HISTORY OF INDIA

(UPTO 1526 A.D.)

HARI RAM
YASHPAL
G. SINGH

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Govt. College for W

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PREFACE

History is a dialogue between past and present, not between a dead past and the living present, but between the living present and a past which the historian makes live again by establishing its continuity with the present.

In this book an attempt has been made to follow the above maxim as far as possible. It has been endeavoured to present the history of India from the point of view of the common man. Events and episodes are put in their right perspective.

The book contains within reasonable compass the story of the rise and growth of Hindu civilization, culture and power and also of Muslim power in India up to 1526 A.D. It is an interesting tale of the pre-historic people, of Aryans, the development of the earliest form of religion, of several peoples voluntarily absorbing themselves in Hindu society and of the perpetuals truggles between a rising people and a decaying society.

Emphasis has been laid upon the growth of institutions and upon the gradual changes in the social organization. Minor wars are dealt with rather summarily, while the great struggles which have considerably influenced the development of political, social and economic institutions have received more detailed treatment.

It is expected that the book will prove useful for the junior university students for whom it is written.

June, 1953.

THE AUTHORS.

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Chapter I

THE LAND AND ITS PEOPLE

Section I—The Land

Introduction

In the following pages we are going to study the history of India (now called *Bharat*). Only recently India has been divided into Pakistan and Bharat, yet for all intents and purposes, especially so far as the scope of this book is concerned, we will consider this as a single unit called India. India is the name given to that part of Southern Asia which lies between Longitudes 61° and 96° East and Latitudes 8° and 37° North. The free India is the fourth largest country in the world after Russia, China and the United States. It possesses one-sixth of the world's entire population. In external trade India is fifth after the United States, the United Kingdom, France and Canada, and the largest exporter of cotton textiles in the world. In industry it occupies eighth position after the United States, Canada, the United Kingdom, France, Germany, Russia and Japan. India is the leading democratic power in Asia. At the present day India wields greatest moral force in world politics.

Speaking of its hoary post it may be mentioned that "Early man appeared in the higher regions of the Punjab and the Siwaliks." Similarly, "it is also the cradle of civilization." The first book of the world (Rigveda) was composed on its soil. The idea of God and religion originated here. Medicine, numerals and the decimal system were invented in this land. It is the birth-place of two oldest religions, Hinduism and Buddhism, the latter still commanding the largest following in the world.

Name

Various names have been given to this country at different periods of its history. These names have undergone a constant change, sometimes on account of political factors and sometimes because of philological changes. This land was known to the old residents of India (Aryans) as *Bharat Versha* or *Bharat Khonda*, being named after King Bharta of the Puranic fame. This *Bharat*

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Versha was considered to be the part of a big island called the Jambudvipa (the Rose-apple Land), an imaginary island according to the old Aryans.

Our immediate neighbours, the Persians, used the name *Hapta-Hindu* for India having derived this from the name *Sapta-Sindhu* the land of seven rivers, as Panjab was called in the early days. This change took place due to philological changes. It was from *Hindu* that we had *Hind* and *Hindustan* as the names for this country. Similarly the word *Indu-desha* was used for it.

The river *Sindh* was called the *Indus* by the Greeks. The word *India* was derived from Indus and was used for this country by the Greek travellers. This name was subsequently applied by all the European people. Now two names are in use, India and Bharat.

Extent

The political boundaries of this country called the *Bharat Versha* have varied with the fortunes of the various kings who ruled it. Under Mauryas it extended up to the Hindukush, the corrupted form of Indo-Caucasus).

In the time of Turko-Afghan kings its north-western boundary did not extend beyond the Khyber Pass. The Hindukush again formed the borderline under the Mughals up to 1739, when Nadir Shah conquered it. The British attempts to include Afghanistan in the Indian Empire failed. The study of races, language and the civilization points out to the fact that Afghanistan was a part of India. This view is supported by the French school of archaeology and the researches of Sir Aurel Stein ; while Baluchistan is certainly more Iranian than Indian.

Physical Features

Physically one could divide India into four clear-cut regions : (*i*) The northern mountains, with their western and eastern ranges and their slopes com-

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It may be interesting to know that this name persists uptil today and is used in Hindu religious ceremonies at the time of performing a charitable deed when the *Purohit* reads out the *Sankalpa* :—

जम्बूद्वीपे भरतखण्डे जम्बूद्वीपे भारतखण्डे आर्यवर्ते देशान्तरगते

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prising the present areas of Kashmir, Siwalik, Tehri-Garhwal, Kumaon, Nepal, Sikkim and Bhutan ; (*ii*) The great northern plains or the Indo-Gangetic plains irrigated by the Indus and the Ganga system of rivers ; (*iii*) the Deccan Plateau, and (*iv*) the long, narrow strip of plains, situated between the sea and the Eastern and the Western Ghats.

The ancient books have given a different division of the country. The plains from the Jumna to the Brahmaputra were called the *Madhyadesha* or the Midlands. It was the most important portion of the country, being the seat of Indo-Aryan culture. The north-western India was called the *Uttarpatha*, the western was called the *Pratichya* or *Aparanta*, the eastern was called the *Prachya*, and the southern was called the *Dakshinapatha*. It appears as if this division was not as scientific as the one attempted above.

Their Effect

It is a well-known fact that the geography of the land always affects the history of the people living in it. In fact the effect of geography on human beings or even living creatures is very great.

Four Divisions

However, these four physical divisions of India were never clearly defined. As such they do not denote any water-tight compartments for historical purposes. The four physical divisions have, on the other hand, played a very important role in the history of India and have not only changed the course of history, but also even its culture and civilization.

The Himalayas

The Himalayas has been the 'Great Sentinel of the North'. It has not only saved India from the northern winds but also from invasions from the north. Hardly was an invader ever able to send his armies across the northern passes which remain snow-bound for the most part of the year. Conversely also it did not allow any Indian to dream of conquering northern regions beyond the Himalayas.

Still, these passes allowed a limited movement and contact during the few weeks, the snow had melted, between the people of India and those of Tibet and China. This contact has been mostly for trade and cultural purposes only. Probably

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it was through these passes that a little Mongoloid blood trickled into the Indian veins and it can be noticed clearly amongst the people living on the slopes of the Himalayas. It may also be pointed out that India was not influenced by the northern culture to any noticeable extent, while these northern countries were affected by the Indian culture in all walks of life, as the researches of Sir Aurel Stein have proved, probably because India had a superior culture.

The North-Western Passes.

The north-western ranges of the Himalayas are called the Sulaiman and the Hindukush mountains and these are not very high. They have a number of passes which have enabled limitless hordes of foreigners made their way into this country. They have also forced a life of insecurity on the people of the north-west and hardly has a century passed when the people of the Panjab were not disturbed by some political upheaval. Right from the days of the Aryan occupation, people have been making their way into India through these passes. The Persians, Greeks, Scythians, Kushans, Huns, Turks, Tatars, Mughals and even the invaders like Nadir Shah, Ahmad Shah Abdali, and his descendants as late as the close of the eighteenth century A.D., have caused a lot of anxiety to the people of India.

The defence of these passes has always been a problem for the rulers of India. Whenever these defences were weak, the invaders poured in. So we have the rise and fall of innumerable states and dynasties in the North-Western India.

North-Eastern Passes

The Himalayan ranges allowed very little contact with the eastern world through its north-eastern passes. The passes leading to Chindwin valley through Brahmaputra valley are impossible to cross. The other passes, leading from Manipur (Imphal) to Chindwin valley, (it was through this valley that Sri Subhas Chandra Bose tried to invade India in 1943) is also hazardous. The malarial climate makes it impossible for any large-scale migration. Hardly any Indian king tried to invade Burma through these passes. Nor did the Burmese try to do so. At the time of the Japanese invasion of Burma in 1942 during World War II a large number

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of Indians fled Burma to India by this route and about a lakh of them perished on the way.

The Indo-Gangetic Plains

The predominance of the Indo-Gangetic plains over the rest of India so far as the history of India is concerned has been natural. It is one of the most fertile tracts on the surface of the earth. Hence it was coveted by all. Endless streams of immigrants have flowed into it. This accounts for the rise and fall of scores of kingdoms and dynasties in this area from time immemorial.

Besides, the rivers provided the easiest means of communication. As a consequence a large number of big cities grew up. This land began to hum with life. The rest of the country remained comparatively quiet and unimportant. It is also interesting to note that it remained the centre of political activity throughout the Indian history and whenever a king tried to shift the centre to the south he failed.

Not only that, this land produced what has been the best in Indian culture. The *Vedas* were compiled here and almsot entire Sanskrit literature was composed here. The Buddhism and Jainism were founded and flourished here and all the seats of learning, Taxila, Nalanda and Sarnath, etc. were situated here. Probably it was because of its riches, that the people had enough leisure to follow these pursuits of larger human interest.

The two systems of rivers, the Indus system and the Ganga system, do not flow in the same direction. The Sutlej and the Jumna became separated from each other by a comparatively higher tract of land extending from the foot of Siwalik hills to Kurukshetra and beyond right up to Rajputana. Therefore it was in this very tract of land that a large number of battles were fought for the possession of the Indian empire from the battles of Tarain 1192 and 1194 up to the third battle of Panipat in 1763 and how silly it looked that battle fought in this region nearly always made the victor the master of the Indo-Gangetic valley.

The great plains of the north are separated from the southern peninsula of India by two mountain ranges of the Vindhyas and the Satpura. Beyond these ranges is situated a plateau

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called the Deccan or the *Dakshinapatha*. It has always remained aloof from the political upheavals of the north and it took years of consolidation in the north, before any conqueror of the north ever dared to step on to the land of the south. When the north had been conquered by the Aryans, the south still continued to be the custodian of the Dravidian culture. It was by Agastya that the banner of the Aryan culture was carried to the south. Similarly it was the case with the Mauryas, the Guptas, the Sultans of Delhi and the Mughals in the sixteenth and the seventeenth centuries. Moreover, it was always not possible to hold on this conquered south for a long time.

The Deccan

Probably it was because of distance and comparative unproductiveness that this region has maintained such aloofness. This could be noticed in almost all spheres, such as racial, social and cultural. With the passage of time the southern culture came to be as much a part of the Indian culture as the northern.

The Deccan, because of its comparatively safer position, also became the saviour of the Indian culture at a time when it was in danger of being lost, through foreign invasions.

As for the Ghats, they have been studded with a large number of harbours which were the chief means of exports for the various products of India. The people of this area mostly lived by fishing, trading and the like and carried a rich trade with the far off lands. It were the people of this area who went to far off East Indies, the Red Sea and the neighbouring areas along the African coast. They were masters of the sea for centuries. It was only about the seventh and the eighth centuries that the Arabs came to share a part of the maritime activity of theirs and became share-holders in this prosperity. Because of this trade, these areas have been rich and were often coveted by the kings of India.

Ghats and their Importance

Section II—Unity of India

Thus, this vast land was able to develop a manifold type of life, as one single civilization was impossible for the whole country. There developed a large number of languages with different scripts, various schools of music, dancing, painting and sculpture. To

The Essential Unity

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a superficial observer it looks as if the so-called geographical unit called India has never existed as a single unit during the last several thousand years of human history.

It is true that never in the known history of India was the whole of it under one political authority. Never were we closely knit in a single unit in any outward way. Yet if we look at the history of India we can notice, quite unmistakably, that there has been a unity in this diversity. This unity has been the unity of culture. The same *Vedas* have been respected all over India, the same heroes (Rama and Krishna) have been the theme of art (poetry, drama, music, painting and sculpture) of the people all over India. A Panjabi may not understand the Tamil speaking Madrasi, and yet he will surely find some temple dedicated to the same gods in the remotest village of Madras as the one in his own village. Though the heroes of the *Ramayana* and the *Mahabharta* could not have possibly gone to all the nooks and corners of India yet every state in India had a place or two associated with the names of Rama and Krishna.

As for the fine arts, this unity is much more remarkable. A southerner may sing a *raga* in a slightly different tone and tune from his counterpart in Northern India, yet his *ragas* are the same, his *swaras* are the same, his meter for poetry is the same. His dance tunes may be slightly different, yet all the four schools of dancing in India have originated from the same source. All this has given India the feeling of oneness and integrity.

On the other hand it must also be noted that this Indian culture was not slow in accepting foreign influences. The influence of Islam is certainly noticeable in all parts of India when we find that Indian saints of the fifteenth and the sixteenth centuries were not slow in denouncing caste system which had become very powerful in the Middle Ages. The teachings of Muslim poets found their way into the holy scriptures of the Sikhs. They are as much respected as the poetry of the first or the tenth Guru. In fact there is a certain thing called the Indian way of life, that has been developed by the country as a whole and this is our greatest link which binds us together.

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Section III The Races

Just as India has a large number of languages, so also she has numerous stocks of men living in various parts of the country.

There have been innumerable migrations into India. At one time the Dravidians were considered to be the oldest residents of India. But the latest researches of scholars have led to the discovery of at least two peoples living in India before the Dravidian, *viz.* the Pre-Mundas and the Mundas. After the Dravidians there were several other migrations into India and here we have the tallest and shortest of the people living. There are people as white as the whitest of the nordics and as black as a negro. In fact India may be considered an ethnological zoo.

Although scholars like Sir Herbert Risley and others have tried to give seven or more distinct races of men living in India, but for our purposes we have five clear-cut races traceable in India.

The Aryans

The most important race living in India is the Aryan race. These people are characterised by their tall stature, fair complexion and long nose. They speak the languages belonging to the Indo-Aryan school of languages, or languages derived from Sanskrit. They live in Northern India including the Panjab and Rajputana.

Dravidians

The Dravidians are comparatively shorter and darker and occupy the southern peninsula. They speak Tamil, Telugu, Malyalam and Kanarese languages. Some of this stock are traceable in Baluchistan speaking the Bruhi language.

Kolerians

The Kolerian family whose characteristics are short stature, dark skin and snub-nose and who speak the Tibeto-Chinese or the Austric family of languages include among them the Kols, Bhils, Gonds, Santhals and Mundas. They occupy various spots of the Indian continent and are today included in the so-called aboriginal people of India.

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Mongoloids

The Mongoloid stock is comparatively beardless, having yellowish skin, snub-nose, a flat or square face and prominent cheek bones. They occupy the slopes of the Himalayas and include among them the Gorkhas, Assamese hill folk, the Bhutias of Bhutan and Sikkim, the Kumaonese of Almora and Garhwalis of Tehri and Garhwal.

Negritos

The Negrito people of Andamans and Makran were a branch of negro family. It is believed that they occupied India at one time, but this race almost disappeared from India at the beginning of the Neolithic Age.

With so many races living in India it was impossible to keep aloof from each other. With the passage of time, they got mixed up so much that very often it was impossible to say what area was occupied by whom and what percentage of which blood ran in our veins.

Questions

1. How far have the physical features of India influenced its history?
2. India offers 'unity in diversity.' Discuss.
3. Write a careful note on the origin and composition of the Indian people.

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CHAPTER II

SOURCES OF ANCIENT INDIAN HISTORY

Section I—Our Difficulties

The modern student who is accustomed to reading history from very early school days has seldom cared to know what were the difficulties of the early writers of Indian history. There was no connected history of India available and it took years of patient research to write a co-ordinated account of ancient India. These people had to face a lot of difficulties.

Chronological Difficulties

The biggest difficulty that they had to confront was the one of fixing the dates of various reigns and events. There were a large number of eras in use in ancient days and almost all important kings had eras of their own. So many of these eras are in use even today that the Government of India has appointed a Calendar Reform Committee to decide a common Calendar for the whole of India. So it was almost an impossible task when the scholars tried to allot dates to our history.

The Sheet-anchor of Indian History

There was an event wellknown in the history of India. This was dated and it could be easily fixed up in the Christian Calendar. It was the invasion of Alexander the Great. It made it possible to fix up various events in chronological order. This is called the sheet-anchor of Indian history.

Geographical Difficulties

Another big problem was to locate the old sites as mentioned in ancient books. A large number of ancient towns have disappeared from the map of India, while others have sprung up. The chief difficulty was presented by the disappearance of many rivers and the new rivers having come into existence. Some of the rivers altered their courses. Under these circumstances locating ancient places is a hard job. The change of names due to philological variations has presented another problem. Some of

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the old towns were rechristened by various conquerors, *e.g.*, Ajodhan, Prayag and Ayodhya became Pakpattan, Allahabad and Faizabad. It was therefore a herculean task for research scholars to tackle these problems and then to reconstruct the history of India.

The sources of ancient Indian history can be divided into three main sections, *viz*,, the literary sources, the archaeological evidence and the foreign accounts and references.

Section II—The Literary Sources

The books that supply the manifold information about this history can be divided into several sub-sections and their contribution has to be assessed separately.

The Historical Literature

Several causes have been ascribed by various scholars to the lack of historical literature in India. There are people who assert that Indians were not interested in taking credit for various things done by them and so in this zeal for self-effacement they wrote no history. Another would hold that most of this historical literature, if ever there was any, was destroyed by the Huns and the Muslims. Whatever be the reasons, it is an established fact that there is almost complete absence of genuine historical literature in India.

In spite of all this, we have a few books which could be included in historical literature. One of these is *Raj-tarangini* by Kalhana, a history of the kings of Kashmir written in the twelfth century A. D. But the information given therein is very unreliable, as the author uses his poetic imagination more than the actual facts for his book, which is written in verse. *Harsha-Charita* by Bana Bhatta, the court poet of King Harsha, is a story ofhis master as given by him. How much of truth is there in the book ? Can a servant describe the weaknesses of his master ? Similarly we have *Vikramarkadeva-charita* of Bilhana, *Nava-Sahasakeadeva Charita* of Padma Gupta, *Bhojabrapandha* of Bellala, *Gaudavaha* of Vakapatiraja, *Prithvi Raj Raso* by Chandra Bardai and the *Prithvi Raj Vijaya* by an anonymous writer.

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What motives led these writers to compile their works we cannot say, but one thing is certain that we have to take this information with a grain of salt.

The Religious Scriptures

The religious scriptures are another very important source. It is believed by all that the religious scriptures were far too sacred for any interpolations and hence their testimony is very reliable. True, these scriptures may not throw much light on the political history, but for social, economic and cultural life they are a storehouse of knowledge. Of course even the political history is sufficiently discovered there, but it is corroborative rather than original. The main reason for this was that the sacred lore was committed to its present form centuries or at least decades after the death of the master or the original writer. During this period its status was undecided or in other words its sacredness was not clear. It is possible that some unreliable information found its way into these books.

In this category we can include the Vedic literature, consisting of the *Vedas*, the *Upa Vedas*, the *Brahmanas*, the *Dharm Shatras* and the like. The *Tripitakas*, or the *Three Baskets* consisting of the *Vinaya*, the *Sutta* and the *Abbidhamma pitakas* of the Buddhists and the twelve *Angas* of the Jains can all be put under this head.

The Semi-Religious Literature and the Traditions

Next to that we have a very large amount of literature belonging to the three religions. This is semi-sacred. It includes a lot of traditions that were current during and after the days of Gautama, Mahavira and various *Rishis* who composed the original Vedic hymns. This literature is very extensive. As such some of its parts are very old, while others are very late, as late as the fifth and sixth century A. D. Thus the *Ramayana*, the *Mahabharata* and the various *Puranas* give us a lot of information. The chief difficulty with regard to this literature is that it is almost impossible to date it very precisely. Its testimony, therefore, becomes unreliable, although it may be true at one or the other period of Indian history. The *Puranas* contain a lot of historical information giving us the chronological order of various dynasties. They also supply us the genealogical tables of several

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others. However, the *Vishnu, Mastya* and *Brahma Puranas* and several others which supply this information are certainly not unimpeachable.

The *Jatabka* tales or the traditions of the Buddhists have a charm of their own, but the truth is hidden in half myths. Similarly the *Dipavamsa* and *Mahavamsa,* the so-called 'Ceylonese traditions' written by Buddha Ghosha in the fifth century A. D. have supplied a lot of information. Similarly the Jain tradition tells us a lot. But the difficulty in all these traditional histories is the same, contraditcions, myth and truth mixed up, and finally the date of composition is not certain.

General Literature

The general literature has not been fully exploited by the historians. It is beyond doubt that the information contained in poetry, drama and prose is of great interest for writing the ancient Indian history with particular reference to social, economic and cultural life of the people. Sometimes even political events find their echo in the literature and give us independent confirmatory evidence at various places. However, so long as the dates of the various writers remain a moot question the information supplied by their books cannot be used in the past history of India.

Law Books

The emphasis on the law books as the unimpeachable witnesses to the height that our culture attained has not been fully laid. They mention the rise and growth of our law and as such they were the witnesses to the various vices and sins that the society developed under the influence of various historical developments. Thus the laws of Bandhayana, Vasishta, Gutama, Parshar, Manu and Yajnavylkya have a story of their own to tell and indicate where we stand in the historical developments of various nations.

Section III—Archaeological Evidence

General Note

This evidence is one of the most important one. The present knowledge of Indian history owes so much to this group of information, that one wonders if the Indian history could have ever been written without the archaeological evidence.

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Pre-historic Finds and Excavations

Scattered all over India have been found various historic and pre-historic remains of ancient people. It is with the help of these finds that we have been able to construct our history of Paleolithic and Neolithic days, and so also that of the Indus Valley Civilization. The recent excavations that have been done in Rajasthan and East Panjab are making clear the sphere of Indus Valley Civilization. As these excavations go on, our knowledge of ancient Indian history steadily advances.

