdom and left a vivid description of the land and its people. Polo exclaimed that:

The darkest man is here the most highly esteemed and considered better than the others who are not so dark. Let me add that in very truth these people portray and depict their gods and their idols black and their devils white as snow. For they say that God and all the saints are black and the devils are all white. That is why they portray them as I have described.

History

Literary sources

Although there are many instances of the Pandyas being referred to in surviving ancient Hindu texts including the Mahabharata, we currently have no way of determining a cogent genealogy of these ancient kings. We have a connected history of the Pandyas from the fall of Kalabhras during the middle of the 6th century.

Literary sources in Tamil

Several Tamil literary works, such as Iraiyanar Agapporul, mention the legend of three separate Tamil Sangams lasting several centuries before the Christian Era and ascribe their patronage to the Pandyas.[25] The Sangam poem Maduraikkanci by Mankudi Maruthanaar contains a full-length description of Madurai and the Pandyan country under the rule of Nedunj Cheliyan III.[26] The Nedunalvadai by Nakkirar contains a description of the king's palace. The Purananuru and Agananuru collections of the 3rd century BCE contain poems sung in praise of various Pandyan kings and also poems that were composed by the kings themselves. Kalittokai mentions that many Tamil Naga tribes such asMaravar, Eyinar, Oliar, Oviar, Aruvalur and Parathavar migrated to the Pandyan kingdom and started living there in the Third Tamil Sangam period 2000 years ago.

Literary sources in Ramayana and Mahabharata

Ramayana, which is older than Mahabharata, makes references to the Pandyas. For instance, when Sugriva sends his monkey warriors to search Sita, he mentions Chera, Chola and Pandya of the Southern region. One surviving record is that Ravana signed a Peace Treaty with a Pandya King. So, both the Chola and Pandya Dynasties date back to Ramayana period, if not earlier, for there are references in the Vedas about Tamil Nadu spices.

The epic Mahabharata mentions it more number of times:

And, O Yudhishthira, in the country of the Pandyas are the tirthas named Agastya and Varuna! And, O bull among men, there, amongst the Pandavas, is the tirtha called the Kumaris. Listen, O son of Kunti, I shall now describe Tamraparni. In that asylum the gods had undergone penances impelled by the desire of obtaining salvation. In that region also is the lake of Gokarna which is celebrated over the three worlds, hath an abundance of cool waters, and is sacred, auspicious, and capable, O child, of producing great merit. That lake is extremely difficult of access to men of unpurified souls. Mahabharatha.

The Pandyas were in close liaison with the Pandavas of the Mahabharata. Pandyan Kings took part in the Mahabharata War .(Karna Parav 20.25) Arjuna and Krishna married Pandyan princesses and had children through them.

And similarly, Pandya, who dwelt on the coast-land near the sea, came accompanied by troops of various kinds to Yudhishthira, the king of kings. Mahabharatha 5:19

Steeds that were all of the hue of the Atrusa flower bore a hundred and forty thousand principle car-warriors that followed that Sarangadhwaja, the king of the Pandyas. Mahabharatha 7.23

In return, Malayadhwaja pierced the son of Drona with a barbed arrow. Then Drona's son, that best of preceptors, smiling the while, struck Pandya with some fierce arrows, capable of penetrating into the very vitals and resembling flames of fire. Mahabharatha 8:20

Early Pandyas (3rd century BCE – 3rd century CE)

Main article: Early Pandyan Kingdom

The following is a partial list of Pandyan emperors who ruled during the Sangam age:[31][32][33] The lists of the Pandya kings are based on the authoritative A History of South India from the Early Times to the Fall of Vijayanagar by K.A.N. Sastri, Oxford U Press, New Delhi (Reprinted 1998).

Koon Pandiyan

Nedunjeliyan I (Aariyap Padai Kadantha Nedunj Cheliyan)

Pudappandiyan

Mudukudumi Paruvaludhi

Nedunjeliyan II

Nan Maran

Nedunj Cheliyan III (Talaiyaalanganathu Seruvendra Nedunj Cheliyan)

Maran Valudi

Kadalan valuthi

Musiri Mutriya Cheliyan

Kadalul Maintha Ukkirap Peruvaludi

First Pandian Empire (6th – 10th centuries CE)

After the close of the Sangam age, the first Pandyan empire was established by Kadungon in the 6th century by defeating the Kalabhras. The following chronological list of the Pandya emperors is based on an inscription found on the Vaigai riverbeds. Succeeding kings assumed the titles of "Sadayavarman" and "Maaravarman" alternately, denoting themselves as followers of Lord Sadaiyan (Sankan(r)/Sivan) and Lord Thiru Maal respectively.

After the defeat of the Kalabhras, the Pandya kingdom grew steadily in power and territory. With the Cholas in obscurity, the Tamil country was divided between the Pallavas and the Pandyas, the river Kaveri being the frontier between them.

After Vijayalaya Chola conquered Thanjavur by defeating the Muttarayar chieftains who were part of Pandya family tree around 850, the Pandyas went into a period of decline. They were constantly harassing their Chola overlords by occupying their territories. Parantaka Iinvaded the Pandya territories and defeated Rajasimha III. However, the Pandyas did not wholly submit to the Cholas despite loss of power, territory and prestige. They tried to forge various

alliances with the Cheras and the Kings of Lanka and tried to engage the Cholas in war to free themselves from Chola supremacy. But right from the times of Parantaka I to the early 12th century up to the times ofKulottunga Chola I the Pandyas could not overpower the Cholas who right from 880–1215 remained the most powerful empire spread over South India, Deccan and the Eastern and Western Coast of India during this period.

List of kings are given below;

Kadungon (590–620)[36]

Maravarman Avani Culamani (590–620)

Cezhiyan Cendan (620–640)

Arikesari Maravarman Nindraseer Nedumaaran (670–710)

Kochadaiyan Ranadhiran (710–735)

Arikesari Parankusa Maravarman Rajasimha I (735–765)

Jatila Parantaka (765–815)

Rasasingan II (790–800)

Varagunan I (800–830)

Srimara Srivallabha (815–862)

Varagunavarman II (862–880)

Parantaka Viranarayana (880–900)

Maravarman Rajasimha II (900–920)

Under Chola Influence (10th – 13th centuries)

The Chola domination of the Tamil country began in earnest during the reign of Parantaka Chola II. Chola armies led by Aditya Karikala, son of Parantaka Chola II defeated Vira Pandya in battle. The Pandyas were assisted by the Sinhalese forces of Mahinda IV. Pandyas were driven out of their territories and had to seek refuge on the island of Sri Lanka. This was the start of the long exile of the Pandyas. They were replaced by a series of Chola viceroys with the title Chola Pandyas who ruled from Madurai from c. 1020. The "Chola yoke" started from about 920 and lasted until the start of the 13th century.[36] The following list gives the names of the Pandya kings who were active during the 10th century and the first half of 11th century.

Sundara Pandya I

Vira Pandya I

Vira Pandya II

Amarabhujanga Tivrakopa

Jatavarman Sundara Chola Pandya

Maravarman Vikrama Chola Pandya

Maravarman Parakrama Chola Pandya

Jatavarman Chola Pandya

Seervallabha Manakulachala (1101–1124)

Maaravarman Seervallaban (1132–1161)

Parakrama Pandyan I (1161–1162)

Kulasekara Pandyan III

Vira Pandyan III

Jatavarman Srivallaban (1175–1180)

Jatavarman Kulasekaran I (1190–1216)[36]

Second Pandian Empire (13th and 14th centuries)

The 13th century is the greatest period in the history of the Pandyan Empire. This period saw the rise of seven prime Lord Emperors (Ellarkku Nayanar – Lord of All) of Pandyan, who ruled the kingdom alongside Pandyan princes. Their power reached its zenith underJatavarman Sundara Pandyan in the middle of the 13th century. The foundation for such a great empire was laid by Maravarman Sundara Pandyan early in the 13th century.

Maravarman Sundara Pandyan(1216–1238)

Sundaravarman Kulasekaran II (1238–1240)

Maravarman Sundara Pandyan II (1238–1251)

Jatavarman Sundara Pandyan (1251–1268)

Maaravarman Kulasekara Pandyan I (1268–1310)

Sundara Pandyan IV (1309–1327)

Vira Pandyan IV (1309–1345)

The Pandyan kingdom was replaced by the Chola princes who assumed the title as Chola Pandyas in the 11th century. After being overshadowed by the Pallavas and Cholas for centuries, Pandyan glory was briefly revived by Maravarman Sundara Pandyan and by (probably his younger brother or son) the much celebrated Jatavarman Sundara Pandyan I in 1251. The Pandya power extended from the Telugu countries on banks of the Godavari river to the northern half of Sri Lanka, which was invaded by Sundara Pandyan I in 1258 and on his behalf by his younger brother Jatavarman Vira Pandyan I from 1262–1264. later Jatavarman Sundara Pandiyan appointed his brother to rule Kongu country, Chola nadu and Hoysala country. Jatavarman Vira Pandiyan's clan was later called as Kongu Pandiyar and he is the first Kongu Pandiya King.

The revival of the Pandyan dynasty was to coincide with the gradual but steady decline of the Chola empire. The last two or three Chola kings who followed Kulothunga III were either very weak or incompetent. The Cholas of course did not lack valour but had been unable to stop the revival of the Pandyan empire from the

times of Maravarman Sundara Pandyan, the revival of the Kadava Pallavas at Kanchi under Kopperinchunga I and indeed the growing power and status of the Telugu Cholas, the Renanti and the Irungola Cholas of the Telugu country; for the last three-named had been very trusted allies of the Cholas up to Kulothunga III, having helped him in conquering Kalinga. The marital alliance of Kulothunga III and one of his successors, Raja Raja III, with the Hoysalas did not yield any advantage, though (initially, at least) Kulothunga III took the help of the Hoysalas in countering the Pandiyan resurgence. Kulothunga III had even conquered Karur, the Cheras in addition to Madurai, Ilam and Kalinga. However, his strength rested on support from Hoysalas, whose king Veera Ballala II was his son-in-law. However, Veera Ballala II himself had lost quite a bit of his territories between 1208–1212 to his local adversaries in Kannada country, like the Kalachuris, Seunas etc.

The resurgent Pandiyans under Maravarman Sundara Pandyan went to war against Kulothunga and first at Kandai and then near Manaparai on the outskirts of modern Tiruchirappalli, the Pandiyans routed the Chola army and entered Tiruchy, Thiruvarangam and Thanjavur victorious in war. But it appears that in the Tiruchy and Thiruvarangam areas, there was renewed control of the Cholas, presumably with the help of the Hoysalas under Vira Someswara with the Hoysalas later shifting their allegiance to the Pandyans either during the last years of Maravarman Sundara Pandyan or the early years of his successor Jatavarman Sundara Pandyan.

Jatavarman Sundara Pandiyan was a very brave, ambitious warrior king, who wanted to completely subjugate the Cholas. He initially tolerated the presence of the Hoysalas under Vira Someshwara with his son Visvanatha or Ramanatha ruling from Kuppam near Samayapuram on the outskirts of Thiruvarangam. This was because other feudatories of the Hoysalas were also growing in power and threatening the Hoysala kingdom itself. Besides, the Delhi Sultanate invasion of the Deccan had started under Malik Kafur. The challenged Hoysalas did have a foothold in and around Tiruchy and Thiruvarangam for a few years and seemed to have indulged in some temple building activity at Thiruvarangam also. But Jatavarman Sundara Pandiyan, who subdued Rajendra Chola III in around 1258–1260 was an equal antagonist of the Hoysalas whose presence he absolutely disliked in the Tamil country. He first vanquished the Kadava Pallavas under Kopperinchungan-II, who had challenged the Hoysala army stationed in and around Kanchi and killed a few of their commanders.

Though Rajendra III suffered another defeat at the hands of Vira Someshwara, because of the growing power of Pandiyans being felt by both Cholas and Hoysalas, there was a political affinity between the two which was cemented also by marital relations. At the time the Pandiyans and the Kadava Pallavas,with an earlier Chola, Raja Raja III, having been held in captivity by Kopperinchunga II and his release being secured by the Hoysalas. Ultimately, the Kadava Pallavas, Hoysalas and also the Telugu Choda Timma who invaded Kanchi were all one by one vanquished by Jatavarman Sundara Pandiyan with the Cholas finally becoming extinct after defeat of Hoysala Ramanatha as well as his ally Rajendra iii around 1279 by Maravarman Kulasekhara Pandiyan.

Jatavarman Sundara Pandiyan seized the opportunity with the Hoysalas being in Tiruchy and not having any ally, the rapidly weakeningCholas seeking alliance with the Kadava Pallavas who were themselves being threatened by the Telugu Cholas. In 1254 (or 1260) Jatavarman first dragged the Hoysalas into war by

routing his son Ramanatha out of Tiruchy. Vira Someshwara Hoysala, who had given the control of the empire to his sons, had to come out of his slumber and tried to challenge Jatavarman. Between Samayapuram and Tiruchy, the armies of Vira Someshwara were routed with Vira Someshwara losing his life in this battle. This ended the presence of the Hoysalas in Tamil country. Jatavarman did not stop there: he went inside Kannada country after conquering Tiruchy and occupied parts of Hoysala territory up to the Konkana coast and established his son Vira Pandiyan as ruler of those territories. Temporarily, at least, the Hoysalas were in disarray in Kannada country itself.

Next the Pandiyan prince Jatavarman concentrated on completely wiping out the Chola empire. Rajadhiraja III had interfered in an earlier Pandiyan war of succession and defeated a confederation of Pandiyan princes. The predecessors of Jatavarman Sundara Pandiyan had suffered at the time of the Chola invasion and he wanted to take revenge. This was his opportunity. Rajendra III had been counting on Hoysala assistance in case he was challenged by the Pandiyans, keeping in mind the earlier marital alliance of the Cholas with the Hoysalas. Unfortunately for Rajendra III, the Hoysalas had lost any claim to regional power in Kannada and the Tamil countries, as they had been wiped out of Tamizhagam and indeed lost territories inside Kannada country itself to Jatavarman Sundara Pandiyan. Initially, Jatavarman consodlidated the Pandiyan hold on Tiruchy and Thiruvarangam and marched towards Tanjore and Kumbakonam. The Chola capital of Gangaikondacholapuram, too, was not far from reach. During the years 1270–1276 it appeared that Rajendra III ruled mainly in and around Gangaikondacholapuram and Tanjore. Tiruchy and Thiruvarangam had been lost by the Cholas to the Pandyas forever, at least from 1254. Though Rajendra III had been opposed to the Hoysalas due to their alliance with the Pandiyans, with new hostilities emerging between Hoysalas and the Pandiyans, Rajendra III had hoped for renewed friendship and military alliance with the Hoysalas.

When challenged by Jatavarman Sundara Pandiyan, the brave but tactically naive Rajendra III marched against the Pandiyans between Tanjore and Tiruchy, hoping for assistance and participation in war from the Hoysalas. However, the already vanquished Hoysalas were in a defensive position. They did not want to go to war and risk yet another defeat by the resurgent Pandiyans. Rajendra III, hopelessly isolated, was thoroughly routed and humiliated in this war, which is variously dated as between 1268–1270. The known rule of Jatavarman Sundara Pandiyan is of course, up to 1268 only. Probably Rajendra III fled the battlefield and had continued in obscurity up to 1279 but without any of the erstwhile Chola territories. By 1280, the Chola empire was no more.

Pandian Civil War (AD 1308 to 1311)

On the death of Maravarman Kulasekara Pandyan I in 1308, a conflict stemming from succession disputes arose amongst his sons. Sundara Pandyan and Vira Pandyan fought each other for the throne. Sundara Pandyan however with the help of his loyal generals and Veera Ballala III was successful in suppressing Vira Pandyan.

Delhi sultanate expedition (AD 1311)

Scenarios changed during 1311, when Alauddin Khilji of Khilji dynasty sent his general Malik Kafur on an expedition to the kingdoms of the south, which led to the capture ofWarangal and the overthrow of the Hoysala Empire south of the Krishna

River. Malik Kafur was not seeking to expand the borders of the Delhi Sultanate; he was engaging in a military treasure-hunt on the Sultan's behalf. Malik's victory over Veera Ballala III and loot of Hindu temples at Halebidu sent alarming bells to the Pandyan Kingdom. Malik Kafur on the other hand, heard about the raised strength of the Pandyan army and its defensive position within the walls of Madurai was reluctant in carrying out his expedition further south. It was Alauddin Khilji himself ordered and sent reinforcements to Malik Kafur to attack Madurai after hearing the richness of it via Veera Virupaksha Ballala who was sent to Delhi as an act of peace by his defeated father Veera Ballala III.

Being a strong Saivite, Sundara Pandyan was enraged by the destruction of the Hindu temples by the Muslim armies. He assembled his army and planned to march them at once to face the invading armies of the Delhi Sultanate. This idea was however opposed by Vira Pandyan who felt that taking a defensive position might be more advantageous. Sundara Pandyan ignored his words and ordered his army to march leaving Vira Pandyan to safeguard Madurai with his men. The Pandyan army managed to march well intact till Melaithirukattupalli. But their reliance on the river Kaveri as the water source turned disastrous as the river ran dry during the hot summer of 1311. The already exhausted Pandyan army planned to march west in search of nearby water source. Their speed was drastically reduced due to the general's decision of marching on the dried beds of River Kaveri. Malik Kafur's forces on the other hand tactically planned on their ration and water supplies, met Sundara Pandyan much before Thiruchirapalli. The physically exhausted Pandyan infantry easily fell prey for the Sultanate's army. However, the Pandyan cavalry revived its attack on the Delhi Sultanate cavalry. But, the cavaliers were well armed withturcopoles and chain mail armours while Pandyan horsemen were inferiorly armoured and heavily relied on heavy swords. Tactical strikes by Malik Kafur's crossbow men over the Pandya cavalry, followed by the Delhi Sultanate infantry's attack blocked any possible retreat for the Sundara Pandyan's army. The generals of Kafur's army took Sundara Pandyan as captive and beheaded all the others captured. Few Pandyan cavaliers managed to escape to Madurai to report their defeat to Vira Pandya. The victorious Sultanate went on plundering the temples of Thiruchirapalli and Thiruvarangam.

The walled city of Madurai was now left only with the Vira Pandyan's men. Their sole aim was to safeguard Meenakshi Sundareswarar Temple. Understanding the fact that they were largely outnumbered, the defenders' only hope is to delay their enemies long enough for them to negotiate. Kafur's siege on Madurai continued for weeks, however, it turned futile as his army lacked any Ballistas or Trebuchets and relied on Battering Rams of inferior quality. On the other hand, continuous archery attack by Pandyan soldiers and surprise cavalry attacks on the Delhi Sultanate infantry during night times tremendously increased the casualties on Kafur's side. Malik Kafur lost about half of his army and had to leave without any indemnity.[38][39]

Decline and fall

Following this there were two other expeditions from the Khilji Sultanate in 1314 led by Khusro Khan (Sultan Nasir-ud-din) and in 1323 by Ulugh Khan (Muhammad bin Tughluq) under Sultan Ghiyath al-Din Tughluq. These invasions shattered the Pandyan empire beyond revival. While the previous invasions were content with plunder, Ulugh Khan annexed the former Pandyan dominions to the Delhi Sultanate as the province of Ma'bar. Most of South India came under the

Delhi's rule and was divided into five provinces - Devagiri, Tiling, Kampili, Dorasamudra and Ma'bar.[40] Jalaluddin Ahsan Khan was appointed Governor of the newly created southern-most Ma'bar province of the Delhi Sultanate by Muhammad bin Tughluq. In 1333, Sayyid Jalaluddin Ahsan Khan declared his independence and created Madurai Sultanate, a short lived independent Muslim kingdom based in the city of Madurai. Vijayanagara Empire conquered the city of Madurai and replaced the Sultanate by Nayak governors in 1378.

Architecture

Pandyan architecture

Rock cut and structural temples are significant part of pandyan architecture. Vimana, mandapa and shikhara are some of the features of the early pandyan temples. Groups of small temples are seen at Tiruchirapalli district of Tamil Nadu. The Shiva temples have a Nandi in front of the maha mandapa. In the later stages of Pandyas rule, finely sculptured idols, portals of temples or gopurams on "Vimanas" were developed. Gopurams are the rectangular entrance and portals of the temples. The portions above the entrance is pyramidal in shape. Gradually gopurams were given more importance than Shikharas.