Inscriptions.

We have been able to discover thousands of inscriptions all over India and these have helped us immensely in reconstructing our distant past. These inscriptions are of various types, *viz.*, donative, dedicative and commemorative. The donative inscriptions are mostly on copper plates indicating the donation of a certain piece of land to a certain individual or individual or institution. The dedicative and commemorative inscriptions have been found on almost any thing, highly polished stone pillars, polished stone tablets, unhewn and uneven rocks and even iron tablets. These inscriptions tell us the extent of various empires, their religious beliefs and all other types of information that can be put on record. These inscriptions have supplied us with almost all the information we have about Asoka. Similarly the Gisinay Rock Inscription of Rudradaman of the *second* century A.D., the Allahabad Inscription of Samudra Gupta of the *fourth* century A.D. and Mahrauli Inscription of King Chandra of the same age and Mandasor Inscription of King Vatsbhatti are some of the more important inscriptions which throw a lot of light on the history of the age.

Coins

The value of coins as a means of reconstructing the history of ancient India is very great. They have solved several chronological problems. They indicate the extent of empires, the religions of the kings, the events of their reign and sometimes their personal achievements. Their weight and purity throws light on the economic condition of the age. The coins are almost the only source of our information regarding the Indo-Bactrian and Indo-Scythian kings. It may also be noted that the bilingual inscriptions on these coins enabled the scholars to decipher the Brahmi script and read some important inscriptions of ancient India.

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The Monuments

The various historical buildings in India and outside India have enabled us to trace the growth of Indian architecture and religion in India and also the activities of Indians abroad. They showed that Indians were not stay-at-home people. Thus the story of Indian culture would be incomplete without them.

Section IV—Foreign Accounts and References

Their Value

The foreigners have been able to preserve a lot of important information about India. Usually this information is used to supplement our own knowledge. Some of these scholars who wrote about India actually visited India, *e.g.*, Fahien and Hieunstsang. Some wrote about India after hearing from the people who saw India and some wrote only on hearsay.

Greek and Persian Accounts

The earliest information about India can be gathered from the inscriptions of Persian King Darius. The Greek historians *Herodotus* and *Katsias*, although they never visited India themselves, have given some information. Plutarch, Arrian and Curtius similarly throw a lot of light on Indian history. By far the most important writer in this list was that of Megasthenes who lived at the court of Chandragupta Maurya for a number of years. His book *The Indica* though preserved in only a fragment of the original book, is still very interesting.

The Chinese Sources

China had a close contact with India from very early days. Several Chinese scholars have given us information regarding the events in India and also regarding the activities of the Indians in the Far East. Some scholars like Fahien and Hieuntsang actually visited India, the birthplace of Buddhism.

Muslims and Others

From the eighth century onward we had a close contact with the Muslims. In the early eleventh century A.D. Alberuni visited India and wrote his interesting *Tehqiq-i Hind*, describing his observations. Similarly the Tibetans who came to India have given us many a detail of ancient Indian history. They carried away the text of many a holy book of the Buddhists. Many of these books were lost in

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India. Some of these have been brought back from Tibet. Besides, Marco-Polo has recorded his own observations. Ibn Batuta visited India in the fourteenth century. He gives a very interesting account of this period—the Venetian traveller visited India in the thirteenth century.

Questions

1. What is, in your opinion, the value of the inscriptions in the reconstruction of the history of ancient India ? *(P.U. 1937)*

2. Write a short but careful note on the Puranas as a source of study of Hindu India. *(P.U. 1937)*

3. Write a short but critical note on either (*a*) the Epics or (*b*) the Puranas as the sources of study of Hindu India. *(P.U. 1940)*

4. Describe carefully the principal sources of information for the history of ancient India. *(P.U. 1949)*

5. Write a short but careful note on the sources of early Indian history.

6. What light do the foreigners throw on the different periods of Indian history ?

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Chapter III

PRE-HISTORIC CIVILIZATIONS OF INDIA

General Note

India has a rich past. May be we lack regular historical works, but we possess such material as has helped us to prove to the world that our civilization is one of the oldest in the world. However, it is beyond doubt that India was one of the earliest areas of this earth that crystallized and it was the home of the earliest man on the earth.

Section I —The Paleolithic and Neolithic men

The Paleolithic Man

This term means the old stone age. These were the earliest people on the earth. Their implements were made of quartzite or crude unpolished stone. The stone was chipped into various shapes and a bone or stick was added as a handle. With its help the earliest men killed their prey. They did not know any metal or agriculture, or pottery. Probably they did not know how to make a fire either. They belonged to the Negrito race with thick woolly hair on their body. They lived in caves. Their remains have been discovered at a number of spots in India.

The Neolithic Man

The old stone age was succeeded by the New (Neo) Stone (lith) age. These people also used stone for their implements, but their stone was of better quality. It was ground, grooved and polished. Their habitats have been found all over India. These people cultivated grain, grew fruit trees, and even knew the use of fire. They knew both types of pottery, the handmade and the wheel-turned one. They lived in caves. They had developed some artistic tastes, as the walls of their caves have been found painted. They even built boats and used cotton and woollen clothes. They used to bury their dead in dolmens, *i.e.*, three or more stone supports in a circle, over which there was a massive stone roof. It may be added here that this feature was common to all the Neolithic men all the world over. Sometimes even big urns (jar like pots) were used for the burial of the dead.

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These Neolithic men belonged to a different race known as the Austric. We can conclude that they had no relation whatsoever with the Paleolithic men. They were short statured, long headed and dark skinned people.

The finds of these primitive people have been discovered all over India, indicating that they had spread far and wide. It appears as if the later races, the Melanids or the Dravidians as some people prefer to call them, conquered them. However, some of them moved into the vast jungles and hills existing all over India. Scholars like Schmidt and others have asserted that the Mundas and Khasis belong to this austric race. They further assert that these people at one time occupied the whole of South-East Asia up to Philippines and beyond and they played an important role in the history of that region. These views are not shared by all.

The Bronze Age

The new race, the Dravidians, was superior to the old austric race. These people had discovered metals. The first metal to be used was a mixture of copper and brass, the bronze, which is more brittle than either of the two.

Section II—The Indus Valley Civilization

For a long time it was believed that the Aryans were the first civilized people of India, the Paleolithic and Neolithic men being considered as far too primitive. The recent excavations at several places have almost stunned the scholars and have proved to the world that India was the cradle of civilization. Dr. Radha Kumud Mookerji says "there is evidence to show that Early Man appeared in the higher region of the Punjab and the Siwaliks.....Thus, as India can claim to be a cradle of man, it is also the cradle of civilization." Although some of the western scholars, writing about the culture of ancient people, have not tried to give us our due by making almost a passing reference to this great civilization of India, yet there are unbiassed people who are willing to accept the real value of these excavations and researches.

Discovery and Sites

The remains of this great civilization have been discovered almost all over the valley of the river Indus and its various tributaries. Thus we have them at Mohanjo-Daro in Larkana district of Sindh

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(Pakistan), Harappa in Montgomery District (Pakistan-Panjab), Chanu-Daro (Sindh), Rupar (Ambala District, Panjab-India) and even in Bikaner districts of Rajasthan. These areas indicate that this was a fairly widespread civilization.

The first two sites have been fully excavated, while the other sites have yet to be worked and the remains unearthed. Mohanjo-Daro was discovered by Dr. R. D. Banerji and Harappa by R. B. Daya Ram Sahni, both of the Achaeological Department of India. The work was started at Mohanjo-Daro in 1928 by Sir John Marshall and his report was finished by 1933. The excavations revealed a wonderful civilization, which was better than any in India uptil the advent of the Aryans.

City and Buildings

Many ancient cities have been unearthed all over the world, but it is very much doubtful if any other people come up to the standards set by these Dravidians in Mohanjo-Daro. The smallest house here is a two roomed one, while the biggest is 85×97 feet with outer walls as much as four to five feet thick. These houses are built of kiln burnt bricks of $20\frac{1}{4}'' \times 10\frac{1}{2}'' \times 3\frac{1}{2}''$ size. Most of these have two storeys with paved floors and courtyards. All houses have wells, bath rooms and drains, as a regular feature, very rare anywhere in the world. Besides there are some other buildings which are of special interest. We have an eighty feet square large pillared hall, which may have been a palace or a temple or even a municipal hall. But our greatest interest centres round the Great Bath, a tank of $39 \times 23 \times 8$ feet, complete with a flight of steps, a well to feed it and a big drain to empty it off. This Great Bath has a building 180×108 feet round it. So here was a society, neither very poor nor very rich with a number of modern amenities of life.

The under-ground covered drains found here have lent a charm of their own to this town. Sir John Marshall believes that the drainage system found there was better than anywhere in the world up to the end of the 19th century. There were soak pits as well. The streets of the city were very wide and all the streets and roads ran at right angles to each other. The cross-roads had rounded corners too.

Food

These people knew several varieties of foods. In addition to wheat, barley and sesamum, they used palm-dates, mutton, pork, fish and eggs.

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Dress and Ornaments

It appears that these people although still in the late stone or early bronze age, had a fairly good knowledge of spinning and weaving. Both cotton and woollen clothes were used. It further appears as if from very ancient days people have been busy finding out things for adorning themselves. These primitive people used all sorts of ornaments both for men and women. These ornaments were made of gold, silver, ivory, copper and precious stones. A poor man might even use earthen beads for a necklace. Skill shown in the manufacture of these ornaments is superb. Sir John Marshall pays high tribute to their skill when he says, that the ornaments found over there appear to have come out of the shop of a Bond Street jeweller of London rather than from a house five thousand years old.

Household Articles

Their life was fairly good and the variety of household articles points out to the fact that their civilization was very much advanced. The pottery used was both handmade and the wheel-turned one and of a large variety. This was sometimes glazed even. Both copper and bronze vessels were used and even silver and porcelain pans were known although rarely used. The most interesting fact is that not a trace of iron has been found indicating that the people were still in late stone or early bronze age. Even the razor for shaving purposes was made of bronze. Chairs were known and the wheeled carts were in use.

Weapons of War

The people knew several weapons, as axes, spears, daggers, maces and slings. The absence of a shield or any defensive weapon, indicates that these persons were highly peaceful. Probably that was the reason that the Vedic Aryans could so easily conquer them. These weapons were made of bronze and stone.

Animals

These people knew several animals, some of which they had domesticated. The humped bull was a common thing. The buffalo, sheep, elephant and camel were known. Even the dog was a familiar thing. It appears that they did not know any horse, although a clay model of an animal which looks like a horse, has been found. May be it was a representative of some other animal and not of a horse, because had they known a horse, they would have made some representation of it on their seals.

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Seals

A large number of seals (about 500) have been discovered, some of them in duplicates. They are made of mud and stone. On these seals, we have a pictographic script, done in a beautiful and very artistic manner. Some of them have representations of animals on them. Attempts to decipher the pictographic script have so far failed.

Fine Arts

These seals point out to a highly developed fine art. The bronze and stone statues, mostly broken, but done in a very fine manner point out to their art of sculpture and bronze modelling. It is very rare to find such a developed art in so old a civilization of the world.

Trade and Commerce

We have come across seals similar to those of the Indus Valley civilization in Egypt and Sumer—part of Babylonia—the two contemporary civilizations. It appears that these seals were used for trade purposes. Even if one may not be able directly to connect seals with trade, at least their presence in Egypt and Sumer indicates their trade relations. Even the existence of tin, copper and precious stones shows that they had contacts with the outside world because these were not found in their area.

Arts and Crafts

The use of various metals and precious stones and the fine shapes given to them indicates the craftsmanship of a very high order. The skill applied for boring a hard stone like carnelian points to very great achievement.

Amusements

It appears that the people found time and leisure enough to pursue several amusements such as music. The drum was a common feature. The presence of dice proves that it was used for some such games. The children were fond of toys and thus they too were not neglected.

Religion

The religious beliefs were quite interesting. The cult of Divine Mother has been found. This shows that this *shakti* worship was so old. We have a man sitting in the posture of a *yogi* with a lot of animals around him and probably this was the Pashupati Shiva (lord of all animals). He is three-eyed, having a *trishula*, with a tall head dress and two horns. Even the phallic worship can be seen and the worship of trees and animals and stones, etc., can be observed.

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Age and Race

What was the age and race of these people? The opinions are divided on this question. The scientists who have analysed the various organic substances found in those homes and the archaeologists have given the age of this civilisation to be between 3,250 B.C. and 2,750 B.C. and belonging to late stone and early bronze age. It is agreed that the civilizations of Indus Valley, Sumer and Egypt were all contemporary. Some assert that it was from India that the civilization went to the west, while others hold that it was an eastward expansion. The biggest moot point is what relation it has with the Vedic civilization? If it is post-Vedic, as some people think, then the Aryans were the first to civilize India. But if it is pre-Vedic as all the evidence points out, it does not speak very highly of the Aryans who destroyed such a great civilization. It is clear that the Vedic Aryans knew the horse, iron and shield, worshipped cow and did not believe in idolatry. Under these circumstances the Indus Valley civilization had no relations with the Vedic civilization and was presumably pre-Vedic.

The question of race is a very complicated one, as most of it is based on conjecture rather than on hard facts. There are people who assert that it was Dravidian, while others say it was Sumerian. At least one thing appears to be certain, that it is not Aryan.

Thus India can boast of a really very advanced civilization in very remote past and those who assert that India is the cradle of the first man may not be far from the truth.

Questions

1. What do you know about the earliest inhabitants of Indus Valley civilization?
2. State what you know of the Indus Valley civilization. *(P.U. 1947)*
3. Write a short essay on Indus Valley civilization. *(P.U. 1950)*
4. Give a brief account of the Indus Valley civilization. Does it "contain germs of much that was to play a great part in the life of the people of India"? *(P.U. 1952)*
5. Compare the Indus Valley civilization with the Aryan civilization.

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CHAPTER IV

THE ARYAN MIGRATION

Probably the most momentous event in Indian history was the occupation of India by the Aryans. These Aryans who were fair, tall and physically strong came to occupy India and overpowered all the local inhabitants. They were better fighters with better weapons and they defeated the people of the Indus Valley civilization and became the masters. Of course they could not wipe out the previous civilization and the two civilizations combined to give India the Indian civilization and culture. This is true that in certain respects it was a retrogressive step, but it was certainly an advancement in many others. The urban civilization was destroyed, but a better religious philosophy was developed.

The Aryan Migration--A great Event

Section I—Their Original Home

There are various views regarding the original home of the Aryans. Some scholars declare that they did not come from outside at all, while others believe that the Aryans came from outside. Perhaps no one has ever cared to worry about the original home of the Chinese or the Japanese. Why then this question should be raised about India? The fact is that towards the close of the eighteenth century there came to India a band of foreign scholars who started studying Sanskrit. During their studies they discovered that Sanskrit and European languages had a common base and very often most of the Latin roots could be traced to Sanskrit. It may be noted that the *Pitri* and the *Matri* in Sanskrit, *Pidar* and *Madar* in Persian, *Father* and *Mother* in English or the *Pater* and *Mater* in Latin are a very clear example of this common ancestry in language. When once this relation between all these languages was established the idea grew that probally all these people who spoke these languages of common origin, had a common ancestry. They called these languages he Indo-European School of languages and the people who poke them as Aryans. If all these people were Aryans, they

Why this Problem

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should have occupied the same region at one time and hence the search for this home started.

The Central Asian Theory

It was asserted that Central Asia was the original home of the Aryans. Max Muller who propounded this view, asserted that at one time all the Aryans lived in Central Asia and later on because of various exigencies migrated, some came to India, while others went to Europe and other countries. Even uptil today many people believe in it very seriously. The study of flora and fauna of the early language points out to a different direction. Moreover it is very improbable that the Aryans with such a superior civilization should have been cradled in one of the most barren tracts of land in Asia.

Dr. P. Gile's & Dr. Macdonell's Views

In the twentieth century a more systematic study of the languages was taken up. P. Giles started looking up the earliest language from the *Rig Veda* and the *Zend Avesta* and the words they contained for various things. *Wiros* is the word that has been used to indicate the early Aryans. In almost all the Aryan countries it means 'men'. Thus these *wiros* had a very interesting flora and fauna. The oak, beech, willow and birch were known. It was a temperate zone. They had no word for sea. They were a settled people, knew ox, cow, sheep, dog and pig. They even knew wolf and bear, but did not know camel, elephant, ass, lion or tiger. This was a white race and they knew agriculture.

This sort of flora and fauna points out unmistakably to the countries of Hungary and Austria, *i.e.*, with the Carpathian mountains in the east, the Balkans in the south, Austrian Alps in the west and in the north it had *Erzge Binge*. Of late this view has been the most accepted one, although of course not without any dissenters. At the time of dispersal, they rounded the lake Van and came to India.

The Arctic Home

Bal Gangadhar Tilak, one of the valiant fighters in our struggle for freedom, who was a great scholar of Maharashtra, did not agree with the Central Asian theory. Working on the theory that the earth is losing heat day by day, he believed that the North Polar regions were at one time of history habitable areas and Aryans originally lived there and were forced to leave their homes because of cold. In

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his book, *The Arctic Home of the Aryans*, he gave out such opinions as according to geologists were not entirely wrong. But such a theory will have to put the migration at a very early date, say several millions of years ago.

The Sapta Sindhu Theory

The author of *Rigvedic India*, A. C. Dass, a scholar writing at the turn of the twentieth century, asserts that the original home of the Aryans was the Panjab or the *Sapta Sindhu* regions of those days irrigated by the seven rivers (Indus, Jhelum, Chenab, Ravi, Beas, Satluj and Sarasvati). According to his studies of the *Rig Veda*, the geographical conditions point out to this region. He asserts that India was connected with the western Asia by land, and wave after wave of Aryans migrated westward and made Europe their home. This view would also shift back the Aryan dispersion to several million years ago.

Tibet and the Baltic Sea

Then there are people who hold that the original home of the Aryans was the Himalayas or Tibet. They look for the Aryan dispersion in the story of the expulsion of *asuras* from heaven after the *Surasur Sangram*. This theory is not supported by many. There are still others who assert that the Baltic regions were the original home, as it would explain the dispersion in Europe.

Thus with all these various theories in the field it becomes almost impossible for a serious student of history to accept or discard any one of them. Although none of these theories is free from the snags, yet the most highly advocated theory is that of Dr. Giles which is today considered to be the most reliable.

Section II—The Dispersion and its Date

These theories about the original home of the Aryans give different dates of dispersion. Bal Gangadhar Tilak and Sylven Levi, the great French idologist, assert on the basis of some astronomical references in the Rig Veda that the dispersion took place some time about 5,000 to 4,000 B.C. But the astronomical references are the most unreliable of data. A.C. Dass of Sapta Sindhu theory would put the dispersion at about 25,000 B.C., whereas almost all the western scholars including Max Muller and Macdonell put the date at about 1,500 B.C. Probably a good deal of support is lent to this view by the discovery of the

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famous Boghaz Koi inscriptions in Cappadocia which have been placed at about 1,400 B.C. and which mention the names of Indian gods in it. It is asserted that this was the route taken by the Aryans for their way to India. Even by those asserting that Central Asia is the original home, this date is advocated.

To an average Indian this appears to be blasphemous as it does not tally with the story of Ramayana and Mahabharata with their genealogical tables putting the date of these rulers and their descendants at several hundred thousand years before Christ. Thus the orientalist and the occidentalist views remain apart, unbridgeable at the moment, causing many a trouble to a student of history.

The Aryan Occupation

Just as all invaders of India had to face some sort of resistance in the Indus Valley (Alexander near the Indus and the Jhelum and Babar at Panipat) so the Aryans had to face a tough resistance in these areas. For a long time the energies of the Indo-Aryans were concentrated in settling down in the north-western plains of India, *i.e.*, the Panjab. Here they had to face the opposition, from local dark-skinned people whom they called Dasyus under their leaders Dhuni, Chumuri and Sambra. Here probably they had some internal trouble also as the mention of the battle of the Ten Kings points out. Finally Bharata King Sudas won a victory over others and became the undisputed king of the Aryans.

It may also be recalled that it was in the plains of Kurukshetra that the *Rig Veda* was compiled or the hymns as arranged in their present form were collected. It was much later that the Aryans shifted along the courses of the Jumna and the Ganga and inhabited the Madhyadesha. The whole area was called the Arya Varta or the land of the Aryans.

The Aryanisation of the Deccan took place much later and according to tradition it was Rishi Agastya who went to the South and colonised it.

Questions

1. What are the various theories about the original home of the Vedic Aryans and which of them do you think is the most plausible ? *(P.U. 1951)*

2. What do you know of the approximate date of the advent of the Aryans in India ? Describe in bare outline the Aryanisation of India. *(P.U. 1939)*

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CHAPTER V

THE EARLY INDO-ARYAN CIVILIZATION

Section I—Political Institutions

The Family

We can form an estimate of the early Indo-Aryan civilization by studying their early literature, *i.e.*, *Rig Veda*. Aryans were patriarchal people, *i.e.*, the oldest male member of the family was the head. He was called the *kulpati* or the *grihapati*. He was supreme in his family.

A group of patriarchal families lived in a *grama*, many *gramas* bound by a common bond of kinship formed a *visa* or a clan, and many *visas* formed a tribe or a *jana*.

Kingship

These *janas* were ruled over by a king. This was the only form of government known to those people, although some scholars like Zimmer believe that these monarchies besides being hereditary, were elective as well. Of course these elective monarchies were not common. The coronation ceremony involved an oath-taking as well. If the king broke his oath he was turned out, although sometimes he was reinstated on making fresh promise. The king or *rajan* was the highest judicial authority and his main duty was to maintain order and lead the tribe in the battlefield. The king was helped by a *senani* or army commander, and a *purohita*. The *purohita* was one of the most important officers. He performed various sacrifices for the king and his people and also advised the king on these matters and was the "forerunner of the Brahmana statesman." (A. B. Kei h). Thus, he was much more important than just a king's chaplain. He was the guiding person both in peace and war.

The Sabha and Samiti

The first conception of democracy was provided by the Rig Veda. Its most important institutions were the Sabha and Samiti. Scholars are divided over the issue of their scope of work. Thus Keith thinks that Samiti was the name of the body and the Sabha the name of the place or hall. Zimmer and Ludwig, two impor-

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tant German indologists, assert differently. Zimmer thinks all people of a village could sit in the Sabha and people from all villages took part in Samiti. Ludwig considers the Sabha to be a council of elders and the Samiti that of the general people. It is doubtful if there was any such division in the society. However, it is clear that there were some sort of assemblies dealing with problem concerning the people at large. This also proves that the king was not absolute and that he had to take into consideration the opinion of the people.

The Local Government

Besides this central government there were local units of administration. The man in charge of the village was called *gramini*. It was probably this person who attended the king's court and represented the people in Sabha and Samiti. The *visa* had a *visapati*. Thus the king's authority was exerted through these officials who also served as the link between the masses and the king.

Section II—The Social Life

Even though the family was a patriarchal one, yet the head was a kind and affectionate type of fellow who looked after the family very well. Of course the sons were preferred to daughters but even they were not neglected. We have examples of women becoming *rishis*, thus being raised to the highest status. The father chose the bridegroom for his daughter, but love marriages were not unknown. Although, monogamy was the usual thing in society, yet polygamy also existed, especially amongst the rich. In the family the woman was held in high esteem. No religious rite or ceremony was complete without the woman. There was no *purdah* for them. Even widow remarriage was allowed.

Family and the Woman

As regards the material for dress, the Aryans knew cotton, silk and wool. Skin was also used. Sometimes clothes were also embroidered with gold and were dyed in various colours. The dress consisted of three pieces, one for the lower part of body called *nivi*, an upper garment (*vasa*) and an over garment (*adhivasa*). Turbans and ornaments were used both by men and women.

The Dress

Being essentially an agricultural community, they used wheat, barley, and rice, the most important crops of India. These were made into cakes and

The Diet

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other tasty dishes and consumed. Meat eating was known and sheep and goats were both used for this purpose. Some westerners assert that even beef was taken, although most of the Indian scholars would try to see a different meaning in the words used. Milk and its various preparations such as curd, butter and ghee were commonly used.

In this land of hot sun, it was always a treat to go in for a refreshing drink. A drink called *soma* (some sort of fermented drink) was the most favourite one. It was prepared from some plants.

Amusements

The struggle for existence was not so keen and hence the Arvans found some leisure to indulge in various forms of amusements. They enjoyed dice playing and chariot racing. Probably there was betting as well on horses used in chariot racing. Hunting was also a favourite sport and even big game such as tiger, elephant, wild boar, buffalo and deer were killed with the help of bow and arrow. There was dancing and singing to the tune of lute and drum. Bardic recitation was also common.

Caste System

It appears that except for the Dasyus and Aryans the other castes were not known so popularly. At only one place in the *Rig Veda* do we come across the mention of four castes and that is in the Purusha Sukta in the tenth mandal of the *Rig Veda*. Therein it is asserted that the Brahmana, Kshatriya, Vaishya, and the Sudra, were born from the mouth, arms, stomach and feet of the *Brahma* (the creator). Thus a divine origin is given to the caste system. Besides it is only towards the later portion of the *Rig Veda* that the caste system is mentioned, which can be a later addition made by interested parties to give a divine sanction, to this social injustice. It is also interesting to note that at no other place do we hear of these castes. Hence even if we accept that the caste system had been known, it must be accepted that it was not so popular.

Section III—The Economic Life

The Village

The society being an agricultural one, the most important unit was the village. There appears to be hardly any mention of a city. The walled *pur* was really a fort and not a city. The village was under a *Gramini* who looked after the civil and military affairs. The homes and the

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arable land was owned individually and the grasslands were owned collectively by the village community as is the practice even today.

In the village the most important profession was agriculture. The people knew of irrigation and even of manuring their lands. Probably horticulture was not known. The next important profession was cattle-rearing. *Gopa* or *gopala* is often met with. People had an ox, horse, dog, goat and sheep in their list of domesticated animals.

Trade and Industry

The life was simple and the wants of an average man were few. Yet trade and industry had developed in the country. Of course barter was mostly used as was the system in most Indian villages only a few decades ago. The unit of barter was the cow. One hears of the *nishaka* even which in early days might have been just an ornament and as time went on it became a medium of exchange. It is doubtful if it was a coin as we have not discovered any gold coins from any ancient sites. The people called *panis* were the merchants and their niggardliness was proverbial. The early Indo-Aryans knew navigation, which according to some was limited to the crossing of rivers by boats, and while others assert it was the navigation on the high seas.

Arts and Science

It appears that their achievements in this field were not very ordinary. Thus the various hymns of *Rig Veda* in different meters are in themselves a great tribute to their art of poetry. Did these people know the art of writing ? Yes, scholars have tried to prove this by use of the epithet *asht-karmi* found in the Rig Veda. We have a statement in the Rig Veda talking of speech 'that is seen and heard' and this clearly indicates that they knew the art of writing. The art of medicine had been developed and so also the art of building. Even there are allusions to the art of sculpture. They even knew something about the science of astronomy.

Section IV—The Religion

Nature Gods

The earliest Vedic religion was a very simple affair. They worshipped the nature gods, or rather they had deified the forces of nature, each of whom was invoked with the help of various hymns composed in its

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praise. Thus the early Indo-Aryans worshipped *Varuna* (the Sky God), *Indra* (the Rain and Thunder God), *Surya* (the Sun), *Usha* (the Dawn), *Vayu* (the Wind-God), *Agni* (the Fire) and a host of others such as *Rudra* (Lightning and Storm) and *Prithvi* (the Mother Earth), etc. Some rivers too had been deified. The abstract gods like *Dhatri* (the Established), *Vidhatri* (the Ordainer) and *Prajapati* (the Lord of Creatures) etc., are known at a later stage.

This early Vedic religion has been called the henotheism or the worship of nature gods leading up to Nature's God. Some people have even tried to read references to phallic worship or even *Krishna*. But it appears that these references do not allude to them at all.

Thus the Vedic gods consisting of the gods of sky (*Varuna* and *Surya*), air (*Vayu, Rudra and Indra*), and the earth (*Prithvi, Agni, Sarswati and Soma*), indicate an interesting type of mythology with the predominance of male gods and a definite tendency towards the monotheism or even monism. The various hymns sung in their praise, preshadow the idea of a Universal God, although known by various names. There were no temples for these gods and they were worshipped in the open. The chanting of hymns was a very important task which with the passage of time became concentrated in the hands of only hereditary *purohits* whose positions became very strong.

Sacrifices

Along with the chanting of hymns, the sacrifices dedicated to the various gods came to be popular. They came to occupy a very important place in Vedic religion. They were accompanied by a definite ritual which also became very elaborate later on. Thus, milk, grain, *ghee*, flesh and *soma* juice were offered in these sacrifices. It appears as if animal sacrifices were known, although cow sacrifice was becoming a taboo.

Questions

1. Give a brief account of the economic, religious and political life of the Rig Vedic Aryans. (*P.U. 1952*)
2. What do you know about the early Aryan civilization ? (*P U. 1948*)
3. What do you know about the religion, social life and political organization of the Indo-Aryans ? (*P.U. 1946*)

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4. Describe briefly the salient features of the Vedic Civilization and Culture. *(P.U. 1944)*

5. Briefly review the state of Aryan society as revealed in the Vedas, with special reference to the status of the king, the priests, the woman and the noblemen. *(P.U. 1941)*

6. What do you know of the life and religious conception of Indo-Aryans in the Vedic age ? *(P.U. 1938)*

7. "From Nature to Nature's God" sums up the religious beliefs of the Rig Vedic Aryans. Examine this statement in the light of Vedic literature. *(P. U. 1953)*

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Chapter VI

THE VEDIC LITERATURE

Section I—The Vedas

The Vedas

The Brahmanic sacred literature consists of a large number of Sanskrit books, the most important and most ancient of them all being the *Vedas*. The word is derived from the Sanskrit root *'vid'* (to know) and thus the word means, 'knowledge'. The orthodox Hindus, or believers in Brahmanical faith, believe that the *Vedas* are revealed books and they contain the germs of all types of knowledge. They also form the basis of all our philosophy and culture, religious and secular. It becomes rather difficult for a student of history to accept any book to be a revealed one. We believe that the Vedic hymns were composed by ancient Rishis (seers) of great antiquity. They were handed down by them from generation to generation. When the Indo-Aryans settled down in the plains of the Panjab, they compiled all these hymns into books in the present form of the *Vedas*. It has been accepted by all that they are about the oldest literary work in the Indo-European school of languages.

Their Compilation

These books were considered to be too sacred for writing on anything and were to be learnt by heart. Hence these were called the *shruti*. The date of composition, however, cannot be conjectured even, but the date of compilation is suggested to be anywhere between 3,000 and 1,500 B.C. It is believed on the evidence of language and the geographical conditions, that the composition of the hymns was spread over a long time and area.

The *Vedas* are four in number, *viz*. the Rig Veda, Sama Veda, Yajur Veda and the Atharva Veda. The orthodox people believe all the four to be revealed books, but there are references in older literature, asserting that only the first three *Vedas* were considered to be really revealed bocks.

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The Rig Veda

The Rig Veda is the oldest part of the Vedic literature and is the earliest book of the world. It consists of 1,017 hymns (*suktas*) arranged in ten chapters (*mandalas*) according to the names of the Rishis and the subject matter. It is alleged by certain scholars that the *Purush Sukta* of the tenth *mandala* was added later. In these hymns various powers of nature have been considered as gods and they have been invoked to help the chanter of these hymns. Even as a piece of the most ancient of human literature it is a piece worth reading. The style and diction is simple and does not contain all those affected things which come with the development of a literature but which are essentially artificial.

The SamaVeda

It contains 1,949 hymns, which are to be sung on the occasion of various sacrifices. Few of these hymns (only 75) are original. The rest are all taken from the *Rig Veda* and are set to music.

The Yajur Veda

The third Veda called the *Yajur Veda* is essentially a prose piece. It contains a number of sacrificial prayers and indicates the manner in which these sacrifices were to be performed. The *Yajur Veda* exhibits a greatly changed type of religion and society from that of the *Rig Veda*. The nature-worship had given place to a highly complicated and elaborate system of religious rites requiring highly skilled priests to conduct them, *i.e.*, the priestly class had become far too important by then. The Caste System was noticeable and some non-Aryan religious beliefs could also be traced to the Yajur Veda.

It has two parts the *white* one, which contains only the hymns and the *black* one which contains prose commentaries.

The Atharva Veda

It came to be recognised as one of the *Samhitas* (Vedas) at a much later stage. It contains magic formulas and its hymns deal with the white and black magic, consisting of spells and charms to control good and evil spirits and forcing them to do things for the human beings. It has 20 chapters and 731 hymns.

Thus these four Vedas are the most important of Brahmanical literature. The later texts called the *Brahmana Grantha*, the-

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Upanishadas and the *Aranyakas* were essentially developed as a part of one or the other of the *Samhitas* (Vedas), and are more or less appendices.

Section II—The Brahmanas, Upanishadas and the Aranyakas

The Brahmanas

These books are elaborate and exhaustive notes on hymns of the Vedas, trying to explain their origins and meanings. The Vedas were considered to be beyond the grasp of ordinary human beings and these books were written in order to explain them to both the scholar and the lay man. They tell its *vidhi* and the *artha* of the hymns and the manner in which various sacrifices were to be performed. We have the *Aitreya* and the *Kaushitiki* Brahmanas explaining the Rig Veda, the *Tandeya-Mahabrahmana* and the *Jaiminiya* explaining the Sama Veda, the *Taitreya* and the *Shatpatha* explaining the Yajur Veda and finally the *Gopatha* explaining the Atharva Veda.

Moreover these Brahmanas contain the legends and the stories of important persons mentioned in the Vedas. These were composed about 1,300 B.C.

The Aranyakas

The *Aranyaka* means a forest. It indicates a particular type of book which was to be studied by the forest dwelling hermits. These contain essentially the philosophical and mystical commentaries on the Vedas. Their date of composition has been placed at about 1,200 B.C.

The Upanishadas

The word Upanishada in Sanskrit means to sit near. These were such philosophical treatises as were to be imparted to the pupil almost secretly. They dealt with the problems of *prakriti* (nature), *atma* (soul), and the *pramatma* (God). These books, although they take their inspiration from the *Vedas*, are considered to be much more important in our Brahmanical literature than any other older books. In fact next to the *Gita* they are the most popular part of our literature. Western scholars have showered the highest praises on them. Some of them are in the form of questions and answers and give the conclusions of the various *rishis* regarding the soul and its problems. There are about 300 *Upanishadas*, but the most important of them are Isha, Katha, Aitreya, Taitreya, Chhandogya and Brahadaranyaka. Their date of composition has been supposed to be about 1,000 B.C.

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Section III—The Vedangas, Upavedas and the Shastras

The Sutra Literature

By this time Aryans had developed a lot of literature which was becoming increasingly difficult for a pupil to memorise. They, therefore, developed a new style of literature, called the *Sutra* literature. In this a big sentence was condensed into a small formula which could be memorised easily and which when explained would give the whole thing in detail to the pupil. This is one of the most interesting and complicated styles developed in any language and in no other language of the world could one find any similar thing.

The Vedangas

The *Vedangas* and *Upavedas* were composed in *Sutra* style. By now the study of the Vedic literature had become a complicated affair. Almost every thing had been standardised and a number of books which were considered to be a part of the *Vedas* (*Vedangas*) were composed. Thus *Siksha* dealt with pronunciation, *Kalpa* with the ritual, *Vyakarna* with grammar, *Nirukta* with etymology, *Chhanda* with the meter, and *Jyotish* with astronomy. Of these the first two are considered to be very important. One of the parts of the *kalpa sutra* deals with the domestic life and is called the *griha sutras*. It enumerated the various rites and ceremonies to be performed in day to day life. It indicates that the simple life of the early Indo-Aryans had been changed into a very complicated affair.

Upavedas

The *Upavedas* (smaller Vedas or the subsidiary Vedas as some people like to call them) deal with some other important subjects. Thus the *Ayurveda* (the Veda of age) deals with the science of medicine, *Dhanurveda* deals with the science of warfare, *Gandharaveda* deals with the art of music, and the *Silpaveda* deals with the art of architecture.

The Six Shastras

The six schools of philosophy form a very important part of Vedic literature. No study of the latter would be complete without the study of these *Shastras*. By now the Aryan mind had refused to take for granted all the simple forms of belief in nature, soul and God as taught by the earlier books. They had started dabbling in intricate mental acrobatics and had developed these six schools of Hindu philosophy. Kapila's *Sankhya* philosophy denied the

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existence of God and accepted only the matter and the soul to be real. We may note that the Buddhism and Jainism owe a lot to this philosophy. Patanjali's *Yoga* philosophy held that God was real and that he could be realized through constant meditation or *yoga*. Gautama's *Nyaya* philosophy argued that God could be realized through correct knowledge, *i.e.*, Jnana. Kanad in his *Vaisheshik* philosophy elaborated on the various practices that constituted this universe. According to him these atoms which constitute it, are working according to a hidden law—*adrisha* and are never destroyed. The fifth shastra was Jaimini's *Purvay Mimansa* which emphasised the performance of the Vedic rites and ceremonies. Vyas in his *Uttar Mimansa* argued that all else but God was unreal and that God was one and it was the only real thing. He denied the existence of matter and soul and laid the basis of the Vedanta philosophy.

Questions

1. What do you know about the age and development of the Vedic literature ?
2. Of what importance are the Brahmanas, Upanishadas and Aranyakas ?
3. Describe the six schools of Hindu philosophy.

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CHAPTER VII

THE LATER VEDIC CIVILIZATION

Section 1—Political

The later Vedic civilization has to be distinguished from the Rig Vedic civilization. In Rig Vedic days, the Indo-Aryans had settled down only in the north-western part of India. Now the Aryans had penetrated to the eastern portions of India and had also crossed the Vindhyas into the Deccan plateau. It is said that it was *Rishi* Agastya who had gone to the South and aryanised it.

The King

By now the things had changed in several other fields as well. The old Rig Vedic tribes had been replaced by stronger ones, such as the Kurus and the Panchalas. The old tribal chief or the *rajan* of early days with a small area under him had been replaced by powerful monarchs who after defeating their enemies, few or many, would undertake a *Rajasuya*, or *Vajapeya* or *Asvamedha* sacrifice. Some of the big kings of the day were Parikshit and his son Jaimanjeya, and king Janaka. The emperor was called the *Smrata*. The sacrifice was performed with a number of rites. The horse-sacrifice was performed by a great king usually called a *Sarvabhauma* king which literally means the king of all the earth, but essentially he was just a great king. The king who wanted to perform such a ceremony would send out a decorated horse followed by a large army through the lands of the kings whom he thought were under him and whom he wanted to conquer. If the horse went out unmolested, it was taken as if the king's suzerainty had been accepted. In case anybody wanted to challenge the army, he had just to catch hold of the horse and thereby indicate that he would not accept the suzerainty. After the return of the horse, it was sacrificed at the altar. The king would then perform other ceremonies of the sacrifice.

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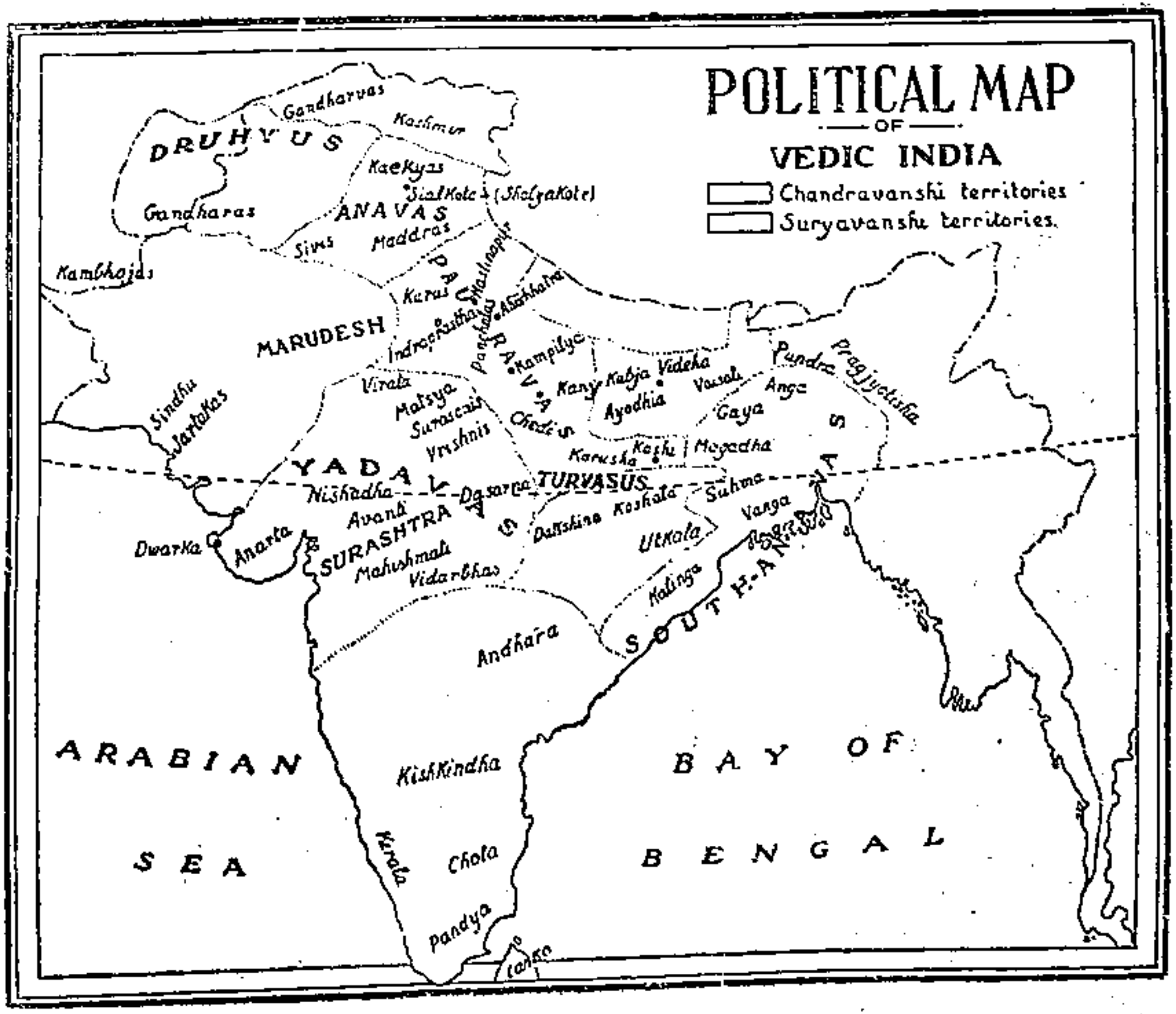
POLITICAL MAP
OF
VEDIC INDIA
Chandravanshi territories
Suryavanshi territories.
DRUHYUS
Gandharvas
Kashmir
Kaekyas
SialKote (ShalyaKote)
Gandharas
ANAVAS
Sivis
Madras
Kambhojas
Kurus
Shakalpura
Ahichhatra
MARUDESH
Indraprastha
Panchalas
Kampilya
Virata
Matsya
Surasenas
Vrishnis
Chedis
Kanya Kubja
Videha
Ayodhia
Vaisali
Pundra
Pragjyotisha
Anga
Gaya
Karusha
Kekii
Magadha
YADAVAS
Nishadha
Dasarna
TURVASUS
Suhma
Avanti
SURASHTRA
Dakshina Kosala
Utkala
Vanga
Dwarka
Anarta
Mahishmati
Vidarbhas
Kalinga
SOUTHERN INDIA
Andhara
ARABIAN SEA
Kishkindha
BAY OF BENGAL
Kerala
Chola
Pandya
Lanka

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The Sabha and Samiti

The old *Sabha* and *Samiti* still existed, but with little power. In fact the rise of the power of the king, decreased their power. But the king was not despotic. He dared not ignore the dictates of the holy books and the wishes of the people. Very often the king was the servant of the people rather than their master. Moreover the Brahmana priest with his mastery of the ancient lore was often consulted and his advice was considered final. Even the king makers (*raja kartari*) are also heard.