Meenakshi Temple in Madurai and Nellaiappar Temple in Tirunelveli were built during the reign of the Pandyas.

Coinage

Pandyan coins

Coins of Pandyas bear the legend of different Pandya ruler in different times. The Pandyas had issued silver punch marked and die struck copper coins in the early period. A few gold coins were attributed to the Pandya rulers of this period. These coins bore the image of a fish, sometimes singly, sometimes in pairs along with symbols like a bow, a conch, a discus etc. The coins with the latter inscriptions had been found in the Kanara district. So some scholars were inclined to attribute them to the Alupa rulers. The copper coins of the pandyas also had the inscription of Chola standing figure or the Chalukyan devices associated with a fish. These coins had the blending of symbols from various dynasties which might be indicative of their conquests and defeats.Some of the coins had the names Sundara, Sundara Pandya or merely the letter 'su' were etched. Some of the coins bore a boar with the doubtful legend 'Vira-Pandya' on one side and the figure of Venu-Gopala (Murlidhara Krishna) on the flip side of the coin. It had been said that those coins were issued by the Pandyas and the feudatories of the Cholas but could not be attributed to any particular king.

The coins of Pandyas were basically square. Those coins were etched with elephant on one side and the other side remained blank. The inscription on the silver and gold coins during the Pandyas, were in Sanskrit and the copper coins bore the Tamil legends.

The coins of the Pandyas, which bore the fish symbols, were termed as 'Kodandaraman' and 'Kanchi' Valangum Perumal'. The Chola standing and the seated king type coins had the titles 'Bhutala Ellamthalai', 'Parasurama', 'Kulasekhara'. Apart from these, 'Ellamthalaiyanam' was seen on coins which had the standing king on one side and the fish on the other. 'Samarakolahalam' and

'Bhuvanekaviram' were found on the coins having a Garuda, 'Konerirayan' on coins having a bull and 'Kaliyugaraman' on coins that depict a pair of feet.

Government and Society

Trade

Roman and Greek traders frequented the ancient Tamil country, present day Southern India and Sri Lanka, securing trade with the seafaring Tamil states of the Pandyan, Chola and Chera dynasties and establishing trading settlements which secured trade with South Asia by the Greco-Roman world since the time of the Ptolemaic dynasty a few decades before the start of the Common Eraand remained long after the fall of the Western Roman Empire. As recorded by Strabo, Emperor Augustus of Rome received at Antioch an ambassador from a South Indian King called Pandyan. The country of the Pandyas, Pandi Mandala, was described asPandyan Mediterranea in the Periplus and Modura Regia Pandyan by Ptolemy.[6] They also outlasted Byzantium's loss of the ports ofEgypt and the Red Sea[43] (c. 639-645) under the pressure of the Muslim conquests. Sometime after the sundering of communications between the Axum and Eastern Roman Empire in the 7th century, the Christian kingdom of Axum fell into a slow decline, fading into obscurity in western sources. It survived, despite pressure from Islamic forces, until the 11th century, when it was reconfigured in a dynastic squabble.

Pearl fishing

Pearl fishing was another industry that flourished during the Sangam age. The Pandyan port city of Korkai was the center of pearl trade. Written records from Greek and Egyptian voyagers give details about the pearl fisheries off the Pandyan coast. The Periplus of the Erythraean Sea mentions that "Pearls inferior to the Indian sort are exported in great quantity from the marts of Apologas and Omana".The inferior variety of pearls that the Tamils did not require for their use was in very great demand in the foreign markets. Pearls were woven along with nice muslin cloth, before being exported. The most expensive animal product that was imported from India by the Roman Empire was the pearl from the Gulf of Mannar. The pearls from the Pandyan kingdom were also in demand in the kingdoms of north India. Several Vedic mantras refer to the wide use of the pearls. The royal chariots were decked with pearls, as were the horses that dragged them. The use of pearls was so high that the supply of pearls from the Ganges could not meet the demand. Literary references of the pearl fishing mention how the fishermen, who dive into the sea, avoid attacks from sharks, bring up the right-whorled chank and blow on the sounding shell. Convicts were used as pearl divers in Korkai.

Megasthenes reported about the pearl fisheries of the Pandyas, indicating that the Pandyas derived great wealth from the pearl trade.

Religion

Historical Madurai was a stronghold of Buddhism. Following the invasion of Kalabhras, Jainism gained a foothold in the Pandyan kingdom. With the advent of Bhakti movements, Saivism and Vaishnavism surfaced. The latter-day Pandyas after 600 CE were Saivites who claimed to descend from Lord Shiva and Goddess Parvati. Pandyan Nedumchadayan was a staunch Vaishnavite.[50]

The Yadavas

Etymology

The Seuna dynasty claimed descent from the Yadavas and therefore, its kings are often referred to as the "Yadavas of Devgiri". The correct name of the dynasty, however, is Seuna or Sevuna. The inscriptions of this dynasty, as well as those of contemporary kingdoms, the Hoysala, Kakatiya dynasty and Western Chalukyas call them Seunas. The name is probably derived from the name of their second ruler, "Seunachandra".

The "Sevuna" (or Seuna) name was brought back into use by John Faithfull Fleet in his book The dynasties of the Kanarese districts of the Bombay Presidency from the earliest historical times to the Musalman conquest of A.D. 1318.

Origin

Scholars are divided regarding the origin of the Seuna dynasty.

Yaduvanshi origin

The Seuna dynasty claimed descent from the Chandravanshi (Yaduvanshis) of north India. According to verse 21 of Vratakhand (a Sanskrit work by Hemadri), the Seunas were originally from Mathura and later moved to Dwaraka. Hemdari calls them Krishnakulotpanna (i.e., descendants of Krishna). The Marathi saint Dnyaneshwar describes them as yadukulvansh tilak. Some Seuna inscriptions call them Dvaravatipuravaradhishvaras ("masters of Dvaravati or Dwaraka"). Several modern researchers, such as Dr. Kolarkar, also believe that Yadavas came from North India.

The remains of Khandesh (the historical stronghold of Yaduvanshi Ahirs) are popularly believed to be of Gawli Raj, which archaeologically belongs to the Yadavas of Devgiri. For this reason, the historian Reginald Edward Enthoven believed that the Yadavas of Devagiri could have been Abhiras.

There is a belief that Deoghur or Doulatabad was built in AD 1203 by a Dhangar or herdsman who, acquiring by some unusual good fortune vast wealth, was named by his brother shepherds Raja Ram and soon after assumed the rank of a Raja.

Maratha origin

According to scholars such as Prof. George Moraes, V. K. Rajwade, C. V. Vaidya, Dr. A.S. Altekar, Dr. D.R. Bhandarkar, and J. Duncan M. Derrett,[4] the Seuna rulers were ofMaratha descent who patronized the Marathi language. Digambar Balkrishna Mokashi noted that the Yadava dynasty was "what seems to be the first true Maratha empire".In his book Medieval India, C.V.Vaidya states that Yadavas are "definitely pure Maratha Kshatriyas".

A stone inscription found at Anjaneri, near Nashik, suggests that a minor branch of the Yadava family ruled a small district, with Anjaneri as its chief city. The inscription indicates that a ruler called Seunadeva, belonging to the Yadava family, called himself Mahasamanta and made a grant to a Jain temple. Scholars such as

Dr. O. P. Varma, state that Yadavas were Marathi speakers and the period of their rule was very important for the history of the Marathi.

Jijabai (the mother of Shivaji, who founded the Maratha Empire) belonged to the clan of jadhavas of Sindkhed Raja, who also claimed descent from the Yadavas.

Karnataka Origin

Hero stone (Virgal) withOld Kannada inscription dated 1286 A.D. from the rule of Yadava King Ramachandra in Kedareshvara temple at Balligavi in Shimoga district, Karnataka state

Hero stone with old Kannada inscription dated 1235 A.D. from the rule of Yadava King Singhana II at Kubetur, Soraba Taluk, Shimoga district, Karnataka state

Scholars such as C M Kulkarni, Colin Masica, and Shrinivas Ritti believe that the Seuna rulers were originally Kannada speaking people. Linguist Colin Masica believes that they originally used Kannada (along with Sanskrit) in their inscriptions, but, by the time of the Muslim conquest, they had begun to patronize Marathi, and Marathi phrases or lines began to appear in their inscriptions. Dr. Shrinivas Ritti speculates that the Seunas were originally from a Kannada-speaking region and migrated northwards owing to the political situation in the Deccan.

Many Seuna rulers had Kannada names and titles such as "Dhadiyappa", "Bhillama", "Rajugi", "Vadugi" and "Vasugi", and "Kaliya Ballala". Some kings had names like "Singhana" and "Mallugi", which were also used by the Southern Kalachuri dynasty. Records show that one of the early rulers, Seunachandra II, had a Kannada title, Sellavidega. The Seunas had very close matrimonial relationships with royal Kannada families throughout their rule. Bhillama II was married to Lachchiyavve, who was from a Rashtrakuta descendant family in Karnataka. Vaddiga was married to Vaddiyavve, daughter of Rashtrakuta chieftain Dhorappa. Wives of Vesugi and Bhillama III were Chalukya princesess.

Over five hundred inscriptions belonging to the Seuna dynasty have been found in Karnataka, the oldest being of the rule of Bhillama II. Most of these are in Kannada language and script. Others are in the Kannada language but use Devanagari script. The Seuna coins from the early part of their rule have Kannada legends. Scholars such as Dr. O. P. Varma believe that Kannada was a court language, used along with Marathi and Sanskrit.

During the rule of the Seunas, ruling chieftains who were related to the Seuna kings were from Kannada-speaking families, like the Seunas of Masavadi in present-day Dharwad. Dr. A. V. Narasimha Murthy opined that during the later part of the Rashtrakuta rule from Manyakheta, Seuna chieftains were despatched from the Karnataka region to rule near Nasik.