Administration

With the increase in the size of the state, the departments of administration also increased, and so also the advisers of the king. Besides the *Purohita* and the army commander, the Chamberlain, the Charioteer, the Collector of taxes and the provincial Governors are mentioned. The village remained the unit of administration. The *gramini* who was the king's administrator in the village acted as the judge and military leader. For the first time we hear of the guilds (*puga*) in the later Vedic texts. These guilds became a very important factor in economic life.

The common law had been developed and had taken the shape of various law books. The judicial machinery had become more defined. It appears as if all the criminal cases could be commuted for money, *i.e.*, by paying for crime committed one could get away with it. Still further, all the people were not equal before the eyes of law. The value of Brahmanas was greater than that of a Kshatriya, Vaishya or Sudra.

Section II—Society

Social Life

Socially there was decline in Indian life. The worst sufferer in society was the woman. While in the early Vedic days she could become a *rishi*, now she had been excluded from inheritance (which was probably due to the patriarchal nature of the Aryan society), from chanting of Vedic hymns and from membership of the *Sabha*. May be there was a further deterioration in her position in centuries to come, but the society started the invidious distinctions against her. The next part of the society which suffered was the Sudra. The caste system had become rooted in the society.

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Brahmana on the other hand became the most privileged person. Due to the rise of the ritualism, which was becoming more complicated day after day, the need of a Brahmana to perform the daily rites became greater and greater. Responsible for opening the gates of heaven upon a person who followed the ritual correctly, he became almost like a super-god.

The Ashramas

Probably the most important feature of this new society was the four *ashramas* or a division of the human span of life into four parts. The Vedic Aryans believed that the span of human life was a hundred years (how distinct from the Christian expectation of seventy years). This was divided into four periods of twenty-five years each. In the first twenty-five years (called the *Brahmcharya Ashrama*) a man was expected to develop his mental and physical powers by living with a preceptor as his pupil. A very rigorous discipline was imposed upon the pupil who was to stay with his preceptor and even go abegging for him. During the next twenty-five years (called the *Grihastha Ashrama*) the man was expected to earn his livelihood and produce wealth and carry on the progeny by marrying. Probably this was in some respects the hardest part of human life. He was to produce enough wealth to maintain the *Brahmacharin*, the *Vanaprasthin* and the *Sanyasin*. He was to perform all the Vedic rites and look after his household.

After these years of married life the man was to turn a *Vanaprasthin* or get ready to give up this world. He was more or less a recluse living away from his home, not necessarily without his wife. He was to practise celibacy and penance. He was to learn *Yoga* and finally at the age of 75 the person was to become a *Sanyasin* when he had to give up his home, wife and children. Thence forward he belonged to the society and not to the family. Now he was preparing hard to collect all the knowledge needed for a man to realize his God. He was not expected to live in *gramas* or towns, but was to wander from place to place. In fact this *Sanyas* was considered to be the only path of salvation.

Section III—Economic and Religious Conditions

Economic Life

With the increase in the size of the state its capital became an important place. In place of villages we come across big towns such as Kaushambi and Videh.

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This also led to the increase in trade and commercial activity. The currency had been developed. Buying and selling had been facilitated. The guild had come into existence and most of the crafts had organised themselves into guilds.

Religious Life

Probably to accommodate the original residents of India many new gods were accepted as a part of Vedic pantheology. Thus Shiva, Rudra, Vishnu and Brahma had been conceived and began to be worshipped.

Another development was the rise of ritualism. So much stress was laid on this ritualism that body became more important than soul.

The various gods which were worshipped now, were given different attributes, and each of them had to be propitiated differently. Hence a belief in various types of sacrifices came into existence. If one god could be propitiated by the offerings of milk and rice, the other god probably needed flesh for being propitiated. One even hears of human sacrifices (*purushmedhas*).

By now the Karma philosophy had become a very important part of the religious beliefs of the people. Good deeds must be done in order to enable a man to attain *Moksha*. Then again this *Moksha* was to be the end of this life. The *Vedantist* philosophy considered this universe to be nothing but *Maya* (halucination). With God as the only real thing it had been put forth in order to satisfy the minds of some. Thus except for idolatry almost all the main trends of Brahmanic thought had been developed. So also the religion had become philosophical. The sixty-two beliefs discussed in the early Buddhist texts as the heresies of the day indicate the minute shades of difference between these various thinkers.

With all these things, there were several phenomena which could not be explained. Hence the people became superstitious. This belief in superstition further led to the faith in spells and charms or what you call witch-crafts, a common phenomenon all over the world. The *Atharva Veda* is full of them.

Questions

1. What do you know about the later Vedic civilization and how did it differ from the early Vedic civilization ?

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CHAPTER VIII

THE CASTE SYSTEM

Section I—Its Origin

One of the most important features of the later Vedic age was the development of the caste system. It is one of those important institutions in India which had far-reaching effects on our national life. It has been condemned outright by some, while others have praised it. The caste system is termed as *Varna-Ashrama* in Sanskrit. The word *Varna* means a 'group' as well as 'colour'. Hence there are people who try to find the origin of the caste system in either of the two meanings. Scholars, led by Professor Rapson believe that its origin was due to the distinction between the white and dark complexion of the Aryans and the original residents. Originally the society was divided into two parts, the *Aryans* (the first three castes) and the *dasyus* (the non-Aryans) who were condemned to the Sudra class in years to come. The first class was called the *dvijas* or the twice born ones.

On the other hand there are scholars like V. A. Smith who assert that the *Varna* means a *class* or an *order* and was essentially based on the occupations of the people. The occupations could be broadly sub-divided into four sections, those dealing with learned and priestly work, those dealing with fighting and administration, those dealing with the production of wealth, and finally those doing the low grade work including labour, skilled and unskilled in all walks of life. There is weight in this argument and also this tallies with the actual work of the four castes.

The Brahmanas attribute divine origin to caste system. They base their views on the tenth *mandal* of the Rig Veda called the *Purusha Sukta* It asserts that the Brahmana was born out of the mouth of Brahma, the Kshatriya from his arms, the Vaishya from his stomach, and the Sudra from his feet. As the *Vedas* are the revealed books and contain nothing but the truth, so the

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division of society as given therein is attributed to divine ordinance.

The Objective View

To an impartial student of history none of these statements contain the whole truth. It appears that the Nordic races had a sort of caste system (superior and inferior social groups) amongst themselves. Amongst the Greeks and Romans there existed free men and slaves. Amongst the early Iranians some such distinctions of society existed. Even the Anglo-Saxons who dominated the whole of Europe had the Earls, Ceorls and the Theowas. The last group was hardly better than a *Sudra*. These were based on birth. Even at the present day in England and elsewhere Counts, Dukes and Archdukes are relics of those days, although the basis is not essentially the same. It leads us to think that there was something in their early social structure which permitted the division of the society into such classes. Later when these Aryans came and settled in the Indo-Gangetic plains, the colour and occupations both contributed to the development of a system which was called the Caste System. In all other countries this old distinction disappeared with the passage of time, while in India certain peculiar circumstances forced the society to continue with this unnatural distinction.

The caste system in early days was flexible. One could easily cross from one caste to another. The famous Parshurama was a Brahmana by birth, although a Kshatriya by profession. Vishvamitra, a Kshatriya by birth became a Brahmana rishi, the highest of the *Rishis*. The famous Rishi Vasishta was the son of a prostitute, while Vyas who is said to have been the author of the original Mahabharata was the son of a fisherwoman. Rishi Parashar, the famous law-giver was the son of a *Chandala*, the lowest of the Sudras. As time went on these castes became very rigid and the crossing over became impossible. These were regarded to be by birth and not by the work that one did. Later these four castes came to be divided further in many sub-castes, each one with a definite status and position in the bigger caste group. These sub-castes might have grown out of little falterings here and there as well. Some new castes were formed by the admission of non-Aryans into the fold of Aryans. Thus this caste system was an instrument of civilization by which the new people as a whole were allotted a status in the Aryan society.

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Section II—Their Relative Position

The Brahmanas

The Brahmanas as a class were considered to be the highest in society. Their duty according to the Dharam Shastras was to read and teach the Vedic literature and to perform various sacrifices for themselves and for others. They were to live on the charity of the people or on the fees obtained by the performance of various rites. This was the intellectual aristocracy from which was drawn the best brains of the day. They were expected to follow a very high standard of morality and were to be an ideal for the rest of the society. They were not to covet wealth, power or any worldly gain. Their only job was to make an endeavour to realise the truth by leading the best of life, an ideal for others. Sometimes they turned out the best of soldiers as well. Dronacharya, a teacher by profession was one of the best soldiers of the day.

The Kshatriyas

The Kshatriya was essentially associated with the administration of the country especially the defence. As political power was often the most important power, the Kshatriyas often asserted their superiority over the Brahmanas. To the Kshatriyas the door of learning was open. Probably the Upanishadas were produced by them. King Janak was one of the profoundest scholars of the *Vedas* of his days.

The Vaishyas

The Vaishya was connected with the economic life of the country. His was the job of production of wealth. As India was and has been an agricultural country, the Vaishya essentially tilled the land and reared cattle. They also carried on trade and commerce. Sometimes they even became kings and warriors.

The Sudras

The Sudra was the strangest creation of the Indo-Aryans. He was denied the study of the Vedic literature, and the wearing of sacred thread. Mixing with him was not permitted to the three upper castes as he was an untouchable. This section of the society became the most under-developed and their lot the hardest. So many social disabilities were imposed on them, that it would be a great day when they would be accepted socially full-fledged members of Indian society.

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Section III—Merits and Demerits

Merits

The caste system possessed certain advantages. It was based on the division of labour. In the earliest days when the Aryans were settling down, it maintained the balance in the society. Further, it led to the specialization in economic field. Even today several important companies in Europe and America employ only the children of their own employees in their factories, believing that these people are better skilled than others.

The caste system helped to increase the Aryan fold. Newly conquered people whom the Aryans thought fit to absorb in themselves, were given a definite place in the social set up.

India has been attacked by innumerable invaders from across the north-western passes. Their strict inter-dining and inter-marriage rules tended to maintain purity of blood. The institution paid the best dividends under the Muslim rule. If there had been no such bars, the average Indian would not have minded mixing up with them and might have in due course of time accepted their religion and civilization. The caste rules prohibited this mixing up and hence it saved the Hindu society in the darkest hour of its history.

The caste system has had its social values as well. The members of the brotherhood felt a social duty towards each other and it served as a sort of social insurance. Moreover, the society was in a way more important than the individual and thus the man learned to master his personal will and subordinate it to the will of the society.

Demerits

The caste system has proved to be more harmful than useful. Scholars and social workers both have decried it in the most disparaging terms. Although it had its social value, yet its anti-social evil was much larger. The society used it as a weapon of tyranny, especially in later years. It suppressed the individual liberty to a rather foolish degree. The society also developed a narrow outlook, being absorbed in its own particular problems. The national interests were ignored or were relegated in comparison to the caste ones. Thus often the Kshatriyas found

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themselves as bearing burden of the national defence and no other caste felt interested in it. The lower and higher castes were divided by an ever-increasing gulf which often led them to petty jealousies and rivalries. The people as a whole were never able to unite and face the enemies.

As time went on the importance of birth increased and so important did it become that merit or the actual achievements of the man were ignored. In fact the whole of Indian history is full of innumerable examples of such tyrannies as are seldom heard of in other parts of the world. When birth and caste rules became very important even a little deviation from them was not tolerated and often those guilty of these deviations were declared outcastes. So it became a disintegrating factor and the society suffered. The existence of the higher and the lower castes makes the whole thing undemocratic. This bred superiority complex in some and inferiority complex in others. It developed a very unhealthy attitude towards each other among the members of society.

One has known the proselyting activities of almost all the religions in the history of the world. But very little work has been done by the Hindus. The biggest problem that confronted an individual convert was, where to fix him in the society. No sub-caste or caste group was willing to accept this new-comer and the poor fellow was obliged to go back to his old fold. Sometimes it was possible for large groups to come and join the Hindu fold. Moreover, the caste system placed barriers in the way of mixing with foreigners. That is why India is an under-developed country today. A country which at one time led the world in almost all walks of life, has been left behind in the race of progress and prosperity.

Questions

1. What do you know of the origin of the caste system? Discuss its effects on the social and economic development of Indian society. *(P.U. 1949)*

2. What do you know about the growth of the caste system in Hindu Society? Discuss its merits and demerits. *(P.U. 1945 & 1938)*

3. Write a brief note on the growth of the caste system. *(P.U. 1943)*

4. "Caste has played a great but silent part in India's History." Discuss the origin and nature of the Caste System and its merits and demerits. *(P.U. 1940)*

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Chapter IX

THE EPIC AGE

Section I—Age and Story

Their Importance

The ancient Hindu literature contains two epics—the *Romayana* and the *Mahabharata*. These have been the source of innumerable works in Sanskrit and in modern Indian Languages. The various characters mentioned in them have to an average Hindu become much more than mere legendary figures. Some of them have been worshipped as real gods—as the various incarnations of God Himself. Their peculiarity lies in the fact that the entire community life of the Hindus revolves round these epics. ; In fact these are national epics. All our festivals are held in order to commemorate the memory of the heroes of these epics. The actual story is enacated year after year in our villages, towns and cities on various occsions. All our music, dance, poetry, drama, sculpture, etc. derive inspiration from these two epics. The life of a Hindu without drawing inspiration from these epics is unimaginable.

Age

According to the orthodox Hindu view *Ramayana* is very very old, belonging to *Treta yuga*, while *Mahabharta* is about five thousand years old belonging to *Dvapar yuga*. The modern historian does not believe in this chronology. According to him the epic period existed after the Vedic period and before the Buddhist period. There are scholars who believe that the epic period did not exist at all, that the nucleus of the stories of the epics existed long ago, and that the stories as they have been handed down to us were a later creation containing merely poet's imaginary picture without many facts.

The linguist asserts, not without reason, that the books are not the creation of one poet or of one age. Winternitz—the great Sanskrit scholar—thinks that the *Ramayana* as it has come to us was composed in the third century B.C. by Valmiki on the basis of the ancient ballads. He puts the date of its composition anywhere between 300 B.C. and 200 A.D. As for the *Mahabharata*

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its composition does not appear to be earlier than the 4th century B.C. and not later than the 4th century A.D.

The *Ramayana* contains the story of Rama. In Kosala there lived King Dasratha. He had three wives and four sons. When Dasratha became old, he wanted to enter the *Sanyas Ashrama* and wished that his eldest son Rama by his first queen Kaushalya should succeed him as the king. His youngest queen Kaikeyi who had been promised two boons by Dasratha on one occasion used them to secure the throne for her son Bharata and desired Rama to go into exile for fourteen years. This was done. Rama, his wife Sita, and his devoted younger brother Lakshmana, son of Dasratha's second queen Sumitra went to the jungles. Dasratha did not live long after this. Even Bharata did not like this. While in the exile, Ravana the King of Ceylon, stole away Sita by force. Sita refused to marry Ravana, but was kept as a prisoner by him. Rama and Lakshmana with the help of Sugriva and Hanumana invaded Ceylon, killed Ravana and brought back Sita. Meanwhile the period of exile was over and Rama returned to Ayodhya to rule over his empire. Later Rama under the fear of criticism turned out Sita. In the jungle she gave birth to twins who were looked after by Valmiki. Soon these children became expert archers. When Rama wanted to perform the horse sacrifice, they challenged Rama's armies and finally the sons and the father were united, although Sita died just then.

The Story of the Ramayana

The *Mahabharata* is the story of the house of Kuru. After tracing the early history of its kings, Shantanu, Vichitra Virya, the line passes on Dhritrashtra and Pandu. Dhritrashtra married Gandhari and had 100 sons called Kauravas. Pandu had five sons, from his two wives Kunti and Madhuri, known as Pandavas. As Dhritrashtra was blind by birth, Pandu became king. Pandu's sons were still minor when he died. Dhritrashtra now assumed the reigns of the government. These 105 children were duly looked after by Dhritrashtra. It was during the period of their education that mutual jealousies started. The five Pandavas always excelled their cousins, in almost all the qualities of head and heart and even in the art of fighting.

Story of the Mahabharata

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Under these circumstances it was almost clear that the throne was to go to Yudhistra, the eldest of the Pandavas and not to Duryodhana the eldest of the Kauravas. A plot was hatched in order to kill the Pandavas by burning them in a house of lac. By chance the Pandavas escaped. The Kauravas cheated the Pandavas at a game of dice. They went into exile. After the expiry of the period of exile, the Pandavas claimed their throne. Lord Krishna tried to reason with Daryodhna in order to obtain a share for the Pandavas. All attempts failed. The issue was to be decided by fighting. Almost all the known kings participated in the war either on one side or the other. On the eve of battle Arjuna, the Pandava hero, hesitated to fight with his kith and kin for the sake of some land and power. Just then Lord Krishna gave him a sermon which forms the subject matter of the Bhagvad Gita. The battle raged for eighteen days. The best of India's manhood perished. Finally the Pandavas regained their throne.

These in short are the stories of the epics.

Section II—Political, Social and Religious Conditions

The Aryan Expansion

The *Ramayana* gives us a glimpse into the story of Aryanization. The *Rakshasas* who disturbed the peace of Vasishta were none else than the non-Aryan savages who did not cherish the expansion of the Aryans. Sugriva and Bali, the *Vanara* kings were non-Aryans who ruled in the Deccan. Aboriginal tribes in these regions still exist in the form of Bhils and Santhals. Their continued existence uptil today is a sad commentary on our civilization.

By the time of *Mahabharta* the whole area had become aryanised. The aborginies still existed and Arjuna's exploits in the *Kamarupa Desha* indicate the extent of Aryanization. Thus in the *Ramayana* period the Aryan culture had spread only to the Indo-Gangetic plain or the Madhya Desha and in the *Mahabharta* period it had extended to as far as the Dakshinapatha. In a word the whole of India had been occupied by the Aryans.

Political Conditions

The existence of a large number of kings at the battle of Kurukshetra indicates that a large number of clans or peoples had settled down in small tracts of country. Probably they were independent of each other, so far as the political authority was concerned.

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Socially and religiously they were the same. The Kosala and Videha, Kurus and Panchalas were big states ruled over by Smratas and not *rajas*. Besides these monarchies a few oligarchies and republics were also noticeable.

These big kings had conceived the idea of universal monarchy or a Chakravartin king. The performance of Asvamedha sacrifice indicates that the king had probably assumed a new status from that day.

An elaborate machinery for the administration of the country had been developed. The kings had big palaces with numerous apartments. This increase in the size of the states made the king very important. Except for moral limitations on his power, there appears to be no authority to check his autocracy. Though Duryodhana was not a good king, yet nothing but force was needed to change him.

Weapons of War

As both the epics deal with one fight or the other, we come across a very interesting list of weapons of war. The simple bow and arrow, sword and shield, mace and battle axes were mostly in use. The war chariot had been developed which assisted the fighter in moving quickly in the field. Fire weapons or missiles which could start fires were used. The *Sudarshana Chakra* or a revolving wheel which was hurled at the enemy and which could chop off one's head without any difficulty, is met with. In the *Ramayana* one also meets the *Viman* (a machine able to fly in the sky). Some of these weapons may be the fore-runners of the present fire-bombs, and aeroplanes and gunpowder.