History

Feudatory

Seunas were once the feudatories of the Rashtrakutas and then of the Western Chalukyas. The founder of the Suena dynasty was Dridhaprahara, the

son of Subahu. According to Vratakhanda, his capital was Shrinagara. However, an early inscription suggests that Chandradityapura (modern Chandor in the Nasik district) was the capital.

The name Seuna comes from Dridhaprahara's son, Seunachandra, who originally ruled a region called Seunadesha (present-day Khandesh). Bhillama II, a later ruler in the dynasty, assisted Tailapa III in his war with the Paramara king Munja. Seunachandra II helped Vikramaditya VI in gaining his throne.

Bhillama V

Bhillama V (1173–1192), son of Mallugi, established the sovereign Seuna kingdom. He took over the Chalukya capital of Kalyani in 1190 and founded Devagiri (now Daulatabad) as the capital of the Yadava dynasty.

The Seunas were bordered by aggressive neighbours on all sides: Paramara rulers of Malwa in the north, Kakatiya dynasty in the east, Hoysalasin the south and Solanki rulers of Gujarat in the west. As a precaution, they built their citadel at Devagiri. The citadel was situated on a hill rising 183 meters (300 meters according to John Keay). The hill was enclosed by three lines of walls, each of which was defended by moats andturrets. The outermost wall had a circumference of 4.4 km.

Singhana II

Singhana II, or Simhana, 1200–1247 C.E. is considered the greatest ruler of the Yadava dynasty. During his rule the kingdom expanded from Narmada to Tungabhadra, reaching its zenith at the expense of Hoysalas in the south, Kakatiya dynasty in the east,Paramaras and Chalukyas in the north.

He founded the town Shinghanapur (or Singhanapur). He was a great patron of learning and literature. He established the college of astronomy to study the work of celebrated astronomer Bhaskaracharya.

The Sangita Ratnakara, an authoritative Sanskrit work on Indian music was written by Sharngadeva (or Shrangadeva) during Singhana II's reign. He also patronized Changadeva, the Kannada poet Kamalabhava.

Ramachandra

Ramachandra (or Ramadevarava or Raja Ram), the grandson of Singhana II, ruled from 1271 to 1309 CE. He seems to have defeated the Turkic invaders in 1278 CE as a Sanskrit royal inscription of that year glorifies him as a "Great Boar in securing the earth from the oppression of the Turks".

Hemadri (or Hemadpant) was Ramachandra's Shrikaranadhipa (Chief Minister) during the initial few years. He compiled the encyclopedic Sanskrit work Chaturvarga Chintamani. He is said to have built many temples in a style known after him – Hemadapanti. He also invented the Modi script for writing Marathi. Hemadri wrote many books onvaidhyakshastra (medical science) and he introduced and supported bajra cultivation.

In 1294, Ala-ud-din Khilji of the Delhi Sultanate captured Devagiri. Khilji restored it to Ramachandra in return for his promise of payment of a high ransom and an annual tribute. However, this was not paid and the Seuna kingdom's arrears to Khilji kept mounting. In 1307, Khilji sent an army commanded

by Malik Kafur, accompanied by Khwaja Haji, to Devagiri. The Muslim governors of Malwa and Gujarat were ordered to help Malik Kafur. Their huge army conquered the weakened and defeated forces of Devagiri almost without a battle. Ramachandra was taken to Delhi. Khilji reinstated Ramachandra as governor in return for a promise to help him subdue the Hindu kingdoms in South India. In 1310, Malik Kafur mounted an assault on the Kakatiya kingdom from Devagiri.

Fall of the kingdom

Ramachandra's successor Singhana III challenged the supremacy of Khilji, who sent Malik Kafur to recapture Devagiri in 1313. Singhana III was killed in the ensuing battle and Khilji's army occupied Devagiri. The kingdom was annexed by the Khilji sultanate in 1317. Many years later, Muhammad Tughluq of the Tughluq dynasty of the Delhi Sultanatesubsequently renamed the city Daulatabad.

The Seuna Yadava rulers

Among the Seuna Yadava rulers, Sindhan, Krishnadev, Mahadeva and Ramdev are considered as having been 'able'.

Feudatory of Western Chalukyas of Kalyani

Dridhaprahara

Seunachandra 850–874 C.E.

Dhadiyappa 874–900 C.E.

Bhillama I 900–925 C.E.

Vadugi (Vaddiga) 950–974 C.E.

Dhadiyappa II 974–975 C.E.

Bhillama II 975–1005 C.E., helped Western Chalukya king Tailapa II in battle against Paramara king Munja.

Vesugi I 1005–1020 C.E.

Bhillama III 1020–1055 C.E., ruled near Sinnar, Nasik. Helped Chalukya Someshvara against Paramaras

Vesugi II 1055–1068 C.E.

Bhillama III 1068 C.E.

Seunachandra II 1068–1085 C.E., overcame civil war, defeated Bhillama IV to become king.

Airamadeva 1085–1115 C.E.

Singhana I 1115–1145 C.E.

Mallugi I 1145–1150 C.E., beginning period of internal family feud which lasted until 1173

Amaragangeyya 1150–1160 C.E.

Govindaraja 1160 C.E.

Amara Mallugi II 1160–1165 C.E.

Kaliya Ballala 1165–1173 C.E.

Independent kingdom[edit]

Bhillama V 1173–1192 C.E.

Jaitugi I 1192–1200 C.E.

Sinhhana II 1200–1247 C.E.

Kannara 1247–1261 C.E.

Mahadeva 1261–1271 C.E.

Amana 1271 C.E.

Ramachandra (Ramadeva) 1271–1311 C.E.[20]

Tributary status under Khilji dynasty[edit]

Singhana III (Shankaradeva) 1311-1313 C.E.

Harapaladeva 1313–1317 C.E.

Literature

Marathi

The Yadavas of Devagiri patronised Marathi which was their court language. Kannada may also have been a court language during Seunachandra's rule, but Marathi was the only court-language of Ramchandra and Mahadeva Yadavas. The Yadava capital Devagiri became a magnet for learned scholars in Marathi to showcase and find patronage for their skills. The origin and growth of Marathi literature is directly linked with rise of Yadava dynasty.

Their reign also saw the literary development of Marathi. The origin and growth of Marathi literature is directly linked to this period.

Some historians believe that prior to the Yadava rule, both Marathi and Kannada had been used in Maharashtra; subsequently, at least partly due to their efforts, Marathi became dominant. Historian José Pereira has credited Yadavas with overthrowing the rule of Kannada-speaking dynasties in Maharashtra.

Bhillama V's son, Jaitrapal (or Jaitugi) had Mukundaraja, the author of Paramamrita and Vivekasindhu as his spiritual teacher. Paramamrita is considered the first systematic attempt to explain the Vendantic principles in Marathi. Vivekasindhu is another exposition of Vedantic principles. Mukundaraja's earliest works were completed in 1190 C.E. and Mahimabhatta wrote Lilacharita in 1238.

The famous Marathi saint-poet Dnyaneshwar wrote Dnyaneshwari, a commentary on the Bhagavad Gita in 1290, during Ramachandra's rule. He also composed devotional songs called abhangas. Dnyaneshwar gave a higher status to

Marathi by translating the sacred Geeta from Sanskrit. He proudly said about Marathi:

माझा मर्हाटाची बोलु कवतिके|

परि अमृतातेहि पैजा जिंके|

ऐसी अक्षरे रसिके-

मेळवीन|

which means I will speak my Marathi (language) only with pride and I will give such Marathi words to the ardent listeners which will even win bets against the nectar (amRit).

Hemadri invented the Modi script during this period. Chakradhara propagated the Mahanubhava cult, using Marathi as the medium for his religious teachings. The work of his followers are counted among the first works of Marathi literature.

Kannada

Many scholars believe Kannada was one of the court languages during early Seuna times, as is evident from a number of Kannada-language inscriptions (see, Origin section). Kamalabhava, patronised by Bhillama V wrote Santhishwarapurana. Achanna composed Varadhamanapurana in 1198. Amugideva, patronised by Singhana II, composed manyVachanas or devotional songs. Chaundarasa of Pandharapur wrote Dashakumara Charite around 1300 A.D.

Sanskrit

The Sanskrit literary works created during the Seuna period include:

Chaturvarga Chintamani by Hemadri

Suktimuthavali by Jalhana

Hammiramadhana by Jayasimha Suri

Karnakutuhala and Siddhanta Shiromani by Bhaskaracharya

Anantadeva's commentaries on Varahamihira's Brijajjataka and Brahmagupta's Brihatsputa siddhanta

Haripaladeva's Sangeetasudhakara, a treatise on Indian Classical Music, which bifurcates Indian classical music as Hindustani Music and Carnatic Music for the first time, acknowledging the Muslim influence on Indian music.

The Kakatiyas

Sources

Historic sources relating to the Kakatiya dynasty are sparse. Of those that are available, the most prevalent are ancient inscriptions that mainly document matters relating to religion, such as donations to Hindu temples. They are particularly abundant for the period 1175–1324 CE, which is the period when the dynasty most flourished and are a reflection of that. The probability is that many inscriptions have been lost due to buildings falling into disuse and also the ravages of subsequent rulers, most notably the MuslimMughal Empire in the Telangana region. Inscriptions are still being discovered today but governmental agencies tend to concentrate on recording those that are already known rather than searching for new examples.

Studies of the inscriptions and coinage by the historian Dineshchandra Sircar reveal that there was no contemporary standard spelling of the family name. Variants include Kakatiya, Kakatiyya, Kakita, Kakati and Kakatya. The family name was often prefixed to the name of the monarch, giving constructs such as Kakatiya-Prataparudra. Some of the monarchs also had alternate names; for example, Venkata and Venkataraya may have been alternate names of Prataparuda I, with the former appearing on a coin in the form Venkata-Kakatiya.

Rulers

The early rulers were feudatoris of Western Chalukyas. Prataparudra I established a sovereign dynasty in 1163 CE.[b] The regnal dates of the early rulers are unknown. In order, they were

Venna, Gunda I, Gunda II, Gunda III and Erra.[6]

The next ruler, Gunda IV, is mentioned in the Mangallu grant of the Eastern Chalukya king Dānārnava in 956 CE. Gunda IV (c.956–995) was followed by

Beta I (c. 996–1051), Prola I (c. 1052–1076), Beta II (c. 1076–1108), Durgaraja (c. 1108–1116) and then Prola II (c. 1116–1157).