Religious Conditions

By the time of the epics several important changes had taken place in religion. The old nature gods of the Rig Vedic days had been superceded by a large number of gods such as Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva. Thus Indra, Surya and Varuna now occupied less important position. Some gods and goddesses such as Ganesh and Parvati who were unknown in Vedic days had become an important part of Brahmanic religion. Similarly *avataravad* or the doctrine of various incarnations of Vishnu had become popular. The heroes of *Ramayana* and *Mahabharata* (Rama and Krishna) were now being worshipped as the incarnations of Vishnu. Probably Indra still held his own in this new

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set up, otherwise all else had changed.

The Bhagvad Gita

The *Bhagvad Gita* or the 'Song Celestial' is one of the most popular religious books of the Hindus. It explains various philosophies of life, especially that of Karma. This is the most precious jewel of the Epic age, and is loved and respected by all the Hindus. It has been translated into almost all the languages of the world.

Social Conditions

The two books throw a flood of light on the society of the age. The caste had become quite important, but it was not so rigid. Rama ate with a Bhil woman and Arjuna and Bhima married non-Aryan women. Even Raja Shantanu, the ancestor of the Kauravas and the Pandavas married a fisherman's daughter. Valmiki, a hunter became a *Brahmarishi*. There were Brahmana warriors such as Dronacharya, Ashvathama and Parshurama. Gambling and drinking were common evils with the rich. False weights and evasion of taxes are also mentioned.

The Warrior Caste

Very interesting light is thrown on the Kshatriyas of the day. They had developed a certain ethical code. They were truthful and a Kshatriya would not go back on his words. He would not refuse a charity. He would not turn back a person who had taken shelter under him, and would gladly die for him. Fighting was his duty and to turn away from the battlefield was the most ignominous act imaginable. Death in the battlefield was a pass to heaven. He would not fight a woman, or anyone resembling a woman. That is why this period is called the Age of Chivalry.

Position of Women

The *Swayamvara* or choosing a husband for the woman, often by laying down a conditional physical act, was a common thing. She herself showed her consent by putting a garland round the neck of the victor in the contest. Women were honoured. They were often learned and took part in various activities. Even widow remarriage is referred to. They often took the aids of perfumes, dyes, jewels, ornaments and bright dresses, etc., to make themselves more presentable. Polygamy was a common feature in rich families.

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Economic Conditions

Agriculure and cattle rearing were the two main stays of life. The people lived in a joint family system. Currency had been fully developed. The agriculturist paid his taxes in kind and the city-dweller in cash. Our contact with the western and northwestern world had become much more real and firm than it was previously. The foreign merchants are often mentioned. In the *Ramayana* there are references to their living in the northern, western and southern provinces of our country. Even sea-going caravans are referred to.

The Value of Epics

The stories of these epics may not mean very much to a critic, but to an average Indian they have been a real source of inspiration from time immemorial. People of all ages have turned to them for guidance in the darkest hour of their life and got inspiration and support. Their stories have formed the subject of many an ancient and modern work. Almost all of our classical musicians, dancers, painters, and sculptors have drawn inspirations from them. The teachings of the *Vedas* and *Shastras* which are too difficult for the common man have been presented to the average Indian in anecdotes from *Mahabharta* and *Ramayana*, while some parts of these works, the *Yoga-Vasishta*, the *Bhagvada-Gita* and the famous *Yudhishthira-Yaksha Samvada* are considered to be the best of what is Hinduism.

Questions

1. Give a description of the social and political conditions of India as depicted in the *Ramayana* and the *Mahabharta* and compare it with the state of society in Vedic times. (*P. U. 1939*)

2. Write a short but critical note on the Epics as the sources of study of Hindu India. (*P. U. 1940*)

3. Write a brief account of the social, political and economic condition of India during the Epic age. (*P. U. 1942*)

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Chapter X

JAINISM AND BUDDHISM

Section I—Causes of the Religious Reform

Condition of Religion

We have already discussed how the Brahmanas had developed very elaborate rituals in order to propitiate various gods. Now they started claiming that gods duly worshipped according to the ceremonies, would not dare refuse the prayer of the devotees In a word the Brahamana who performed the rituals properly had become more important than the god himself. May be such a claim would not have evoked any protest had the Brahmanas continued to live a highly moral life. With birth becoming the source of caste, rather than actions, things became all the worse. Here was a person who even with lax morals was still a Brahmana. Under these circumstances a revolt, sooner or later, was bound to come.

The Sixty-two Heresies

The early Buddhist scriptures mention sixty-two shades of religious views and ideas in those days, most of them with a minute difference. In addition they talk of six important teachers including Nigantha Nataputta (Mahavira) and Makkhal Gosala. Even if we do not accept the existence of all these numerous religious views, at least one thing is clear that the people's mind were agitated over the question of the true path. It also indicates that various paths were prescribed as the only and correct way to salvation. Thus the coming to the scene of Mahavira and Gautama Buddha was not an individual act, but it was the result of that human aspiration for the salvation' which agitates the soul. Hence the stage was already set for a new path, which might have been an absolutely new path, or the old wines in new bottles. With the stage ready, the coming in of actors was not astonishing—nothing strange.

The Kshatriya Revolt

The revolt against the Brahmanical supremacy came from the Kshatriyas. These Kshatriyas, the ruling caste, often found that although the political power was in their hands, yet they were subordinate to the Brahmanas. They revolted against this monopoly

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of God. Strangely enough both the founders of new religions followed almost all the practices of the Brahmanas. Gautama was often heard saying that he was the best of 'the Brahmanas of the *Shramnas* (*Sanyasis*).'

The masses did not like bloody sacrifices, the rigidity of the caste system and the use of Sanskrit for religious purposes. These practices were boldly attacked by the new reformers.

Section II—Mahavira and Jainism

Early Tirthankaras

Most of the scholars of the early nineteenth century believed that Jainism was a sect of the Buddhists. Later on they discovered that it was not so. Only the emphasis on Ahimsa and Karma, the two important dogmas of both the religions, had led to this belief. Similarly the European scholars asserted that as Gautama was the founder of Buddhism, so was Mahavira of Jainism. The Jains believe that Mahavira was the last or twenty-fourth of that chain of prophets which started with Rishabha. Their sacred lore gives the story of each of these twenty-four *tirthankaras*. Their ages, names and other details are not accepted by western scholars, as no historical evidence has come down to us about them. Rishabha, according to the orthodox view, was the father of King Bharata, the first *Chakravartin* King of India.

Parshvanath

The twenty-third prophet, Shri Parshvanath, appears to be a historical figure. Prof. Jacobi believes him to have been the real founder of Jainism. He was the son of Shri Ashvasena, the King of Banaras. He was also a Kshatriya. After having lived for thirty years as a *grihasthin* (householder) he became a *Sanyasin* (ascetic). He meditated for eighty-four days and attained *mukti*. For the next seventy years he preached his doctrines and insisted on only four vows, *i.e.*, not to injure life, not to tell a lie, not to steal anything and not to possess any property. It was Mahavira who introduced celibacy and nudity on the followers of Jainism. The date assigned by scholars to Parshvanath is the eighth century B. C. The Jains also claim that he lived 250 years before Mahavira. It may, however, be noted that the authenticity of all these statements is not yet proved.

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Mahavira

We possess fairly good knowledge of the career and work of Mahavira, the 24th *Tirthankara*. Vardhamana, as he was known in his earlier days, was the son of a Kshatriya noble of Vaisali, the capital of the Vajjian confederacy. He was the chief of the Jnatrika clan. It appears that this clan was a part of the Lchhavis who inhabited the town of Vaishali. Through his mother he was related to the ruling family of Videha (which also was a part of the Vajjian confederacy). He was the son of Siddhartha and Trishala and was born at Kundalagrama. He was married early to Yasoda and had a daughter at the age of thirty. With the permission of his elder brother he left his home and family and became an ascetic. He joined the order of Shri Parshavanath. For twelve long years he went about performing various types of penances and yet he had not been able to realize his object. In his thirteenth year he attained the supreme knowledge. He was now a *jina* or a conqueror, Mahavira, the great hero. He was at the moment only forty-two.

For the next thirty years he was a preacher. It is said that Makkhali Gosala was his fellow aspirant and had claimed to have become the 'path finder' (*tiratha-kara*) earlier than Mahavira. It is also asserted, that Makkhali was his son-in-law. Mahavira's followers were called the Jains or the Nirgranthas (free from any bonds).

As a Teacher

As a teacher Mahavira travelled from place to place carrying his message of a new faith, a new hope for the world. The Jaina texts do not contain as detailed an account of this great teacher, as do the Buddhist texts of their founder. His sphere of activity was mainly confined to Magadha (South Behar), Videha (Tirhut) and Anga (Bhagalpur District). He started an order of monks to which were admitted both men and women. According to the Jaina tradition Bimbi sara and his son Ajatsatru (the kings of Magadha) were his followers. Thus he received some royal patronage as well. During his tours he is said to have held discussions with Gautama also.

Date of his Death

At the age of seventy-two he died at Pava, in Patna District. There is some difficulty regarding the fixation of the date of his death. There are several conflicting

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references to the date of his death. It will suffice to say here that it is accepted to be about 527 B. C.

His Teachings

Parshvanath had insisted on four vows of non-injury, truthfulness, no stealing and non-attachment. Mahavira added the fifth that of celibacy or *Brahmacharya*. These are called five vows. He also insisted on nudity, although it was later on discarded by a section of the Jains called the Svetambaras.

Further the teacher said that his followers must follow the three-fold path (three *ratnas*), that of right belief, right knowledge and right conduct. By following this path the soul would be released from the circle of birth and death and attain *Moksha* or the *Siddha Sila*.

The Jain prophet laid great stress on right conduct. This included the belief in *Karma* or one's own actions. The right conduct also included subjecting the body to great pains. Therefore fasts were often undertaken. It was considered good to die of slow starvation. In this conduct the highest emphasis was laid on *ahimsa*, or non-injury to life. According to them even insects and plants feel pain and one should not injure them. He is silent about the existence of a personal god.

The Schism

The Jains today are divided into two sects, called the Svetambaras and the Digambaras. In the fourth century B. C. a group of Jain monks (called *Yatis*) migrated to the south. In their absence a council of those that remained was called. These people adopted the use of clothes and hence were called the *Svetambaras*. Those of the monks who scrupulously followed their old master, continued to go naked and were called the *Digambaras* or the sky-clad ones. The monks of this sect still continue to live like that, although their number has decreased.

The Jain Literature

It is believed that the original teachings of Lord Mahavira were contained in fourteen *Purvas*. During the absence of Bhadrabahu and his followers, the remaining monks drew up the old sayings, as they remembered them, into twelve *Angas* which are available today. In addition there are some *Upangas* and *Mula Sutras*, which help us to understand the teachings of the Jains.

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Section III—Gautama and Buddhism

Gautama and his Career

Gautama's teachings have affected the world to the greatest extent. Even today the number of his followers is larger than Christians and Muslims. Buddha was a younger contemporary of Lord Mahavira. Gautama belonged to the Sakya tribes of Kapilvastu. His father Suddhodana was the chief of his clan. As the Buddhist tradition has it, Gautama's mother Mahamaya dreamt of a 'white elephant' entering her body. The sages interpreted the dream to be indicating that the lady would give birth to a child who would be either a great religious teacher or a *Chakravartin* king. In 566 B.C. Gautama was born in the Lumbini Gardens while his mother was on her way to Kapilvastu from her father's house. He was born under a sal tree. The tradition asserts that the child took seven steps as soon as it was born indicating that it was an extraordinary child. Within seven days of his birth, his mother died and he was brought up by his step-mother and aunt, Prajapati Gautami.

Gautama as a Householder

Suddhodana had been warned that his son could be a great saint. As a Kshatriya he did not like this and took care to see that his son was soon lost in the householder's life. He was given due education in the various arts of a Kshatriya. Soon he was excelling almost every Sakya prince in these athletic feats. He was hardly sixteen when he was married to Yasodhara. The mention of more than one name for the wife of Gautama does not mean that he had many wives, as it is almost certain that all these were the various names for the same person. A son was born to Gautama after some years. Him he called Rahula (or fetter) considering him to be another bond for him.

The Renunciation

The very name given to his son suggests that this young man was yearning to be free. He was often in a pensive mood. Although his father had taken care that there should be nothing to attract him into an ascetic's state, yet the prince met an old man, an ill-person, a dead body, and a *Sanyasin*. He questioned his charioteer and was told that this was to be the fate of every person, that everybody was to get old, fall ill and die. Immediately the prince's mind revolted. If that was the end of life, why have it ? Was there no way to-

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get rid of it ? The answer was *Sanyas*. This was the only way, that earlier people had followed. Hence the prince decided to renounce this world. One night when he was twenty-nine he quietly left his home and went into homelessness.

The Search for Truth

Gautama took the conventional course. He followed the old Brahmanical asceticism in order to find a path that could save him from being born over again. He went from jungle to jungle and practised the severest penances. The six years thus spent by him indicate the fruitlessness of this path. Then he went to Sarnath and in the Deer Park he practised penance along with five other co-aspirants. Afterwards he went to a saint called Alara Kalama who now put him on the right path. He soon learnt from him all that he had to teach. He left him and went to another teacher called Uddaka Ramaputta. This teacher took him a step further. Gautama was never a bad pupil and soon surpassed his master. When he also had nothing to teach him further, Gautama left him and wandered to Gaya. There he sat under the famous Bodhi tree and soon attained the supreme knowledge. Thus he had become the Enlightened One, or the *Buddha*.

Buddha as a Teacher

Buddha was not the type of man who could keep the knowledge to himself. He decided to make converts. Alara Kalama and Uddaka Ramaputta were dead. He went to the Deer Park in Banaras, where now Sarnath is. There he met his five old co-aspirants. He delivered his first sermon which is also called the 'turning of the wheel of law'. Soon he had sixty mendicants. He sent them into the world to preach his doctrine and to wander about in the world for the good of humanity, no two persons going the same way.

Buddha also left for Gaya. Here three Karhyapa brothers who had a large following became his disciples. This had a good effect on the people of Magadha. Then he went to Rajagriha where two persons Sariputta and Maha Mogallana became his converts. They later on became the foremost of his *bhikshus*. Then he wandered from place to place, giving sermons and making converts. He even went to Kapilavastu, where he converted a large number of his cousins and even

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his own son. After about a year's wanderings, he again returned to Rajagriha. Anathpindaka, a multi-millionaire of Shravasti invited him to his place. Gautama went there and Anathpindaka gave him a beautiful grove called the 'Prince Jata's garden' for building a monastery. In this manner he moved from place to place, practically in the whole of Madhyadesha, or the Midlands.

Nuns

After the death of Gautama's father, Prajapati Gautami and Yasodhara, Gautama's wife were very keen to become nuns. So far no woman had been admitted to the order of monks. Gautama for long time was undecided whether or not he should permit their admission. Finally they were allowed a separate order of nuns with as intricate and long set of rules and regulations as the monks had.

His Social Equality

Gautama was a revolutionary in many ways. He broke those barriers of caste which nobody had dared touch uptil then. This also he did not by precept but by action. Some of his foremost *Bhikshus* were of low caste. Reverend Upali who later became the head of the order, was of low birth. Once when he visited Vaishali, he accepted dinner at the house of Amrapali, a prostitute.

His Death

In moving and preaching from place to place, Buddha spent forty-five years. Finally he reached Pava—an important town of the Mallas. Here he had his last meals with Chunda, the smith. He had been ill already. He now moved to Kusinagara, another town of the Mallas and died soon after. He was given a royal funeral. His ashes were divided among eight peoples who carried them to their own lands and built stupas over them.

Section IV—The Buddhistic Teachings

Gautama accepted four basic truths.

The Four Noble Truths

(*i*) There is sorrow. (*ii*) It has a cause. (*iii*) It can be stopped. (*iv*) There is a path leading to its cessation.

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The noble eightfold path led to cessation of sorrow. It included : Right views, right aspiration, right speech, right action, right living, right efforts, right mindfulness, and right meditation.

The Noble Eightfold Path

Right meditation is explained as the realization, through the concentration of the mind, of various spheres or worlds. Thus a person could realize the stage of Nirvana through meditation only. Meditation was a very important and basic principle of the Buddhist faith. No special hymns were to be recited, no reading of the mass, no prayers, no ritualism and no sacrifices were to be performed. It was one's own effort that counted. There was no intermediary, no God's agent to help you in the salvation.

Along with the Noble Eightfold path and the four Noble Truths, Ahimsa formed a very important part of the Buddhist life. This meant non-injury to all living beings. But here again the intentions mattered most.

Ahimsa

The moral tone of the society immediately before Buddha was quite low. Buddha tried to raise it. He thought that soul, purified by leading a good moral life was capable of discerning the truth and attaining Nirvana. His followers both Bhikshus and lay disciples were required to lead a strict moral life.

Morality

The Brahmanic faith had laid great stress on the chanting of the hymns and performing of sacrifices. Even the Upanishadas believe that one could attain bliss by performing sacrifices. This automatically decreased the stress on one's own life and actions. The moral tone had gone down. Now Gautama believed in no chanting of hymns, no sacrifices. Hence essentially the man had to depend on one's own-self. Thus the Karma philosophy formed a very important part of Buddhism.

Karma Philosophy

By following the above mentioned code of conduct, one could attain a high state of mind. The soul would be free from the circle of life and death and would have conquered craving, *Trishna*.

The Nirvana

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No Personal God.

Throughout his teachings Gautama is silent about the existence of a personal God, somebody who could help you in your distress. There was no God to pardon one's sins, no Allah to grant Heaven to the faithful, and no Brahma to become one with. He neither accepted nor denied the existence of such a god. He might be called an agnostic, but certainly not an athiest. He advised his followers, not to worry about these petty questions of the existence or non-existence of God. They were to mind their ownself and uplift their soul.

The Middle Path

Gautama adopted the Middle Path. He had seen that the extreme asceticism in which he had indulged for a very long time, had not brought him nearer the truth. So also the luxurious life that he had been leading while a householder had failed. In his search after truth he had come to the conclusion that one should follow the 'middle path.' This was exactly what he told his five followers in Sarnath when he said that the ascetic monks should avoid both the extremes, that is neither one should pain one's own body aimlessly nor lead a luxurious life. Hence his path as a whole has been called the 'middle path.'

The Order of Monks

One of the most important features of the new religion was the order of monks. Ascetics or Sanyasis there had been but never before with such clear-cut rules and regulations of life. Nor was it a means of expanding his religion or message. In fact it was the only way through which one could achieve Nirvana.

Gautama was a methodical man. He had seen the fate of a large number of ascetics and the paths that they had followed. He realized the importance of organization. One of the most important part of the Buddhist scriptures is the *Vinaya Pitaka*, which contains the rules and regulations for the Buddhist *Sangha* (order of monks). A very detailed programme was laid out for the Bhikshus. Moreover, Gautama got an opportunity to live for forty five-years after his enlightenment. He gave his vedict on almost all conceivable aspects of a monk's life, from the fashion of hair cuts to the number of clothes he was to carry, and the charity he was to accept.

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The most important feature of the organization was its democratic character. Everything was to be decided by regular elections. The monastery work was to be carried by the officers elected by the monks. In order to avoid bickerings, secret voting was resorted to. To this democratic body was also given the task of deciding any future question of the religion. These councils could not alter the basic principles of the religion. As for minor rules and regulations decisions could be taken by these councils. It was in pursuance of this policy that various Buddhist councils were called from time to time. That is why Sanskrit was adopted by the Mahayana School, although Gautama had said that his teachings should not be taught in Sanskrit. The monk was not a free person, even though he might be following the Dharma and Gautama. The holy formula said

Buddham Sharanam Gachhami,
Dharmam Sharanam Gachhami,
Sangham Sharanam Gachhami.

[I take refuge in Buddha, Dharma and the Sangha.] The monk was not only subjecting himself to a discipline of the law (Dharma) but also he was subjecting himself to the will of his comrades. A better discipline could not be imagined.

Sangha was a peculiarity of Buddhism. Its origin might be due to the regular monasteries for its monks. The other religions did not have any such organization and it was there because of the genius of Gautama.

The Two Schools of Buddhism

Mention may also be made of the later schools of Buddhist thought. In the days of Kanishka under the influence of the Brahmanic faith several things were brought into Buddhism. This new Buddhism was called the *Mahayana* or the Greater Vehicle. This will be discussed in subsequent chapters.

Buddhist Scriptures and Councils

Lord Buddha had given sermons at various places. These sermons were remembered by his followers. After the death of the Master, these sayings were collected at the first Buddhist Council of Rajagriha. The books were divided into three baskets

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(*Tripitaka*), according to the nature of the subjects discussed in the sermons of Gautama.

These books are called the Sutta pitaka, the Vinaya pitaka and the Abbiddhamma pitaka. The *Sutta pitaka* itself is divided into five *nikayas*, or collections. They contain some of the most important sermons of Gautama. The *Vinaya pitaka* contains the rules and regulations for the order of monks. The *Abbiddhamma pitaka* deals with the philosophical aspect of the Buddhist religion. It is also asserted by various scholars that the shape of the books, was not finalized in the first Buddhist Council. Probably another century passed before the texts became finalized. It may further be mentioned that these texts are in Pali, the language of the masses.

Jatakas

One of the most interesting and important part of Buddhist Scriptures is the *Jatakas* or the birth stories wherein are traced the story of Gautama in his previous births. The soul that was in the process of becoming a Buddha (awakened one) was called the Bodhisatva. It is the story of the Bodhisatvas that is contained in the *Jatakas*. It appears that most of these stories were written later on with the definite purpose of driving home into the minds of the lay public the necessity of living a good life. These stories became very popular with the masses.

The Second Council

After a hundred years from the Council of Rajagriha, another Council was held at Vaisali. Some of the monks disagreed to certain restrictions imposed on them. Ten issues were raised. A huge council was held in which the sayings of Gautama were recalled and ten points were cleared. It may also be noted here that this Second Buddhist Council and its proceedings are mentioned in the Vinaya. It makes it clear that the texts were finalized much later.

Later Councils

Asoka called the third Buddhist Council about the year 240 B.C. at Pataliputra. The fourth was called by Kanishka at Kundalavana in Kashmir about the year 120 A.D. where decisions regarding the Mahayana School of Buddhism were taken.

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Section V—Causes of its Success and Failure

(*a*) **Causes of Success**Very often one wonders at the spread of this religion in the East. Brahmanism also spread but excepting for the colonies in the East Indies, hardly any other country accepted it. Jainism did not go beyond Indian boundaries. Sikhism did not spread even in the whole of India. Similarly the other minor sects were never seriously taken by the people. How was it that Buddhism was able to attract such large adherents in Asia especially in all the countries of the Far East? Was it all due to the royal patronage and the proselytising activities of the Buddhist monks? Why did it spread in India? Let us examine its causes.

A Popular Revolt

Buddhism was a popular revolt against the Brahmanic ritualism. The people as a whole were not very happy with the superiority claimed by the Brahmanas. The whole country was passing through a period of religious discontent. Hence a sect with a new outlook on life, and based on equality and simplicity made it a popular affair.

Simple Teachings

Another feature was the simplicity of its teachings. The path was the middle one, not taxing anybody's powers. There was no ceremonial, no expenses and nothing beyond an average man's means and intellect. It also appealed to an average man that one's own actions, not the chanting of hymns would lead to one's salvation. As it laid greater emphasis on morality it appealed to all.

Buddha's Own Personality

Gautama had a very charming personality. He charmed almost any man who came in contact with him. His own life was an ideal one. Very important and highly placed persons became his followers and their influence as a whole helped the religion.

Local Language

The Vedic religion employed Vedic Sanskrit (a very old form of Sanskrit) which was not followed by masses. The average man employed the local language which in those days in the Gangetic plains or the Madhyadesha, was Pali. The use of Pali for the sermons was the first important step towards endearing it to the people.

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Absence of Caste

The existence of a higher caste and a lower caste based on birth was averse to the feelings of the majority of the people. Gautama did not believe in any such distinctions. For him all were equal. His religion did not tolerate any such pretensions. It was immensely liked by the Sudras.

Missionary Work

The *Sangh* or the order of monks played a very important role in the history of Buddhist expansion. To his first followers Gautama had declared that no two of them should go the same way. Thus these monks helped a great deal in the conversion of the masses. The residences of the monks, *Vihāras* or monasteries became popular institutions. Here every Sabbath day (seventh, fourteenth and fifteenth day of the fortnight) sermons were delivered. They became the seats of learning. Their lives were ideals for others. Thus the Buddhist religion spread more by example than by precept.

Royal Patronage

Buddhism might have been as unimportant a religion as Jainism, but for the royal patronage. It were kings like Asoka and Kanishka who made it a great religion. It was Asoka who sent missionaries abroad with the torch of Buddhism in their hands. His own children joined in this task. Kanishka spread it beyond the Hindukush mountains. Even in the land of its birth, Buddhism owes a lot to them. Their royal patronage did not mean any forcible conversion or the persecution of the non-believers. These kings under the influence of Buddhism led a very noble life indeed and by their pilgrimages drew the attention of the nation to a religion which might not have been so well-known.

Adaptability

Gautama had empowered the Buddhist councils to take important decisions so far as the minor precepts were concerned. This very fact suggests that this religion was to adapt itself to the changed circumstances. Thus a man could believe in Gautama alone or in Bodhisatvas or he could be an idolater or a meat-eater and still he could be a Buddhist.

(*b*) Causes of Decline in India

Why is it that Buddhism is lost to the land of its birth, whereas it is still a guiding force in the lives of many millions of people in the Far East, and South-East Asia ?

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The Brahmanical Revival

Probably the largest single factor that sent Buddhism to its doom was the Brahmanical revival. Outside India, wherever Buddhism had gone there was hardly a religion worth the name it had to replace. In certain areas, especially the East Indies, it had gone immediately after the people had emerged from the state of paganism. With no religion which could be revived, it struck. While in India, it had replaced the old Brahmanical faith and hence when the old Brahmanical faith reformed itself Buddhism disappeared. In the Brahmanic new gods. Buddha was admitted as one, and his followers quietly slipped into the fold of Hinduism.

The Rajput Revival

From the eighth century onwards the Indian political scene was dominared by the Rajput kings. These Rajputs claimed themselves to have been the descendants of the old Kshatriya families with Rama (*Surya Vanshis*) and Krishna (*Chandra Vanshis*) as their ancestors. In order to be accepted as such they must be true to their families, they must follow the religion of their forefathers. The doctrine of *ahimsa* did not fit into their life and they turned against Buddhism, with a vengeance. It is, however, very interesting to note that Jainism has survived even though it believed in a severer type of *ahimsa*.

Weaknesses of Buddhism

During the period that followed the Kushan rule, the Buddhist missionaries lost their old zeal. They too adopted Sanskrit, although the public still spoke the local dialects. It had also developed almost all the ills of Hinduism without its mythology and philosophy. These weak points were fully exploited by Shankaracharya and other philosophers who changed the whole outlook of the people. The state support was no longer available. The Hunas and Muslims were most hostile to the Buddhists and they also contributed towards the decline of Buddhism.

Section VI—Buddhism, Jainism and Brahmanism Compared

Their Similarities

Really speaking none of these reformed religions claimed to be something absolutely new. Mahavira followed Parshva Nath and Gautama was put on the path by Alara Kalama and Uddaka Ramputta. Gautama

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often asserted again and again that he was not propounding any thing absolutely new. It was the old religion, modified according to the needs of the time. The very philosophies of these religions were based on old existing philosophies. As a matter of fact these were just reforms within the old fold. The basic principles remained the same. All the three believed in the indestructibility of the soul and in its transmigration. All of them believed in the law of *karma* wherein the deeds done in this life would be rewarded in future. All aimed at the ultimate release of the soul from the circle of birth and death, *i.e.*, *Moksha*. In later years all of them developed idolatry with many gods and goddesses. Lastly all the three laid great stress on a good moral life.

Dissimilarities

There were a number of differences among them. The chief difference was in the belief in personal God. The Brahmanism cherished a strong belief in a personal god called the *Brahma* or the *Paramatma* who could hear prayers and grant their fulfilment. He could be won over by performing sacrifices and the chanting of Vedic hymns. Gautama was scrupulously silent about Him. According to him the Universal Law (*Dharma*) controlled this universe. The Jains went a step further and denied the existence of God. Thus prayers which are quite important for a Brahmana lose their significance for a Jain or a Buddhist. While a Brahmana could invoke the mercy of god, the Buddhist and the Jain had to rely on his own self and work for his salvation.

Another important point of difference is the attitude towards *Ahimsa*. To a Brahmana *Ahimsa* was good, but not so very important. In case of emergency a living being could be killed. Various sacrifices that were performed by him involved such bloody deeds. To a Buddhist *Ahimsa* was very important, but if unconsciously a living creature was killed it did not matter. To the Jain it was of the utmost importance. He must watch his every movement. He should see that hot breath coming out of his mouth or nostrils should not kill even the tiniest insect.

There was a difference in the attitude towards this world. In Brahmanism, the comforts of this world were to be enjoyed fully, especially by the householder, the *grihasthin*. A luxurious life was not to be shunned. *Dharma*, *Artha* (wealth),

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Kama (wishes) and *Moksha* were his basic beliefs. For him the worldly life was real. It was the means to an end. To the Buddhist the path was to be a middle one, *i. e.*, neither too hard a life nor too luxurious : the golden mean. For him the world was full of sorrow. To the Jain, this world was all unreal. Death by slow starvation was the best course. Give as much pain to your body as possible. This was the only way of getting joy hereafter. To him only the other world was real.

There were other minor differences. In Brahmanism and Jainism caste was quite important, while Buddhism did not believe in this institution at all.

Then there was the attitude towards their scriptures. The Brahmanas believed that their scriptures, the *Vedas* were revealed books and hence their religion was God's religion. The Buddhists and the Jains denied the authority of the *Vedas*. Their own books were the creations of their masters.

Besides the Brahmanic faith did not possess any special order of monks which was to carry on proselytising activities and make converts. The *Sanyasin* and Brahmana did look after the spiritual needs of the masses, but there was no organised institution like the Buddhist *Sangha*. The Jains had *Yatis* (monks) who wandered about and attended to the spiritual needs of their co-religionists. On the other hand the Buddhists had the best organised *Sangha* which worked very smoothly and went about serving the community. They made converts and contributed largely to the popularity of Buddhism.

The Brahmanas used Sanskrit while the Buddhists and the Jains used the local dialects. The Brahmanism was a very complicated religion while Buddhism and Jainism were well within the comprehension of an average person.

Questions

1. Give an account of the early career and teachings of the Lord Buddha. (*P. U. 1938*)

2. Describe the chief political and social causes which led to the spread and decline of Buddhism in India. (*P. U. 1939*)

3. Briefly outline the life and teachings of Buddha. (*P. U. 1940*)

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4. What are the main teachings of Jainism? What part was played in the development of Jainism by Mahavira? Give a brief sketch of his life. (*P. U. 1943*)

5. What are the main teachings of Buddhism? What were the causes of its success in India? (*P. U. 1944*)

6. Write a short note on Mahavira and his teachings. (*P. U. 1945*)

7. Give a short account of the life and teachings of Buddha. How do you account for the popularity of Buddhism and its rapid spread in India? (*P. U. 1947*)

8. Write a short note on the teachings of Buddha. (*P. U. 1948*)

9. Give a brief sketch of the life of Buddha. What were the main teachings of Buddha, and how do you account for the rapid spread of Buddhism? (*P. U. 1949*)

10. Give a short account of the life and teachings of Buddha. Examine the effects of Buddhism in India. (*P. U. 1950*)

11. What were the causes of the disappearance of Buddhism from our country? (*P. U. 1951*)

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CHAPTER XI

India in the Sixth Century B.C. and the Rise of Magadha

Regular History

About this time we come to possess a fairly regular history of India. All the details of the whole of India may not be available, yet the story is readable and connected. This was not due to the fact that previously big states had not existed, but because no political account had been recovered. Moreover the scriptures of the Buddhists and the Jains have conveyed to us a lot of information regarding the political condition of India. Besides India attracted foreign attention and their accounts greatly contributed to our knowledge of the period.

Section I—The Sixteen Mahajanapadas

The Buddhist scriptures mention the names of sixteen Mahajanapadas, *i.e.*, big states. Most of them had never been visited by Gautama and no first hand information was left to us about them. The names mentioned are from all over India and not northern India alone. Wherever Gautama himself went, he left a fairly interesting account of the people. The list as preserved in the Buddhist *Pitakas* contains the names of Anga (Eastern Bihar), Magadha (Southern Bihar), Kasi (Banaras), Kosala (Oudh), Vajjis (Northern Bihar), Mallas (Gorakhpur district), Chedis (between the Jamuna and the Narbada), Vatsa or Vamsa (Allahabad area), Kurus (Thanesar, Delhi and Meerut districts), Panchalas (Bareilly, Badaun and Farukhabad districts), Matsyas (Jaipur), Saurasenas (Mathura), Assakas (near Godavari), Avanti (Malwa), Gandhara (between Jhelum and Peshawar) and the Kambojas (South-West Kashmir and part of Kafiristan). Out of this list the names of Magadha, Kosala, Vatsa, Avanti, Vajjis and the Mallas stand out as the most important ones. Of these the first four were monarchies and the last two republics.

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Avanti

It was one of the western states of India with Ujjaini as its capital. It was ruled by Pradyota who was a man of very bad temper, although not very bad at heart. It appears as if this state controlled almost all the routes to Deccan and the west-coast harbours and as such a very rich trade passed through this state. The king although for ever quarrelling with his neighbours was respected by them.

Vatsas

The Vatsas was another important monarchy of the age. It was ruled by King Udayana who had a very charming personality. He married Pradyota's daughter Vasavadatta and their love is the subject matter of many a story in Sanskrit. He also married another princess from Magadha and thus by matrimonial alliance with two important states had greatly enhanced his prestige. Its capital was Kosambi near Allahabad.

Kosala

It had great epic traditions attached to its name. Although in olden days its capital was Ayodhya, but in the sixth century B.C. Sravasti on the river Rapti appears to have been the centre of the political activity. The town was one of the finest of the age. Its palaces and halls were very important. It was ruled in these days by King Prasenajit. He had matrimonial relations with the king of Magadha. Kosala appears to have been a very prosperous state. It had annexed Kasi and even the Sakyas were a part of the Kosala empire, although they enjoyed certain amount of autonomy. It was the rival of the Magadhan empire.

Magadha

Magadha was the most important kingdom. It had a long history of important chieftains. In the sixth century B.C. the stage was held by a dynasty known as the Hiranyakas. It was represented by Shrenika or Bimbisara. The capital in these days was Rajagriha, a town built just near the old city of Girivajja. Rajagriha was a big town and the state was on the path of glory.

Bimbisara came to the throne in 546 B. C. or sixty years before the death of Gautama. He followed a policy of expansion from very early days. He commanded certain advantages over all other states. The soil was very fertile, its streams gold-bearing, and its elephants a big battle-winning machine. The matri-

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monial relations of Bimbisara with the king of Kosala and an important Vaisali prince paved the way for the expansion of Magadha in these areas. He easily conquered Anga.

The Vajjis

The Vajjis were a very powerful people in these days. They had a republican type of government. It was a confederacy of several clans, including the Lichhavis, Videhas, the Vajjis themselves and the Koliyans. Although the exact machinery which carried on the government of the country has not been recorded yet it appears that a popular assembly and a council of elders carried on the state work. These may not have been truly democratic in the modern sense of the word, but this type of government was at any rate oligarchical in character, or more precisely they were a sort of clan oligarchies. Their capital was Vaisali. The Lichhavis seemed to have been a very strong people and the king of Magadha had to build the town of Pataigrama (later Pataliputra) to serve as a fort against the possible Vajjian expansion.

The Mallas

The other republic of the age was that of the Mallas. Their constitution seemed to have been an example of *sangha-gana*. They had two settlements, one at Pava and the other at Kusinagara. At the former Mahavira died and at the latter Gautama himself.

Section II—Rise and Subsequent History of Magadha

Ajatshatru

It was Bimbisara who started the expansion of Magadha. His son Ajatshatru proved to be as powerful a king as Bimbisara was, if not better. In the early days he had to face the combination of the Vajjis, the Kosalans and the Mallas. Ajatshatru defeated them all and forced Prasenajit of Kosala to surrender Kasi which formed a part of Magadha. Ajatshatru's supremacy was established from the Ganga to the Himalayas.

His Successors

The *Puranas* assert that Ajatshatru was succeeded by his son Darshaka and the latter by his son Udayi. But the Jain and Buddhist traditions do not accept Darshaka to be Ajatshatru's son and assert that Udayi was the son and successor of Ajatshatru. The most notable incident of Udayi's reign was his fight with the king of Avanti.

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He is also said to have founded the town of Pataliputra, just near the fort of Pataligrama.

There is a divergence of opinions regarding the list of kings that ruled Magadha after Udayi, between the *Puranas* and the Buddhist tradition. The latter has been considered to be more reliable because of its antiquity. The Buddhist list says that Udayi was followed by Anrudha, Munda and Naga-darshaka, all patricides. Their bad government was disliked by all and finally Naga-darshaka was banished and the throne offered to Sishunaga, the minister.

The Sishunagas

The Puranas and the Buddhist tradition disagree regarding this king. The Puranas assert that Sishunaga was the founder of the family to which Bimbisara and Ajatshatru belonged and the last of this family was Kalasoka who was murdered by Mahapadma Nanda, the founder of the Nanda dynasty. The Buddhist tradition on the other hand tells us that Sishunaga was succeeded by his son Kalasoka or Kakavarnin. He was a king of some importance and transferred the capital from Rajagriha to Pataliputra. On the death of Kalasoka his sons could not handle the situation and a new king known as Mahapadma Nanda came to the throne.

Nandas

The new king was known by three names, *Mahapadma Nanda* (sovereign of immense wealth), *Maha-padampati* (sovereign having a huge army), and *Ugrasena* (having a terrible army). The family is known as the *Nava Nandas* (New Nandas or Nine Nandas). The total duration of this line is estimated differently, 155 years, 100 years and 22 years only. It is very difficult to be sure about it all. Suffice it to say that the last figure appears to be more reliable. The name Mahapadma also appears to be such a title as was taken on by subsequent rulers of this dynasty.

As regards his parentage, almost all the Indian traditions put him as a low fellow. Even Curtius, the Greek scholar tells us that he was a barber who through his friendship with the queen, killed the old ruler, pretended to be the guardian of the princes and then put them to sword. The king thus put to death might have been Kakavarnin.

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Magadha under the Nandas

The new king, although of quite a humble origin appears to have been a great king. He is known as the exterminator of all the Kshatriyas in the tradition. Thus it was he who conquered all the states from the Beas to Magadha and became the first great monarch.

An inscription in Kalinga of an early date refers to the fact that he had conquered a large part of India. It also points out that Kalinga was a part of his empire.

He was succeeded by his eight sons. The last was named Dhana Nanda or Agrammes or Xandramea as mentioned by the Greeks. It was in his reign that Alexander invaded India. He had a huge army consisting of 200,000 infantry, 20,000 cavalry, 2,000 chariots and 3,000 elephants. Probably his heavy taxation and harsh rule made him unpopular. The disgruntled group with Chandragupt a Maurya as their leader overthrew the king and the new dynasty of Mauryas came into existence.

Questions

1. Write a short note on the political condition of India on the eve of Gautama.

2. What do you know about the rise of Magadha as a great power under the Sishunagas and Nandas ?

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CHAPTER XII

The Persian and Greek Invaders

Section I—Persian Conquest

It appears that after the major Aryan migration to India, little contact was maintained with the western world. This little contact was mostly of commercial nature rather than political.

Cyrus (558-530 B. C.)

About this time we have only a passing reference made to the Gandharas and Kambojas in the Buddhist canon. We also hear that a Pakkusati sent an ambassador with a letter to Bimbisara, the Magadhan king.

It was Cyrus the great, who first turned his attention towards India. Cyrus or Kai Khusro (558-530 B.C.) was the founder of the Achaemenian empire of Persia. He conquered Bactria, Media, Babylonia and Assyria. Then he advanced towards India through Gedrosia (Makran). As the approach was made from a wrong end, it was a failure. Some Indian scholars assert that Cyrus was none else than Kurus (*C* pronouncing as *K*) who established a huge empire in Persia.* Cyrus having failed to make any headway through Makran, attacked India through Kabul valley. He conquered the town of Kapisha near the junction of the Ghorband and the Panjshir rivers, north-east of Kabul. Nearly all the Pashto-speaking area lying west of river Indus became a tributary to the Persians.

After Cyrus the next important king of this dynasty was Darius I or Darayavahush son of Vishtaspa. He was the third king of this dynasty. He conquered the Kambojas, Gandharas, and the Indus valley people which comprised the Derajat and the Sindhsagar Doab.

Darius I (522-486 B.C.)

The Bahistan inscription of Darius which is dated 516 B.C., however, does not mention India as a part of Persian empire. It mentions the Gandhara. Another inscription at

*Itihas Pravesh of Jay Chandra Vidyalankar, 1952, p. 60.

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Persepolis, of the same king, mentions India as a separate satrapy from Gandhara. So also the Nakshi-Rustam inscription mentions India. Thus it was he who conquered north-western India.

Even Herodotus (484-424 B.C.) an almost contemporary Greek historian tells us that the north-western India formed the twentieth satrapy (province) of the Persian empire. Darius sent Skylax to explore the river Indus and he spent two years and a half in the Indus valley. We are further informed that this twentieth satrapy alone paid to the Persian kings an annual tribute of '360 euboic talents of gold dust' which would be equal to one and a quarter million pounds in modern currency. The Gandhara was a part of the seventh satrapy. Thus it appears as if the Persian hold over Indian soil was quite strong. The Persian kingdom touched the Rajputana desert.

Xerxes (486-465 B. C.)

Darius's successor Xerxes (pronounced *Zerksiz*) continued to hold the Indian empire. It is further said that in his days the Zoroasterianism spread in this part of the country. It may be added here that many Zoroastrian monuments were discovered at Taxila, especially in the excavations belonging to the earliest period. A contingent of Indian troops fought with the Persian army against the Greeks. The Greek writers recorded that Indian soldiers were clad in clothes of a wool which grew on trees, thereby referring to cotton.

Decline

The Persian hold declined within the next few years. This Persian empire which included the Indian territories was the largest empire that the world had known. Although it continued to hold the middle eastern and near eastern countries for another century or so, Indian soil was freed from foreign yoke by 425 B. C. Then the whole area was split up into a number of small states.