Next come the sovereign rulers

Prataparudra I (1158–1195 or 1163–1195), Ganapati (1199–1262 or 1199–1260), Rudrama Devi (1262–1289 or 1261–1295 CE), and Prataparudra II (1289 or 1295–1323).

The dynasty ended in 1323 after an invasion by the Delhi sultanate.

The early Kakatiya rulers used the title "Reddi" (derived from "Redu," meaning king in Telugu). However, after they became sovereigns they were addressed as "deva" (Lord or deity) and "devi" (Lady or deity). There appears to be a significant element of "sanskritisation" in this transition.

Prataparudra I

According to Sastry, Prataparudra I reigned between around 1158 – 1195, while Sircar gives the dates 1163–1195. He was also known as Rudra Deva, Kakatiya Rudradeva, Venkata, and Venkataraya He was the son of Prola II, who had

made efforts to assert greater Kakatiya influence on territories in the western parts of the declining Western Chalukyan empire and who died in a battle fought against the Velanati Choda ruler Gonka II around 1157/1158 while doing so. It was during Prataparudra's reign, in 1163, that the Kakatiyas declared an end to their status as feudatory chiefs of the Chalukyas. It is notable that inscriptions were henceforth written using the Kakatiya chiefs' vernacular Telugu rather than the Kannada language that had prevailed until that point.

Maha Deva succeeded Prataparudra I as king, reigning probably from 1195 to 1199.

Ganapati

Just as the Seuna and Hoysala dynasties took control of linguistically related areas during the 13th century, so too did the Kakatiyas under the rule of Ganapati. He is also known as Ganapathi Deva and, according to Sastry, reigned between 1199–1262; Sircar gives regnal dates of 1199–1260.[6][9] He significantly expanded Kakatiya lands during the 1230s when he launched a series of attacks outside the dynasty's traditional Telangana region and thus brought under Kakatiya control the Telugu-speaking lowland delta areas around the Godavari and Krishna rivers. The outcome in the case of all three dynasties, says historian Richard Eaton, was that they "catalysed processes of supralocal identity formation and community building".

The Kakatiya capital at Orugallu, established in 1195, was not forgotten while Ganapati expanded his territory. He organised the building of a massive granite wall around the city, complete with ramps designed for ease of access to its ramparts from within. A moat and numerous numerous bastions were also constructed.

Ganapati was keen to bolster the dynasty's economy. He encouraged merchants to trade abroad, abolishing all taxes except for a fixed duty and supporting those who risked their lives to travel afar.

Rudrama Devi

Rudrama Devi, also known as Rudramadevi, reigned around 1262–1289 CE (alternative dates: 1261–1295 CE) and is one of the few queens in Indian history. Sources disagree regarding whether she was the widow of Ganapati or his daughter.

Marco Polo, who visited India probably some time around 1289–1293, made note of Rudrama Devi's rule and nature in flattering terms. She continued the planned fortification of the capital, raising the height of Ganapati's wall as well as adding a second earthencurtain wall 1.5 miles (2.4 km) in diameter and with an additional 150 feet (46 m)-wide moat.

Rudrama was married to Virabhadra, an Eastern Chalukyan prince of Nidadavolu who had been selected for that purpose by her father. Having no son as an heir, Rudrama abdicated in favour of her grandson when it became apparent that the expansionistsultan Alauddin Khilji was encroaching on the Deccan and might in due course attack the Kakatiyas.

Prataparudra II

The earliest biography of Rudrama Devi's successor, Prataparudra II, is the Prataparudra Caritramu, dating from the 16th century. His reign began in 1289 (alternative date: 1295) and ended with the demise of the dynasty in 1323. It is described by Eaton as the "first chapter in a larger story" that saw the style of polity in the Deccan change from being regional kingdoms to transregional sultanates that survived until the arrival of the British East India Company in the 18th century.

Characterization

Geography

The Kakatiya base was the city of Orugallu[26] in the dry uplands of northern Telangana on the Deccan Plateau. From there they expanded their influence into Coastal Andhra, the delta between the Godavari and Krishna rivers that feed into the Bay of Bengal. According to Rao and Shulman, the latter contained a high proportion of Brahmins while the former was the haunt of "peasants, artisans and warriors". Under the Kakatiyas, cultural innovation often began in the uplands, was refined in the lowlands and then recycled back into the Deccan. This bi-directional flow of cultural influences brought into being a feeling of cultural affinity between those who spoke the Telugu language where nothing of that nature had previously existed. The unification of the distinct upland and lowland cultures was their most significant political achievement, achieved through a process of binding many locally powerful figures in allegiance to the empire.

The area of land under Kakatiya control reached its zenith around the 13th century CE during the rule of Ganapati Deva. By this time, South India and the Deccan was essentially under the aegis of four Hindu monarchies, of which the Kakatiyas were one.[e] The four dynasties were in a constant state of warfare with each other, with the Kakatiyas eventually exercising control from close to Anagondi in the west to Kalyani in the north-east, and down to Kanei and Ganjam district in southern Orissa.

Architecture

A notable trend during the dynastic period was the construction of reservoirs for irrigation in the uplands, around 5000 of which were built by warrior families subordinate to the Kakatiyas. The dramatically altered the possibilities for development in the sparsely populated dry areas. Many of these edifices, often called "tanks", including the large examples at Pakala and Ramappa, are still used today.

Another notable architectural feature of the dynasty relates to temples. Even before the arrival of the dynasty, there were large, well-established and well-endowed Hindu places of worship in the relatively populous delta areas; however, the temples of the uplands, which were smaller and less cosmopolitan in origin and funding, did not exist until the Kakatiya period. In the lowlands, where Brahmins were numerous, the temples had long benefited from a desire to build social networks for the purposes of domestic and foreign trade, as well as for obtaining grazing rights in the face of competition; in the uplands, the endowment of the buildings was often associated with the construction and continued maintenance of reservoirs and enabled a different type of networking based on political hierarchies. The strengthening of those hierarchies, which was achieved in part by donating land for the temples and then attending worship, was necessary as the inland agrarian society grew rapidly in number and location.

Society

There is a disparity between analysis of inscriptions, of which the work of Cynthia Talbot has been in the vanguard, and the traditional works of Vedic Hinduism that described pre-colonial India in terms of a reverent and static society that was subject to the strictures of the caste system. Colonial British administrators found much that appealed to them in the latter works but the Kakatiya inscriptions of Andhra Pradesh, which depict a far wider range of society and events, suggest that the reality was far more fluid and very different from the idealised image.

Caste itself seems to have been of low importance as a social identifier. Even the Kakatiya kings, with one exception, considered themselves to be Shudras (in the ritual varnasystem).[f] They were egaliterian in nature and promoted their subordinate warrior-chiefs who were similarly egalitarian and spurned the Kshatriya rank. Anyone, regardless of birth, could acquire the nayaka title to denote warrior status, and this they did. There is also little evidence that Kakatiya society paid much regard to caste identities, in the sense of jāti. Although occupation does appear to have been an important designator of social position, the inscriptions suggest that people were not bound to an occupation by birth.

The population became more settled in geographic terms. The growth of an agricultural peasant class subsumed many tribal people who previously had been nomadic. The nexus of politics and military was a significant feature of the era, and the Kakatiya recruitment of peasants into the military did much to create a new warrior class, to develop social mobility and to extend the influence of the dynasty into areas of its kingdom that previously would have been untouched. The Kakatiya kings, and in particular the last two, encouraged an egalitarian ethos. The entrenched landed nobility that had existed prior to the dynasty found its power to be on the wane; the royal gifting of lands formerly in the possession of nobles to people of lesser status did much to effect this dilution.

Demise of the dynasty

The conquest of the Deccan by the Delhi Sultanate began in 1296 when Alauddin raided and plundered Devagiri. Later in that year, he murdered his uncle, the reigning sultanJalaluddin, and took became sultan himself.

The Kakatiya kingdom attracted the attention of Alauddin because of the possibility for plunder. The first foray into the Telugu kingdom was made in 1303 and was a disaster due to the resistance of the Kakatiya army in the battle at Upparapalli. In 1309 Alauddin sent a general, Malik Kafur, in an attempt to force Prataparudra into acceptance of a position subordinate to the sultanate at Delhi. Kafur organised a month-long siege of Orugallu that ended with success in February 1310. Prataparudra was forced to make various symbolic acts of obeisance designed to demonstrate his new position as a subordinate but, as was Alauddin's plan, he was not removed as ruler of the area but rather forced thereafter to pay annual tribute to Delhi. It was probably at this time that the Koh-i-Noor diamond passed from Kakatiya ownership to that of Alauddin, along with 20,000 horses and 100 elephants.

In 1311, Prataparudra formed a part of the sultanate forces that attacked the Pandyan empire in the south, and he took advantage of that situation to quell some of his vassals in Nellore who had seen his reduced status as an opportunity for independence. Later, though, in 1318, he failed to provide the annual tribute to Delhi,

claiming that the potential for being attacked on the journey made it impossible. Alauddin responded by sending another of his generals, Khusrau Khan, to Orugallu with a force that bristled with technology previously unknown in the area, including trebuchet-like machines. Prataparudra had to submit once more, with his obeisance on this occasion being arranged by the sultanate to include a very public display whereby he bowed towards Delhi from the ramparts of Orugallu. The amount of his annual tribute was changed, becoming 100 elephants and 12,000 horses.

The new arrangements did not last long. Taking advantage of a revolution in Delhi that saw the Khilji dynasty removed and Ghiyasuddin Tughlaq installed as sultan, Prataparudra again asserted his independence in 1320. Tughlaq sent his son, Ulugh Khan, to defeat the defiant Kakatiya king in 1321. Khan's army was riven with internal dissension due to its containing factions from the Khilji and Tughluq camps. This caused the siege on this occasion to last much longer — six months, rather than the few weeks that had previously been the case. The attackers were initially repulsed and Khan's forces retreated to regroup in Devagiri. Prataparudra celebrated the apparent victory by opening up his grain stores for public feasting. Khan returned in 1323 with his revitalised and reinforced army and, with few supplies left, Prataparudra was forced into submission after a five-month siege. The unprepared and battle-weary army of Orugallu was finally defeated, and Orugallu was renamed as Sultanpur. It seems probable, from combining various contemporary and near-contemporary accounts, that Prataparudra committed suicide near to the Narmada River while being taken as a prisoner to Delhi.

Aftermath

Tughlaq control of the area lasted only for around a decade. The fall of the Kakatiya dynasty resulted in both political and cultural disarray because of both disparate resistance to the sultanate and dissension within it. The structure of the Kakatiya polity disintegrated and their lands soon fell under the control of numerous families from communities such as the Reddies and Velamas. As early as 1330, Musunuri Nayaks who served as army chiefs for Kakatiya kingdom united the various Telugu clans and recovered Warangal from the Delhi Sultanate and ruled for half a century. Surrounded by more significant states, by the 15th century these new entities had ceded to the Bahamani Sultanate and the Sangama dynasty, the latter of which evolved to become the Vijayanagara empire.

A brother of Prataparudra II, Annamaraja, has been associated with ruling what eventually became the princely state of Bastar during theBritish Raj period. This appears likely to be historical revisionism, dating from a genealogy published by the ruling family in 1703, because it records only eight generations spanning almost four centuries of rule. Such revisionism and tenuous claims of connection to the Kakatiyas was not uncommon because it was perceived as legitimising the right to rule and a warrior status. Talbot notes that there is a record of a brother called Annamadeva and that:

He is said to have left [Orugallu] for the northeast after anointing Prataparudra's son as king. Thus, the founder of the family fortunes in Bastar may very well have been a Telugu warrior from Telangana who was familiar with the prevalent legends about the Kakatiyas.

Acoording to Talbot and Eaton, a revisionist interpretation of Prataparudra II himself appeared much sooner, within a few years of his death, and for broadly similar reasons. A stone inscription dated 1330 mentions a Prolaya Nayaka, who

was said to have restored order, as in Prataparudra days. He presented himself as a legitimate successor to Prataparudra, by portraying both of them as righteous monarchs, meanwhile reconstructing Prataparudra's life and career in a favorable way. By 1420, Muslim rulers had become accommodated to the Deccan society, and strong dichotomies between Hindus and Muslims were no longer useful. Muslim rulers were no longer conceived as diametrical opposed to the figure of Prataparudra, but rather as rulers of equal status.

This type of revisionism, which Talbot describes as "social memories" and which persist to the present day, reappeared in the 16th century with the Prataparudra Caritramuhagiography, which claimed him to be the founder of the padmanayaka class of Telugu warrior and provided the elite of the Vijayanagara empire with what Talbot has described as a "charter of legitimacy". This work claimed, contrary to all reasonable evidence, that he did not die after being taken prisoner but instead met with the sultan, was recognised as being an avatar of Shiva, and allowed to return to Orugallu. Once back home, the Prataparudra Caritamu says, he released the padmanayakas from their allegiance to him and told them to become independent kings. The work also claims Vijayanagara to be an ally of Prataparudra, which is clearly anachronistic but served the purpose of elevating the role of the padmanayakas, whom it claimed to be ultimately subordinate to Vijayanagara during his time time.

The Kalachuris

Origin of Kalachuris

Natives of Central India

Historians such as Dr. P.B. Desai are emphatic about the central Indian origin of the Kalachuris. Before the arrival of Badami Chalukya power, they had carved out an extensive empire covering areas of Gujarat, Malwa, Konkan and parts of Maharashtra. However, after their crippling defeat at the hands of Chalukya Magalesa, they remained in obscurity for a prolonged period of time. A 1174 CE record says the dynasty was founded by one Soma who grew beard and moustache to save himself from the wrath of Parashurama, and thereafter the family came to be known as "Kalachuris", Kalli meaning a long moustache and churi meaning a sharp knife. Historian have also pointed out that several Kalachuri kings were related to Chalukyas and Rashtrakutas by matrimonial alliances and ruled from places like Tripuri, Gorakhpur, Ratnapur, Rajpur. They migrated to the south and made Magaliveda or Mangalavedhe (Mangalavada) their capital. They called themselves Kalanjarapuravaradhisvara, which indicates their central Indian origin. Their emblem was Suvarna Vrishabha or the golden bull. They must have started as modest feudatories of the Chalukyas of Kalyani.

Legends

According to legends, Kalli meaning long moustache and Churi meanoing Sharp knife is the source of their dynastic name. They were also referred to as Katachuris (shape of a sharp knife), Kalanjarapuravaradhisvara (Lord of

Kalanjara) and Haihaya (Heheya). Mount Kalanjara is in north central India, east of the Indus Valley floodplain.

This name Haihaya is supposed to be derived from haya (a horse). Other theories are,

A prince of the Lunar Dynasty of Kshatriyas, and great-grandson of Yadu.

A race or tribe of people to whom a Scythian origin has been ascribed. The Vishnu Purana represents them as descendants of Haihaya of the Yadu race, but they are generally associated with borderers and outlying tribes.

In the Vayu and other Puranas, five great divisions of the tribe are named as Talajanghas,

Vitihotras, Avantis, Tundikeras, Jatas, or rather Sujatas.

They conquered Bahu or Bahuka, a descendant of King Harish Chandra, and were in their turn conquered, along with many other barbarian tribes, by King Sagara, son of Bahu. According to the Mahabharata, they were descended from Saryati, a son of Manu. They made incursions into the Doab, and they took the city of Kasi (Benares), which had been fortified against them by King Divo Dasa; but the grandson of this king Pratardana by name, destroyed the Haihayas, and re-established the kingdom of Kasi. Kaartaveerya-arjuna, of a thousand arms, was king of the Haihayas, and he was defeated and had his arms cut off by Parasurama.

The Vindhya Mountains would seem to have been the home of these tribes; and according to Colonel Tod, a tribe of Haihayas still exists “near the very top of the valley of Sohagpur, in Bhagelkhand, aware of their ancient lineage, and though few in number, still celebrated for their valor.”

Early Kalachuris

The earliest historical information we have on the Kalachuris refers to a dynasty that ruled in the 6th and 7th centuries a large area that included Malwa, northern Maharashtra, southern Gujarat and southern Rajasthan, with their capital perhaps at Mahishmati. These Early Kalachuris were the builders of the famous cave temples on Elephanta Island in Mumbai harbor and also of several caves at the well-known site of Ellora, including the famous Rameshwara cave (Cave 21). Both Elephanta and Ellora are World Heritage Sites.

Three kings of this dynasty are known: Krishnaraja (c. 550-575), his son Sankaragana (c. 575-600) and his grandson Buddharaja (c. 600-625). Krishnaraja is known from his coins and from being mentioned in the copper plate grants of his son and grandson. Sankaragana and Buddharaja are known from their copper plate grants.[6] Later Kalachuri dynasties in the north and south were presumably descendants of this early Kalachuri dynasty.

Northern Dynasty

First dynasty

The Kalachuris, or Haihayas, ruled Gorakhpur and Bundelkhand after emerging from Gujarat, Maharashtra and Malwa of central India. The Kalachuris of

Chedi, Dahala-mandala, established their kingdom in Madhya Pradesh, with their capital at Tripuri near Jabalpur. Kokkala I was the founder of the dynasty in 845 CE. The Chedis had to face the Turushkas, Pratiharas, Chalukyas and Rashtrakutas. They also had to defend their territory against the Palas, and a confederacy of Cholas, Pallavas, Kungas, Muralas, and Pandyas. One of the most important rulers of the Kalachuri dynasty was Gangeyadeva (1019-1040), who made the Chedis the "greatest political power in India." He was succeeded by his son Lakshmi-Karna, or Karna, "one of the greatest generals of his time." However, Yashkarna's reign (1073-1125 CE) "was overwhelmed by a series of invasions." Vijayasimha (1177-1211 CE) was the last king of the dynasty, whenChandella Trailokyavarman conquered the kingdom.

Second dynasty

After the decline of the Gurjara-Pratiharas, Laksm Karna (1041–1072) of Kalachuri dynasty of Tripuri, who came to power, brought under his control almost the entire region covered by the present district of Gorakhpur. But his son and successor Yash Karna (1073–1120), was unable to check the process of disintegration. The Kahla inscription indicates that Sodha Deva, a feudatory of another branch of Kalachuri dynasty, had proclaimed his independence in a portion of Gorakhpur district. During the same period the Kalachuri rule was supplanted by that of the Gahadvalas of Kannauj over this region. According to epigraphic evidence the kingdom of Govind Chandra (1114–1154) of the Gahadvala dynasty extended to Bihar including the area now comprising Gorakhpur. Two inscriptions ascribed to Govind Chandra have also been found one each at Magdiha (Gagha) and Dhuriapar in Bansgaon Tehsil mentioning the genealogy of the Gahadvalas and the charity given by him for the prosperity of his family. A number of mounds of bricks, ruins and masonry wells found at these places go to establish their antiquity.

The defeat of Jaya Chandra (1170–1194) grandson of Govind Chandra, at the hands of Shihab-uddin Ghuri in 1194, paralyzed the Gahadvala power and brought to an end their dominance over the district. As a result, a number of small principalities held by Sarnet, Donwar, Kaushik Rajputs and Bhars came into existence in different parts of the district.

Southern Dynasty, Immigrants in Karnataka

Legends

This dynasty which overthrew the Kalyani Chalukyas in the early part of the 12th century, had a relatively short but stormy rule.[8] According to a record pertaining to the year 1174, the founder of the family was Soma, who was a disciple of Ashwathama (the heroic character of the Mahabharata). According to legends, he grew a beard and a moustache to conceal his visage, in a bid to escape the wrath of the fiery Parashurama (another famous character of the Mahabharata). Thereafter his family and kinsmen came to be known as Kalachuris. However, the later records of the dynasty claim that they descended from Brahma, the Creator of the universe.

The Southern Clan

The early Kalachuris of the south were Jains and encouraged Jainism in their kingdom. The first notable chief of the Kalachuri family of Karnatakawas Uchita. While there were several kings who followed him ruling as feudatories of the Kalyani

Chalukyas, it was Jogama who became an influential vassal of Vikramaditya VI, being related to the great Chalukya king by matrimony.