Effects

The effects of the Persian conquests on our history were many. The old barriers were broken and Indians sought services under some of the foreign kings. Trade developed and a closer contact between the west and India grew. The most important effect was in the field of languages and art. The *Kharoshti* script derived from

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Aramaic script came to north-western India and continued uptil the 4th century A.D. The system of inscriptions is said to have been of Persian origin. The Mauryan art was affected by the Persians. Its traces are clearly noticeable in Mauryan buildings. It is said that the Indian kings took on many Persian ceremonies. Another noticeable feature was the employment of Persian women (*Yavanis*) as bodyguards by Indian kings and thus people from both the countries crossed over the boundaries to seek their fortunes.

Section II—Panjab and N.W. India on the eve of Alexander

After the decline of the Persian empire the area from the Beas upto the Hindukush mountains became divided into a number of small states. Many of the tribes living here were democratic and others were monarchical. The geographical conditions of the area were such as tended to divide these tribesmen, who were very often quarrelling amongst themselves. Because of their perpetual jealousies and quarrels, they maintained big armies. It is very interesting to note that Alexander who destroyed the Persian empire and overran the whole of Western Asia in a very short time spent more than five years (330-326 B.C.) occupying and conquering this comparatively small area.

Ashvakas

The hilly tract north of the Kabul river and including the valleys of rivers Swat and Kunar, was occupied by a tribe called the Ashvakas (whom the Greek name Assakenese). Its capital was Massaga and it had a huge army, consisting of 30,000 infantry, 20,000 cavalry and 30 elephants.

Nyasa

Somewhere nearby on the way to India stood the town of Nyasa which the Greek historians tell us was founded and colonised by the Greeks and was under them uptil then.

Pushklavati

The river Indus divided the Gandhara into two parts. The Western Gandhara had its capital at Pushklavati somewhere near modern Peshawar.

Taxila

The Eastern Gandhara was ruled by King Ambhi with Taxila as its capital. The site of this town is indicated by the Bhir mound in Taxila city today. This town was well known all over India for its trade

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and learning.

Abhisara

To the north of Taxila, in the regions indicated by Punch and Nowshehra (Kashmir) lay the kingdom of Abhisara. The fighting qualities of the people of this area are well known even today.

Urusha

Nearby in the area indicated by Hazara district of today lay the state of Urusha. This lovely valley irrigated by a large number of streams and springs is one of the loveliest spots in north-western India (now Pakistan).

The Purus

In the south-east of Taxila, was the kingdoms of Purus brothers. The elder Poros occupied the area between the Jhelum and the Chenab, and the younger one between the Chenab and the Ravi. The elder Puru (Poros) had a very flourishing kingdom with over 300 towns and an army of 50,000 infantry, 3,000 horses, 1,000 chariots and a large number of elephants.

Kathaioi and Sanbhutis

On the borders of the Purus lay the state of Kathaioi with Sagala as its capital. The Sanbhutis were to the east of river Jhelum. It is said that this tribe was organised on a community basis, the state looking after the needs of the people. Even the bringing up of children was its duty. Deformed and mentally defective children were destroyed.

The Sebois

This state was situated on the lower regions of Ravi and Jhelum. The town of Shorkot (District Jhang) indicates its original site. It also had a huge army of over 40,000 soldiers.

The Oxydrakoi

The Montgomery district was occupied by the Oxydrakois or the Kshudrakas. These people had a democratic form of government.

The Mallois

The area bounded by the Ravi, Jhelum and the Sutlej (Multan district) was occupied by the tribe known as Mallois or the Malvas. They had over 90,000 infantry, 10,000 cavalry and 900 elephants. They are referred to by Panini, the famous Sanskrit Grammarian as a tribe living by arms. Probably in later years they shifted to Rajputana and Malwa.

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Another democratic people Ambasthas are al eferred to. These were located near the con, ion of the Chenab and Jhelum. They were als fighting race.

Ambasthas

This area was divided into a number of small kingdoms. Of these Alexandra had to fight Morsikanos and Pattala.

Upper Sindh

Thus the Greek writers have given us the list of those states which lay on Alexander's route and with which he had to fight. It is very probable that there were many more which have not been noted by the Greek writers.

This politically disintegerated country was no match for a conqueror like Alexander, but the fight that most of them put up indicates the stuff they were made of. Beyond the Beas lay the powerful kingdom of the Nandas which extended to Bengal, all under one king.

Section III—Alexander's Campaign

Alexander was the son of Philips, king of Macadonya, a small state in south-east Europe. In 336 B.C. he became the king. He w.s a man of remarkable energy. Within two years he collected an army of 30,000 foot soldiers and 5,000 horse-men. Then he started to conquer the old Persian empire. Actually he was dreaming of the world conquest. In 333 B.C. he defeated Darius III. In 331 B.C. another crushing defeat was inflicted at Arabela on the old king. Darius was killed by one of his own straps. In the meantime, Alexander had occupied Asia Minor, Syria and Egypt. After Arabela he captured and destroyed the Persian capital Persepolis. He was now seriously dreaming of occupying the whole of the old Persian kingdom and with a huge army he now moved towards the east.

His Early Career

The winter of 330 B.C. was spent in Seistan and the capture of Kandahar. The year 329 and 328 B.C. found the conqueror busy in occupying Afghanistan and moving towards the Kabul river valley. In 327 B.C. he occupied Bacteria. He garrisoned a number of forts in this area so as to serve as the supply base for his conquest of India.

330 B.C. and Thereafter

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He now divided his armies. A part he kept under himself and the other he sent under the command of Hephaistion and Perdikkas towards India. He himself undertook to conquer the wigs, especially the northern area. Thus, the end of the year 327 B.C. found him busy in the valley of Kuvar and Swat.

Moves Towards India

He captured Massaga, Aornos and Nyasa. At Massaga the battle was very fierce, and it was with great difficulty that the fort was conquered. Alexander is said to have put to sword 7,000 mercenary Indians who served with the people of Massaga, and who refused to serve him. Was it loyalty to their mother country or to their employers one could not say.

Aornos was another tough fort. It is said to have defied Hercules even. This flanking movement of Alexander was very successful and it made his lines of communications very safe.

Meanwhile the two generals of Alexander had captured Pushkalvali, situated near modern Charsadda. The two armies now joined up and forcing a marching through dense forests he crossed the river Indus at Ohind by boats. Ambhi, the king of Taxila, who was not on very good terms with his neighbours, welcomed the invader. Presents were offered. Here the king of Abbisara also sent his submission. When Poros the king beyond the Jhelum was asked to submit, he refused and so Alexander prepared for a battle. He marched ahead. Some people think that he followed the present Grand Trunk Road route, while others believe that he came through hills down to Haranpur, across the river then swollen due to early rains. Poros was ready with a huge army.

Crossing of India

With a view to put Poros off his guard Alexander pretended to have postponed his attempt at crossing till the end of the rainy season. His troops slept in the day and quietly worked at night. One night he crossed the river seventeen miles above his camp. A small band of soldiers sent to stop him, failed and soon Alexander came up to give Poros a fight. Poros put up one of the hardest fights that Alexander had ever experienced. Poros was captured. Alexander who had been impressed by the bravery of his enemy treated him generous and restored him to his throne. So great

Battle of Hydespes

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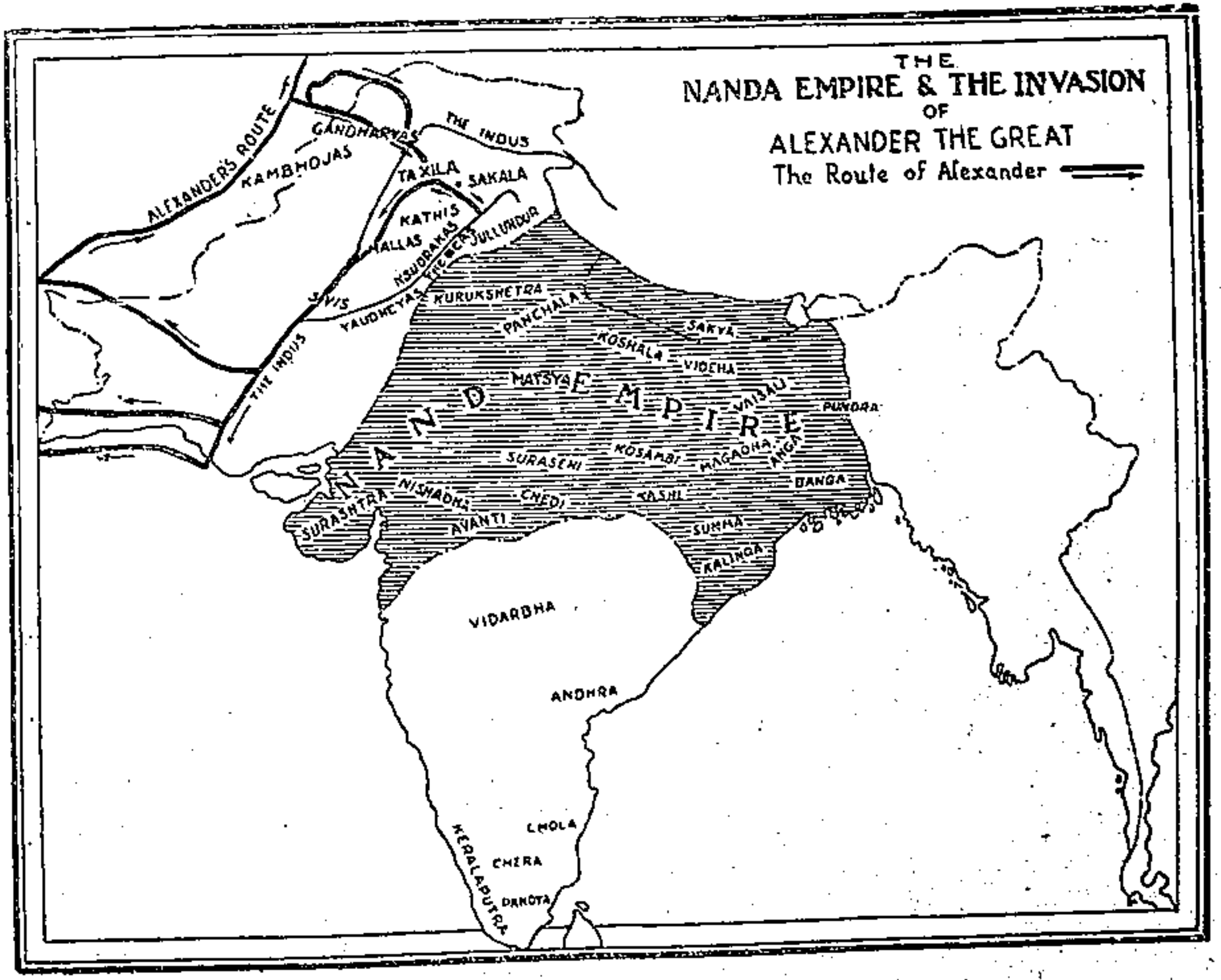
THE
NANDA EMPIRE & THE INVASION
OF
ALEXANDER THE GREAT
The Route of Alexander
ALEXANDER'S ROUTE
GANDHARYAS
THE INDUS
KAMBHOJAS
TAXILA
SAKALA
KATHIS
MALLAS
KSUDRAKAS
JULLUNDUR
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YAUDHEYAS
KURUKSHETRA
PANCHALA
SAKYA
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MATSYA
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MAGADHA
ANGA
BANGA
SURASHTRA
NISHADHA
CHEDI
KASHI
AVANTI
SUHMA
KALINGA
VIDARBHA
ANDHRA
CHOLA
CHERA
PANDYA
KERALAPUTRA

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was the confidence which Poras inspired that Alexander left him in charge of all his Indian dominions when he went back.

Further Advance

Then Alexander overran the petty states situated near about. Thus Sangla, the capital of the Kathaioi, was captured. This is said to have been situated in the modern Gurdaspur district of the Panjab. Finally Alexander reached the banks of river Beas (Hyphasis). Beyond this river lay the empire of the Nandas with a huge army at their disposal. Moreover, the soldiers of Alexander are said to have refused to go farther as it was a long time ago that they had left their homes.

Retreat

Alexander decided to return. Here on the banks of the river Beas he built twelve altars to mark the limit of his march and also to perform sacrifices to his gods. Then he returned to Jhelum. Having appointed Poras as his viceroy, he chose a different route for his retreat. He built a flotilla of about 2,000 boats and sent a part of his troops under the command of Nearchos down the river Jhelum. He himself led the other part and marched through the lands of the free tribes living along the banks of rivers Chenab, Jhelum and Ravi. A third portion was sent home through Afghanistan.

Malloi and Oxydrakoi

During this march of Alexander, a number of small states tried to resist him. So ruthless was the conqueror that thousands of men, women and children were killed. The Mallois and Oxydrakois, *i.e.*, the Mallas and the Kshudrakas, the two tribes living in present Montgomery and Multan districts opposed the invader. Alexander received a very serious wound himself. Finally the tribes were defeated and had to purchase a pardon by making large presents to the great conqueror. Finally the king reached Pattala on the sea. Here he further divided his armies. One part under Nearchos was sent by sea, while the other under his own command marched through Gedrosia by unexplored routes to Persia. After a good deal of sufferings, in which thousands of his camp followers died, he reached Karmania in May 324 B.C. In 323 B.C. he reached Babylon, near modern Baghdad where after a short illness he died at the age of thirty-three only.

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Section IV—Effects of Alexander's Campaign

Alexander's Plan

Alexander's plan was to occupy and rule the area that he had conquered. He was no plunderer, no adventurer, no brute. It was due to his early and premature death that this plan failed.

No Direct Effect

No direct Greek influence on India could be traced to Alexander's invasion. It was also due to the fact that Indians had hardly anything to learn from them. India's own culture was great. Its achievements in almost all fields were superior to those of the Greeks. Hence the Greeks failed to leave any marks of their occupation in India. Moreover the occupation of the north-western India including Afghanistan by King Chandragupta soon after the retreat of Alexander did not offer any opportunities to Greeks to influence India.

Indirect Effects—Contact of East and West

Alexander's campaign opened up a number of routes with the west, three land and one sea route. Thereafter the contact between the two peoples became closer. The geographical horizons had been widened and the segregation was broken. Although because of distance this contact was not intimate yet at least the outer fringes of both the countries touched each other.

Indo-Bactrian and Indo-Parthian Settlements

Several Greeks and other foreigners had settled down on the outskirts of India. Asoka refers to them in one of his edicts. These areas were later on occupied by many foreign tribes who later founded the Indo-Bactrian, Indo-Parthian and Indo-Scythian dynasties.

Political Unity

The conquest of north-western India united all the petty states into one single unit. Because of the disappearance of these states no power strong enough was left to oppose the Mauryas.

Other Effects

Alexander's campaign is also considered to be the sheet anchor of Indian History. But for this event the date of many an event would not have been fixed. The Indians learnt a good deal in the field of coinage, astronomy and art. The Gandhara School of Art which became very famous in the first and second centuries A. D. was begun under the influence of Hellenistic art. In the field of dramatics the Indians

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learnt the use of curtain (*Yavanika*) and also idolatry in the religious field can be traced to the Greek influence. On the other hand the Greeks learnt a lot in the field of philosophy.

Questions

1. "The importance of the Indian Campaign of Alexander has been both exaggerated and under-estimated." Discuss it. (*P.U. 1937*)

2. Give an account of the invasion of India by Alexander. How far did it influence the social and religious life of India ? (*P.U. 1939*)

3. Trace with the help of a sketch map the invasion of India by Alexander the Great. What is the importance of this invasion ? (*P.U. 1952*)

4. What do you know about the Persian invasion of India and what were its effects ?

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Chapter XIII

CHANDRAGUPTA MAURYA

Section I—Sources of Mauryan History

The story of the Imperial Mauryas is not only interesting but also fascinating. The Mauryan empire was the earliest and one of the biggest empires ever established in India. We possess detailed accounts of the Mauryas.

Indika

Chandragupta Maurya the founder of the dynasty defeated the Greekgeneral Seleucus. As a result a Greek envoy named Megasthenes was left at the court of Chandragupta. Megasthenes while at the court wrote a detailed account of the country and people that he saw. This book was called the *Indika*. Unluckily when the ambassador was returning home the book was lost and only a few pages of the work could be salvaged. These were preserved through several centuries. In the 19th century Mcrindle translated these few pages into English. This is one of the most authentic and interesting sources of the period.

Other Greek Writers

Besides Megasthenes several Greek writers such as Arrian, Curtius, Plutarch and Justin also give certain details of the contemporary India. Some of these writers obtained their information directly from soldiers who came with Alexander to India. The others used other contemporary sources in order to compile their works. This source is also quite reliable.

Arthashastra

This is said to have been the work of Chanakya, the iron chancellor of Chandragupta Maurya. For a long time its authorship and the date of composition were disputed. Now that is almost settled. This is a book on polity, but it gives us an insight into the political institutions of the day.

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Mudra Rakshasa

In the eighth century A.D. Vishakhdatta, a poet and dramatist, wrote a drama entitled *Mudra Rakshasa*. It describes how Chandragupta Maurya became the master of the north-western India. This story is said to have been based on some reliable sources. The most important king of the north-western states named in the story is Parvataka, a name not occurring in Greek accounts. It appears as if Parvataka and Poras were one and the same person. If this assumption is accepted then alone Mudra Rakshasa can be considered as an important source, otherwise the whole story becomes fantastic and imaginary and its testimony useless.

Inscriptions

Inscriptions of Asoka which have been discovered all over India, form another important source. The name occurring in these inscriptions is '*devanam piya piyadasi.*'. It means one who is beloved of gods and who is good to look at. This was the title assumed by several kings. Hence there are sceptics uptil today who doubt the authorship of these inscriptions. The internal and external evidence has, however, proved beyond doubt that these belonged to Asoka. What settled the issue was the addition of the word '*asokassa*' at the end of the formula in one of the inscriptions. These inscriptions have thrown a flood of light on Asoka and his activities. Some minor inscriptions discovered in Mysore state throw some light on the conquests of Chandragupta Maurya.

The Buddhist Traditions

Asoka's services to Buddhism are so great that he occupies a place only next to Gautama. Hence there are detailed references to him in the Buddhist tradition. The Ceylonese Chronicle *Mahavamsa* gives us a lengthy account of Asoka.

The Jain Traditions

According to the Jains Chandragupta Maurya was a Jain by religion. He is said to have helped the spread of Jainism in his days. We cannot rely on the Jain traditions absolutely.

The Mauryan Monuments

The Mauryan monuments are probably the earliest of ancient Indian monuments. The stupas of Sanchi and Bharut give the story of the Mauryan art which could never have been known but for these relics.

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Through the study of these materials historians have been able to build up a connected account of the Mauryas.

Section II—Chandragupta and his Conquests

Early Career

The origin and early career of this prince is obscure. It is very strange that none of the Mauryan kings, not even Asoka has left any account of this family. The early Sanskrit tradition puts him as the son of Nandas from a Sudra woman Mura and hence his name Maurya. The Jain tradition asserts that he was the son of a keeper of peacocks (*mora*) and hence his name. The others think his mother was of Persian origin. There was a tribe called 'Moriyas of Plipphala Vana' who shared the remains of Buddha. With the rise of Magadha, the area must have been included in the Magadhan empire.

Then we are told that King Chandragupta was the commander of the Nandas, but having quarrelled with his master he fled with a price on his head. It is true that he wandered into the Panjab. Justin and Plutarch also assign him a low birth. They assert that when Alexander came to the Panjab, Chandragupta met him and tried to persuade him to invade Magadha. Having failed here he won over Vishnugupta also known as Chanakya and Kautilya at Taxila who was annoyed with the Nandas. With his help he was able to capture the throne of Magadha. Scholars are of opinion that he got hidden wealth from the forests of Vindhyas, with the help of which he raised a large army and finally conquered Magadha. Others hold that he conquered Magadha with the help of the King of Nepal, and then occupied the Panjab. Some believe that he conquered the Panjab first and Magadha afterwards, while others suggest that he actually occupied Magadha with the help of north-western troops and chiefs.

The last two suggestions appear to be nearer truth. How very interesting it is that the states of Panjab which put a fierce fight against Alexander submitted to Chandragupta without any opposition. Chandragupta's accession took place about the year 324 B.C. Even if there is some difference of opinion regarding this date, it is clear from the Greek sources that by 321 B.C. Magadha and the north-western India had passed under the rule of Chandragupta.

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Conquest of Malwa and Kathiawar

There is a certain amount of evidence to show that Gujrat and Kathiawar formed a part of Chandragupta's empire. The Junagarh inscription of Rudradaman dated about 150 A. D. refers to the construction of Lake *Sudarshana* for irrigation purposes by Pushyagupta of Vaishya caste, who ruled this area for Chandragupta Maurya.

The Deccan

Mulnamer, an ancient Tamil writer, on the basis of ancient tradition tells us that Chandragupta had advanced as far as the Podiyil Hill in the Tinnevelley district of Madras. Another Mysore inscription says that Nagakhanda in Shikarpur *Taluka* was also a part of King Chandragupta's empire. Thus Chandragupta's empire included the western coast, and extended to far south in India.

War with Seleucus

Even in the north-west a lot of territory came into the possession of Chandragupta. Alexander had left Philippos as the Satrap to govern the north-western Panjab. In 324 B.C. Philippos was murdered and was succeeded by Endemos. After the death of Alexander even Endemos was recalled. Soon after this area fell into the hands of Chandragupta who was considered the saviour of the mother-country from the foreigners.