Decline Of Kalachuris

Even though the earliest of the Kaluchuri dynasties declined with the rise of the Badami Chalukyas during the 7th century, the Kaluchuris lingered around until a much later date. The Southern Kaluchuri kingdom went into decline after the assassination of Bijjalla. The rulers who followed were weak and incompetent, with the exception of Sovideva, who managed to maintain control over the kingdom. Western Chalukyas ended the Kalachuri Dynasty. Many Kalachuri families migrated to Kanara districts of Karnataka. The Kalachuris are the principal characters in the Andhra epic The battle of Palnadu.

The Kalachuri Clan (feudatory of Kalyani Chalukyas)

Uchita

Asaga

Kannam

Kiriyasaga

Bijjala I

Kannama

Jogama

Permadi

Bijjala II (1130–1167): proclaimed independence in 1162.

Sovideva (1168–1176)

Mallugi --> overthrown by brother Sankama

Sankama (1176–1180)

Ahavamalla (1180–1183)

Singhana (1183–1184)

Kannada Inscriptions and Coinage

Hampi was ruled not only by Vijayanagara empire, but earlier ruled by Kadambas, Badami Chalukyas Hoysalas, Kalachuris and Yadavas. As per the 1163 CE inscription which records a religious offering (mahadana) in the presence of Hampi Lord Virupaksha by Bijjala the Kalachuri King.

Coinage

The Southern Kalachuri kings minted coins with Kannada inscriptions on them.

Gajasaradula type: They were mostly gold or copper. Some of the common ones were the seated goddess type along with the name of the issuer which is generally prefixed with Srimat and suffixed with Deva.

The Hoysalas

History

Kannada folklore tells a tale of a young man Sala, who saved his Jain guru Sudatta by striking dead a Lion he encountered near the temple of the Goddess Vasantika at Angadi, now called Sosevuru. The word "strike" literally translates to "hoy" in Hale Kannada (Old Kannada), hence the name "Hoy-sala". This legend first appeared in the Belur inscription of Vishnuvardhana (1117), but owing to several inconsistencies in the Sala story it remains in the realm of folklore.[2][3] The legend may have come into existence or gained popularity after King Vishnuvardhana's victory over the Cholas at Talakad as the Hoysala emblem depicts the fight between the mythical warrior Sala and a tiger, the tiger being the emblem of the Cholas.

Early inscriptions, dated 1078 and 1090, have implied that the Hoysalas were descendants of the Yadava by referring to the Yadavavamsa (clan) as Hoysala vamsa. But there are no early records directly linking the Hoysalas to the Yadavas of North India.

Historians refer to the founders of the dynasty as natives of Malnad Karnataka, based on numerous inscriptions calling themMaleparolganda or "Lord of the Male (hills) chiefs" (Malepas). This title in the Kannada language was proudly used by the Hoysala kings as their royal signature in their inscriptions. Literary sources from that time in Kannada (Jatakatilaka) and Sanskrit (Gadyakarnamrita) have also helped confirm they were natives of the region known today as Karnataka.

The first Hoysala family record is dated 950 and names Arekalla as the chieftain, followed by Maruga and Nripa Kama I (976). The next ruler, Munda (1006–1026), was succeeded by Nripa Kama II who held such titles as Permanadi that show an early alliance with the Western Ganga dynasty. From these modest beginnings, the Hoysala dynasty began its transformation into a strong subordinate of the Western Chalukyas. Through Vishnuvardhana's expansive military conquests, the Hoysalas achieved the status of a real kingdom for the first time. He wrested Gangavadi from the Cholas in 1116 and moved the capital from Belur to Halebidu.

Vishnuvardhana's ambition of creating an independent empire was fulfilled by his grandson Veera Ballala II, who freed the Hoysalas from subordination in 1187–1193. Thus the Hoysalas began as subordinates of the Western Chalukyas and gradually established their own empire in Karnataka with such strong Hoysala kings as Vishnuvardhana, Veera Ballala II and later Veera Ballala III. During this time, peninsular India saw a four way struggle for hegemony – Pandya,Kakatiya and Seuna Yadavas of Devagiri being the other kingdoms. Veera Ballala II defeated the aggressive Pandya when they invaded the Chola kingdom. He assumed the title "Establisher of the Chola Kingdom" (Cholarajyapratishtacharya), "Emperor of the south" (Dakshina Chakravarthi) and "Hoysala emperor" (Hoysala Chakravarthi). He founded the city of Bangaloreaccording to Kannada folklore.

The Hoysalas extended their foothold in areas known today as Tamil Nadu around 1225, making the city of Kannanur Kuppam near Srirangam a provincial capital and giving them control over South Indian politics that began a period of Hoysala hegemony in the southern Deccan. Vira Narasimha II's son Vira Someshwara earned the honorific "uncle" (Mamadi) from the Pandyas and Cholas. The Hoysala influence spread over Pandya kingdom also. Toward the end of the 13th century, Veera Ballala IIIrecaptured territory in the Tamil country which had been lost to the Pandya uprising, thus uniting the northern and southern portions of the kingdom.

Major political changes were taking place in the Deccan region in the early 14th century when significant areas of northern Indiawere under Muslim rule. Alla-ud-din Khilji, the Sultan of Delhi, was determined to bring South India under his domain and sent his commander, Malik Kafur, on a southern expedition to plunder the Seuna capital Devagiri in 1311. The Seuna empire was subjugated by 1318 and the Hoysala capital Halebidu (also called Dorasamudra or Dwarasamudra) was sacked twice, in 1311 and 1327.

By 1336, the Sultan had conquered the Pandyas of Madurai, the Kakatiyas of Warangal and the tiny kingdom of Kampili. The Hoysalas were the only remaining Hindu empire who resisted the invading armies. Veera Ballala III stationed himself at Tiruvannamalai and offered stiff resistance to invasions from the north and the Sultanate of Madurai to the south. Then, after nearly three decades of resistance, Veera Ballala III was killed at the battle of Madurai in 1343, and the sovereign territories of the Hoysala empire were merged with the areas administered by Harihara I in the Tungabhadra region. This new Hindu kingdom resisted the northern invasions and would later prosper and come to be known as the Vijayanagara Empire.

Economy

The Hoysala administration supported itself through revenues from an agrarian economy. The kings gave grants of land as rewards for service to beneficiaries who then became landlords to tenants producing agricultural goods and forest products. There were two types of landlords (gavunda); gavunda of people (praja gavunda) was lower in status than the wealthy lord of gavundas (prabhu gavunda). The highlands (malnad regions) with its temperate climate was suitable for raising cattle and the planting of orchards and spices. Paddy and corn were staple crops in the tropical plains (Bailnad). The Hoysalas collected taxes on irrigation systems including tanks, reservoirs with sluices, canals and wells which were built and maintained at the expense of local villagers. Irrigation tanks such as Vishnusagara, Shantisagara, Ballalarayasagara were created at the expense of the state.

Importing horses for use as general transportation and in army cavalries of Indian kingdoms was a flourishing business on the western seaboard. The forests were harvested for rich woods such as teak which was exported through ports located in the area of present-day Kerala.Song dynasty records from China mention the presence of Indian merchants in ports of South China, indicating active trade with overseas kingdoms.[54] South India exported textiles, spices, medicinal plants, precious stones, pottery, salt made from salt pans, jewels, gold, ivory, rhino horn, ebony, aloe wood, perfumes, sandalwood, camphor and condiments to China, Dhofar, Aden, and Siraf (the entryport to Egypt, Arabia andPersia). Architects

(Vishwakarmas), sculptors, quarry workers, goldsmiths and other skilled craftsmen whose trade directly or indirectly related to temple construction were also prosperous due to the vigorous temple building activities.

The village assembly was responsible for collecting government land taxes. Land revenue was called Siddhaya and included the original assessment (Kula) plus various cesses. Taxes were levied on professions, marriages, goods in transit on chariots or carriages, and domesticated animals. Taxes on commodities (gold, precious stones, perfumes, sandalwood, ropes, yarn, housing, hearths, shops, cattle pans, sugarcane presses) as well as produce (black pepper, betel leaves, ghee, paddy, spices, palm leaves, coconuts, sugar) are noted in village records. The village assembly could levy a tax for a specific purpose such as construction of a water tank.

Administration

In its administrative practices, the Hoysala Empire followed some of the well-established and proven methods of its predecessors covering administrative functions such as cabinet organisation and command, the structure of local governing bodies and the division of territory. Records show the names of many high ranking positions reporting directly to the king. Senior ministers were called Pancha Pradhanas, ministers responsible for foreign affairs were designated Sandhivigrahi and the chief treasurer was Mahabhandari or Hiranyabhandari. Dandanayakas were in charge of armies and the chief justice of the Hoysala court was the Dharmadhikari.

The kingdom was divided into provinces named Nadu, Vishaya, Kampana and Desha, listed in descending order of geographical size. Each province had a local governing body consisting of a minister (Mahapradhana) and a treasurer (Bhandari) that reported to the ruler of that province (Dandanayaka). Under this local ruler were officials called Heggaddes and Gavundas who hired and supervised the local farmers and labourers recruited to till the land. Subordinate ruling clans such as Alupas continued to govern their respective territories while following the policies set by the empire.[60]

An elite and well trained force of bodyguards known as Garudas protected the members of the royal family at all times. These servants moved closely yet inconspicuously by the side of their master, their loyalty being so complete that they committed suicide after his death. Hero stones (virgal) erected in memory of these bodyguards are called Garuda pillars. The Garuda pillar at the Hoysaleswara temple in Halebidu was erected in honor of Kuvara Lakshma, a minister and bodyguard of King Veera Ballala II.

King Vishnuvardhana's coins had the legends "victor at Nolambavadi" (Nolambavadigonda), "victor at Talakad" (Talakadugonda), "chief of the Malepas" (Maleparolganda), "Brave of Malepa" (malapavira) in Hoysala style Kannada script. Their gold coin was called Honnu or Gadyanaand weighed 62 grains of gold. Pana or Hana was a tenth of the Honnu, Haga was a fourth of the Pana and Visa was fourth of Haga. There were other coins called Bele and Kani.

Culture

Religion

The defeat of the Jain Western Ganga Dynasty by the Cholas in the early 11th century and the rising numbers of followers of Vaishnavism andLingayatism in the 12th century was mirrored by a decreased interest in Jainism. Two notable locations of Jain worship in the Hoysala territory were Shravanabelagola and Kambadahalli. The decline of Buddhism in South India began in the 8th century with the spread of Adi Shankara'sAdvaita philosophy. The only places of Buddhist worship during the Hoysala time were at Dambal and Balligavi. Shantala Devi, queen of Vishnuvardhana, was a Jain but nevertheless commissioned the Hindu Kappe Chennigaraya temple in Belur, evidence that the royal family was tolerant of all religions.

During the rule of the Hoysalas, three important religious developments took place in present-day Karnataka inspired by three philosophers,Basava, Madhvacharya and Ramanuja.

While the origin of Lingayatism is debated, the movement grew through its association with Basava in the 12th century.[66] Madhvacharya was critical of the teachings of Adi Shankara and argued the world is real and not an illusion.[67] His philosophy gained popularity enabling him to establish eight mathas in Udupi. Ramanuja, head of the Vaishnava monastery in Srirangam, preached the way of devotion (bhakti marga) and wrote Sribhashya, a critique on the Advaita Vedanta philosophy of Adi Shankara.

The impact of these religious developments on culture, literature, poetry and architecture in South India was profound. Important works of literature and poetry based on the teachings of these philosophers were written during the coming centuries. The Saluva, Tuluva and Aravidu dynasties of Vijayanagar empire were followers of Vaishnavism and a Vaishnava temple with an image of Ramanuja exists in the Vitthalapura area of Vijayanagara.[69] Scholars in the later Kingdom of Mysore wrote Vaishnavite works upholding the teachings of Ramanuja. King Vishnuvardhana built many temples after his conversion from Jainism to Vaishnavism. The later saints of Madhvacharya's order, Jayatirtha,Vyasatirtha, Sripadaraja, Vadirajatirtha and devotees (dasa) such as Vijaya Dasa, Gopaladasa and others from the Karnataka region spread his teachings far and wide. His teachings inspired later day philosophers like Vallabha Acharya in Gujarat and Chaitanya Mahaprabhu in Bengal. Another wave of devotion (bhakti) in the 17th century–18th century found inspiration in his teachings.

Society

Hoysala society in many ways reflected the emerging religious, political and cultural developments of those times. During this period, the society became increasingly sophisticated. The status of women was varied. Some royal women were involved in administrative matters as shown in contemporary records describing Queen Umadevi's administration of Halebidu in the absence of Veera Ballala II during his long military campaigns in northern territories. She also fought and defeated some antagonistic feudal rebels. Records describe the participation of women in the fine arts, such as Queen Shantala Devi's skill in dance and music, and the 12th century Vachana poet and Lingayatism mystic Akka Mahadevi's devotion to the bhakti movement is well known. Temple dancers (Devadasi) were common and some were well educated and accomplished in the arts. These qualifications gave them more freedom than other urban and rural women who were restricted to daily mundane tasks. The practice of sati in a voluntary form was prevalent and

prostitution was socially acceptable. As in most of India, the Indian caste system was conspicuously present.

Trade on the west coast brought many foreigners to India including Arabs, Jews, Persians, Chinese and people from the Malay Peninsula.[80]Migration of people within Southern India as a result of the expansion of the empire produced an influx of new cultures and skills. In South India, towns were called Pattana or Pattanam and the marketplace, Nagara or Nagaram, the marketplace serving as the nuclei of a city. Some towns such as Shravanabelagola developed from a religious settlement in the 7th century to an important trading center by the 12th century with the arrival of rich traders, while towns like Belur attained the atmosphere of a regal city when King Vishnuvardhana built the Chennakesava Temple there. Large temples supported by royal patronage served religious, social, and judiciary purposes, elevating the king to the level of "God on earth".

Temple building served a commercial as well as a religious function and was not limited to any particular sect of Hinduism. Shaiva merchants of Halebidu financed the construction of the Hoysaleswara temple to compete with the Chennakesava temple built at Belur, elevating Halebidu to an important city as well. Hoysala temples however were secular and encouraged pilgrims of all Hindu sects, the Kesava temple at Somanathapura being an exception with strictly Vaishnava sculptural depictions. Temples built by rich landlords in rural areas fulfilled fiscal, political, cultural and religious needs of the agrarian communities. Irrespective of patronage, large temples served as establishments that provided employment to hundreds of people of various guilds and professions sustaining local communities as Hindu temples began to take on the shape of wealthy Buddhist monasteries.

Literature

Although Sanskrit literature remained popular during the Hoysala rule, royal patronage of local Kannada scholars increased. In the 12th century some works were written in the Champu style, but distinctive Kannada metres became more widely accepted. The Sangatya metre used in compositions, Shatpadi (six line), Tripadi (three line) metres in verses and Ragale (lyrical poems) became fashionable. Jain works continued to extol the virtues of Tirthankaras (Jain ascetics).

The Hoysala court supported scholars such as Janna, Rudrabhatta, Harihara and his nephew Raghavanka, whose works are enduring masterpieces in Kannada. In 1209, the Jain scholar Janna wrote Yashodharacharite, the story of a king who intends to perform a ritual sacrifice of two young boys to a local deity, Mariamma. Taking pity on the boys, the king releases them and gives up the practice of human sacrifice.[89][90] In honour of this work, Janna received the title "Emperor among poets" (Kavichakravarthi) from King Veera Ballala II.

Rudrabhatta, a Smartist Brahmin, was the earliest well-known Brahminical writer whose patron was Chandramouli, a minister of King Veera Ballala II. Based on the earlier work of Vishnu Purana, he wrote Jagannatha Vijaya in the Champu style relating the life of Lord Krishna leading up to his fight with the demon Banasura.

Harihara, (also known as Harisvara) a Lingayati writer and the patron of King Narasimha I, wrote the Girijakalyana in the old Jain Champu style which describes the marriage of Lord Shiva and Parvati in ten sections. He was one of the earliest

Virashaiva writers who was not part of theVachana literary tradition. He came from a family of accountants (Karanikas) from Halebidu and spent many years in Hampi writing more than one hundred Ragales (poems in blank verse) in praise of Lord Virupaksha (a form of Lord Shiva). Raghavanka was the first to introduce theShatpadi metre into Kannada literature in his Harishchandra kavya which is considered a classic even though it occasionally violates strict rules of Kannada grammar.

In Sanskrit, the philosopher Madhvacharya wrote Rigbhshya on Brahmasutras (a logical explanation of Hindu scriptures, the Vedas) as well as many polemical works rebutting the doctrines of other schools of Vedas. He relied more on the Puranic literature than the Vedas for logical proof of his philosophy.[96] Another famous writing was Rudraprshnabhashya by Vidyatirtha.

Architecture

The modern interest in the Hoysalas is due to their patronage of art and architecture rather than their military conquests. The brisk temple building throughout the kingdom was accomplished despite constant threats from the Pandyas to the south and the Seunas Yadavas to the north. Their architectural style, an offshoot of the Western Chalukya style, shows distinct Dravidian influences. The Hoysala architecture style is described asKarnata Dravida as distinguished from the traditional Dravida, and is considered an independent architectural tradition with many unique features.

A feature of Hoysala temple architecture is its attention to exquisite detail and skilled craftsmanship. The tower over the temple shrine (vimana) is delicately finished with intricate carvings, showing attention to the ornate and elaborately detailed rather than to a tower form and height. The stellate design of the base of the shrine with its rhythmic projections and recesses is carried through the tower in an orderly succession of decorated tiers. Hoysala temple sculpture replicates this emphasis on delicacy and craftsmanship in its focus on depicting feminine beauty, grace and physique. The Hoysala artists achieved this with the use of Soapstone(Chloritic schist), a soft stone as basic building and sculptural material.

The Chennakesava Temple at Belur (1117), the Hoysaleswara temple at Halebidu (1121), the Chennakesava Temple at Somanathapura (1279), the temples at Arasikere (1220), Amruthapura(1196), Belavadi (1200), Nuggehalli (1246),Hosaholalu (1250), Aralaguppe(1250), Korvangla (1173), Haranhalli (1235), Mosale and Basaralu (1234) are some of the notable examples of Hoysala art. While the temples at Belur and Halebidu are the best known because of the beauty of their sculptures, the Hoysala art finds more complete expression in the smaller and lesser known temples. The outer walls of all these temples contain an intricate array of stone sculptures and horizontal friezes (decorative mouldings) that depict the Hindu epics. These depictions are generally clockwise in the traditional direction of circumambulation (pradakshina). The temple of Halebidu has been described as an outstanding example of Hindu architecture and an important milestone in Indian architecture. The temples of Belur and Halebidu are a proposed UNESCO world heritage sites.

Language

The support of the Hoysala rulers for the Kannada language was strong, and this is seen even in their epigraphs, often written in polished and poetic language, rather than prose, with illustrations of floral designs in the margins. According to historian Sheldon Pollock, the Hoysala era saw the complete displacement of Sanskrit, with Kannada dominating as the courtly language. Temples served as local schools where learned Brahmins taught in Sanskrit, while Jain and Buddhist monasteries educated novice monks. Schools of higher learning were called Ghatikas. The local Kannada language was widely used in the rising number of devotional movements to express the ecstatic experience of closeness to the deity (vachanas and devaranama). Literary works were written in it on palm leaves which were tied together. While in past centuries Jain works had dominated Kannada literature, Shaiva and early Brahminical works became popular during the Hoysala reign. Writings in Sanskrit included poetry, grammar, lexicon, manuals, rhetoric, commentaries on older works, prose fiction and drama. Inscriptions on stone (Shilashasana) and copper plates (Tamarashasana) were written mostly in Kannada but some were in Sanskrit or were bilingual. The sections of bilingual inscriptions stating the title, genealogy, origin myths of the king and benedictions were generally done in Sanskrit. Kannada was used to state terms of the grants, including information on the land, its boundaries, the participation of local authorities, rights and obligations of the grantee, taxes and dues, and witnesses. This ensured the content was clearly understood by the local people without ambiguity.