After a decade or so, Seleucus, one of the great generals of Alexander came to possess the eastern empire of the Greek conqueror. Naturally he claimed all areas upto the Beas leading to a fight with Chandragupta. Details of this battle are not available, but either he was defeated or he had to purchase peace from Chandragupta Maurya. Seleucus ceded Peropanisadai (Kabul), Aria (Herat), Archosia (Kandahar), and Gedrosia (Baluchistan) in return for 500 elephants. The treaty was sealed by a matrimonial alliance—Chandragupta marrying Seleucus's daughter. Seleucus sent Megasthenes as an envoy to Chandragupta's court.

This addition of four important provinces to Chandragupta's empire greatly enhanced his prestige. He was thus the first Indian king to rule over such a vast empire and his fame spread far and wide. This empire was divided into four big provinces for the sake of administration, *viz.*, Ujjain, Suvarnagiri, Taxila and Magadha itself.

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His Death

About the year 300 B. C. Chandragupta died. According to the Jains, he died by slow starvation after having retired from active life.

Section III—His Administration

The *Arthashastra* and *Indika* of Megasthnes throw a flood of light on the administration of Chandragupta Maurya,

The King

The king was the pivot round which the whole administration revolved. He was not a constitutional ruler. He was an autocrat. He was the source of all law and justice. There was no popular control over the king. But the king did not neglect his duty. The ideal as given in the *Arthashastra* was that the king should place his subjects over his ownself. The same testimony is given by Megasthenes regarding Chandragupta Maurya. He was a benevolent king.

Ministers

The king had a big secretariat to carry on the administration of the country. The *Samahartri* was the minister in charge of the interior and finance. The *Samidhatri* was minister in charge of works. The *douwark* was the chamberlain and the *senapati* was in charge of the army. In addition to them the king was helped by *adhykshas* or suprintendents and *amatyas* (executive heads). We do hear of a *Parishad* (council of advisers) even, although its composition and powers are not very clear. The king does not seem to have been bound by it. The officials were appointed irrespective of caste, colour or creed.

Provincial Administration

The country was divided into four provinces. The north-western regions had their headquarters at Taxila, the western at Ujjain and the southern at Suvarnagiri. The eastern areas were administered from the capital, *i.e.*, Pataliputra. The provinces were governed by viceroys called *'kumars'* who were usually the princes of blood royal. As the forts always played an important role in the defences of those days, the masters of forts or *durgpalas* were very important and they helped the provincial governor in maintaining peace.

There appear to be some smaller provinces as well. These were under the officers called the *Rashtriyas*. The inscription

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of Rudradaman points out to Kathiawar being such a province under Pushyagupta. Then there were districts. These were under the *Sthanikas*. The village administration was run by the *Gopa*, who had several villages under him. There was *Gramini* who with the help of the *panchayat* carried on the village administration. The town administration was on the lines of Pataliputra which as we shall see later had six boards to administer it.

Justice

The king was the fountain of justice. There were judicial officers and tribunals who helped the king in the administration of justice. These courts were presided over by *Mahamatras* and *Rajukas*. There was a separate judge for listening to the cases of the foreigners. The law was very severe. Justice was rough and ready. Of course the witnesses were called, evidence recorded and then judgment delivered. Most of the crimes could be commuted for money payment. Limbs were cut off for serious offences. This severity established perfect peace and security. Megasthenes tells us that in Pataliputra with a population of four lakhs on no day the total theft exceeded to more than 200 drachmas or £ 8.

Military Administration

Chandragupta had built his vast empire on a large and efficient army. He had 60,000 foot-soldiers, 30,000 horsemen, 9,000 elephants and 8,000 chariots. As three or four soldiers could be accommodated in a chariot or on an elephant the total strength of his army can be put at more than a lakh and a half of soldiers. The whole military organisation was managed by a commission of thirty members. These thirty members constituted six boards consisting of five members each. They looked after the infantry, cavalry, chariots, elephants, transport and supplies. The river transport involved the care of ships, boats and bridges. There was no navy.

Military Equipment

The infantry was equipped with swords, javelins, bows, and arrows. The horseman was equipped with two lances and a shield. Each elephant carried three archers while the chariot carried two archers in addition to the driver. Thus essentially it was the bow and arrow fight.

The *Arthashastra* refers to the existence of medical aid in the battlefield.

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Finances and Revenues

The finances were under the *Samahartri*. The state claimed ¼ as its share payable in cash or kind. Taxes were levied on the mines too. Similarly the forests, cattle and roads were taxed. Even a water rate was charged. The state provided irrigation works of huge dimensions and thus planned against the vagaries of nature. The collection and expenditure of the revenues was according to a plan and thus the modern system of budgeting had been adopted.

Spies

There existed a very efficient and organised system of espionage. It served a double purpose. It kept the king informed of the possible conspiracies against him as well as of the feelings and difficulties of the people. Spy system was a very essential feature in the absence of modern press. It also served the purpose of propaganda. These officers were the real public relations officers.

The Municipal Administration

One of the most interesting and enlightened institution of the day was the municipal administration. Megasthenes has thrown some light on it. He talks of the administration of Pataliputra. It can be reasonably presumed without any fear of contradiction that such a system prevailed in other important towns of the state.

The municipal administration was entrusted to a commission consisting of thirty members and divided into six boards with five members on each. Each of these boards had a separate department of its own. while collectively they looked after the whole town as well. The first board was in-charge of the industries and crafts. It regulated the wages and the work. It also saw that inferior quality of stuff was not sold in the market. The second board looked after the foreigners and the casual visitors to the city. These were provided with accommodation and were properly attended. They took care of their property and kept a watch over their movements. The third board looked to the registration of births and deaths. This served the census or the statistical department. The fourth board controlled the sale. It kept a watch over weights and measures and issued licenses to merchants. The fifth one supervised manufacture. The purity of saleable articles was

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their responsibility. The sixth board collected taxes on all the goods sold in the city.

Collectively the commission was responsible for the roads, markets, temples, gardens, hospitals, schools and even harbours.

Section IV—Megasthenes's Account

Society

In addition to the above mentioned account of municipal affairs given by Megasthenes, he tells us a lot about social condition of the country. He says that the society was divided into seven castes. The philosophers were the most important and the king employed them for very responsible jobs. The next caste was of husbandmen, who tilled the soil. The herdsmen and hunters constituted the third caste. The fourth consisting of the artisans and merchants were engaged in industry and commerce. The soldiers formed the fifth. The overseers of various offices belonged to the sixth class. The king's councillors and assessors composed the seventh caste.

Thus instead of the traditional four castes, the Greek envoy gives the list of seven castes. He seems to have mistaken certain professions for separate castes.

Morality

The Greek writer was wonder-struck at the high standard of morality of the man in the street. The men seldom took wine. There were no written contracts. People did not give false evidence. They did not lock their houses. There was no slavery. Polygamy was prevalent.

Pataliputra

Megasthenes gives us a description of the town of Palibothra (Pataliputra). The town was situated on the confluence of the Ganga and the Son. It was 80 stadia (about 9½ miles) long and 15 stadia (about 1½ miles) wide. It had a wall and a ditch 600 feet wide and 60 feet deep. The wall itself had 64 gates and 570 towers. His description of the town management has already been noted.

Other Observations

The ambassador pays high tribute to the king and administration. He had never seen cotton plants or sugarcane and so he talks of vegetable wool and honey without bees. Megasthenes counted sugar candy among the mineral wonders of the world. On grinding it

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between the teeth it tasted "sweeter than figs or honey." He was astonished at two crops in the year. He attributed them to extreme fertility of the soil.

The King and his Palace

Megasthenes was rather struck by the magnificence of King Chandragupta's Court. The king lived with great pomp and show. There was great display of colour and jewellery. He himself appeared in public in a golden palanquin. He was guarded by a band of female bodyguards, who as the later literature points out were usually foreigners. The king was so afraid of plots and conspiracies that he never slept for two consecutive nights in the same room. He seldom appeared in public.

The king's palace was a grand edifice. Mostly built of timber with a fine laid out park with lotus and fish ponds in it, it was one of the most magnificent buildings. It was better than the palace of any other king all over the world.

Section V—Bindusara

About the year 298 B. C. Chandragupta was succeeded by his son Bindusara. It was asserted by the Jains alone that Chandragupta abdicated.

Bindusara ruled for about 25 years. Our information regarding this king is very scanty. One thing is certain that Bindusara preserved the kingdom intact. To maintain such a huge empire speaks highly of this man. The Buddhist tradition says that he had sixteen wives and a hundred sons. What truth there is in this statement, no historian can definitely assert.

The same tradition tells us that Kautilya continued to be the prime minister of the state even during Bindusara's reign and that he conquered sixteen kingdoms (probably of the south). It appears that Kalinga and some districts in the extreme south (Tamilnad and Travancore-Cochin) were the only territories that remained outside the jurisdiction of the Mauryas. Bindusara died in 273 B. C.

Questions

1. What are the chief sources for the history of the Mauryas? *(P. U. 1938, 1946, 1950)*

2. Name the chief authorities of the Mauryan period and write descriptive notes on each. *(P. U, 1939)*

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3. What are the principal sources of information of the Mauryan period ? *(P. U. 1942)*

4. Write a brief note on the character of Chandragupta Maurya. *(P. U. 1944)*

5. Give a short account of Chandragupta Maurya's career and conquests. *(P. U. 1948)*

6. Give a brief account of the civil and military administration of India under Chandragupta Maurya.

7. Who was Megasthenes ? What does he tell us about India ? What is the value of his account ?

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CHAPTER XIV

ASOKA AND BUDDHISM

Section I—Asoka and his Conquests

Asoka is considered by one and all to have been the greatest king that sat on the throne of India. The traditional account given of Asoka by the Buddhists is rather unpleasant. It is said that Asoka was not the eldest son of his father. He had 99 brothers. He was unruly and of bad temperament. He was, therefore, sent as viceroy to Ujjain and later to Taxila. At Taxila he crushed a revolt and thus proved his fighting capacity. Later he was recalled to Patali-putra, while his eldest brother was sent there. When his father died Asoka captured the throne. A struggle ensued between the brothers and Asoka after putting his 99 brothers to death became the king.

Early Life

The truth in this story is a matter of opinion. The Buddhist tradition asserts it is true. The modern historian does not accept it, as we come across his brothers later on. The story of the murder of 99 brothers may have been a pure invention of the Buddhists in order to give a dark background to the spotless Asoka of later days. Yet there are certain facts which cannot be ignored. Bindusara died in 273 B. C. while the actual coronation of Asoka took place in 269 B. C. This delay of four years does point out to some sort of struggle. Moreover the presence of Asoka's brother later on does not necessarily mean that all the brothers were alive. Asoka refers to the 'unseemly behaviour' which had been developed of late and may be this was due to the penitent feeling that he cherished later. The exact element of truth in the story cannot be determined.

Early Reign and Conquests

During the early years of his reign Asoka was mostly busy in carrying on the government in the traditional manner. He went out hunting and merry-making like kings of old. In religion he was probably of Brahmanic faith. During this period he crushed a revolt in Taxila.

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In the eighth year of his coronation he decided to conquer Kalinga, a small maritime state on the eastern coast of India, surrounded on three sides by the dominions of Asoka. The Kalinga people had built up a huge force. Asoka's inscription tells us that in the war that followed 150,000 were captured, 100,000 were killed and many times that number died in the aftermath. This colossal destruction produced a tremendous effect on Asoka. It touched the tender cords of Asoka's heart and he was struck with remorse.

Its Effects

The Kalinga war is the turning point in the history of the East. It was an end of the conquest for Asoka. If war was to bring so much misery to mankind then he must stop it. In future there should be *dharma vijaya* instead of *digvijaya* (*i.e.*, conversion to *dharma* rather than conquest of earth) and there would be *Dharma-ghosha* instead of *Bheri-ghosa, i.e.*, there would be the preaching of the *Dharma* instead of the sounding of the battle-drums.

This was a new approach to life. Never before and never hereafter was a conqueror with all the available sources of a huge empire at his disposal to think in these terms. The break with the past was complete. The sight of the suffering humanity was far too much for the conqueror. He must turn away from it and be no more an instrument of bringing pain to humanity. Instead he must bring relief to the aching human soul by making it lead a good life.

The Extent of Asoka's Dominions

The conquest of Kalinga rounded off Asoka's empire. It now extended from Shahabazgarhi near Peshawar in north west to the Andhras in the south, from Sopara and Girinar in the west to the Dhauli and Jaugada or beyond in the east. Actually his dominions may have been more than the boundaries indicated above, but we are taking a very conservative estimate. These boundaries are indicated by the existence of Asoka's inscriptions in these places. The territories beyond the Khyber Pass including Afghanistan and Baluchistan were frontier states.

The Buddhist tradition asserts that Kashmir, Nepal, Northern and Eastern Bengal, all were included in his dominions. There appears to be hardly any reason not to believe this tradition.

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Section II—Asoka as a Buddhist

Conversion of Asoka

Kalhana, the author of *Raj Tarangini*, says that Asoka formerly was a worshipper of Shiva. He now turned a lay disciple (*upasaka*) of Buddhism. For about a year or so he was not a very zealous Buddhist. After his visit to *Sambodhi* (Bodhigaya) he turned an active Buddhist. Some people think it was due to the influence of Upagupta, a prominent Buddhist monk.

Here again the tradition gives us a different story regarding his conversion. It does not give any credit to the Kalinga war for the conversion of Asoka. It says that Asoka had prepared a replica of the hell with its blazing fires and hot houses. Upagupta was thrown into it but the fires became cold at the touch of Upagupta and finally the king came under the influence of the monk and became a Buddhist. There appears to be very little truth in this story.

Asoka made a deep study of the Buddhist religious books and started exerting himself for the cause of religion and morality.

Pilgrimages

Next he undertook pilgrimages (*dharma-yatra*) instead of pleasure tours (*vihara yatra*). He visited almost all the important places of Buddhist pilgrimage. During these tours he talked to the people at large about morality and piety. By his personal example he drew the attention of the people to religious trips. These tours were taken in his tenth and twentieth years. He visited Bodhigaya, Sarnath, Lumbini gardens, and Kapilvastu. He erected various monuments and pillars in order to commemorate his visits.

Change in the tone of Administration

Another very important and direct result of the Kalinga war was that there was a change in the general tone of administration. Asoka concentrated on humanitarian activities. In the early days he used the *Rajukas* (district officers), *Pradeshikas* (provincial revenue and police officers) and *Yuktas* (clerks) for taking the message of the *dharma* to the masses. These officers were instructed to give the maximum publicity to the moral code of life. They undertook every five years tours of area under their jurisdiction. When he discovered that the work had become rather too much

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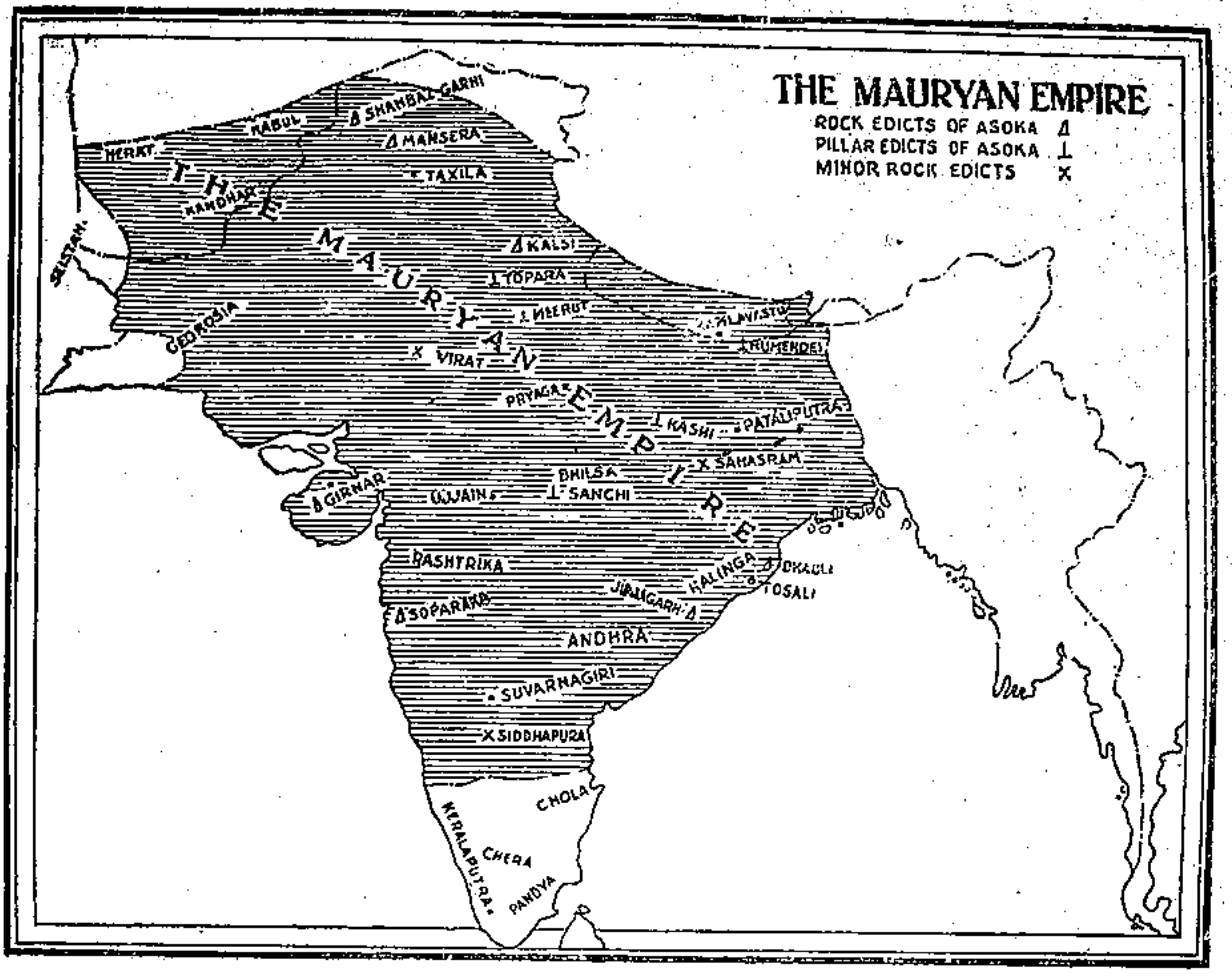
THE MAURYAN EMPIRE
ROCK EDICTS OF ASOKA Δ
PILLAR EDICTS OF ASOKA ⊥
MINOR ROCK EDICTS X
THE MAURYAN EMPIRE
HERAT
KABUL
SHAHBAZ-GARHI
MANSERA
TAXILA
KANDHAR
SEISTAN
KALSI
TOPARA
MEERUT
GEDROSIA
VIRAT
PRYAGA
KASHI
PATALIPUTRA
SAHASRAM
DHILSA
SANCHI
UJJAIN
GIRNAR
RASHTRIKA
KALINGA
DHAULI
TOSALI
SOPARA
JUNAGARH
ANDHRA
SUVARNAGIRI
SIDDHAPURA
CHOLA
KERALAPUTRA
CHERA
PANDYA

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for these officers, he appointed special officers known as the *Dharma Mahamatras* who were put in charge of these activities. He ordered that the moral code and other proclamations of the king be inscribed on pillars and rocks at the most conspicuous places so that they should serve as guide to the subjects and the officers alike.

Missions Abroad

Asoka's inscriptions tell us that the king in persuance of his policy of *Dharma-vijaya* (conquiest by piety) sent missions to almost all the known countries. These missions were singularly successful. Buddhist missionaries were sent to Antiochos II of Syria (261-246 B. C.), Ptolemy II of Egypt (285-247 B.C.), Antigonos of Macedonia (276-239 B. C.), Magas of Cyrene (300-258 B. C.) and Alexander of Corinth (252-244 B. C.). He also sent missionaries to Tamil land and Ceylon. These very Buddhist missions might have influenced Christianity two and a half centuries later. He not only sent his best preachers abroad, but even his son and daughter joined the Buddhist order to carry the message of the lord to the non-believers. The Ceylonese tradition asserts that these missions were even sent to Lower Burma and the East Indies.

Towards the close of his reign Asoka called the third Buddhist Council, in order to settle certain points of disagreement. It met under the presidentship of Tissa at Pataliputra in 246-245 B. C. It drew up rules for the guidance of monks and clarified certain doctrines.

Thus Asoka, by all possible means at his disposal, tried to propagate the message of Gautma amongst the people in India and abroad. He adopted Buddhism as the state religion. Persuasion and personal example were the chief means adopted for propagation of the new faith.

Section III—His Administration

Anta Mahamatras

Asoka inherited from his father and grandfather a well-organised and established form of government. This structure he maintained with slight modifications. His inscriptions reveal that Asoka was the head of a large confederation of states. They were united for imperial purposes alone, and they retained complete independence in their internal administration. *Anta Mahamatras*

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were the wardens of the marches with special jurisdiction over the frontier districts.

Mantri-parishad and Purashas

The *Mantri-parishad* discussed Asoka's verbal orders and urgent works assigned to his officials. The king anxiously awaited their decisions conveyed to him by his reporters. Purashas were personal agents of Asoka. They inspected the actual administration and submitted secret reports.

Rajukas

Rajukas were the ministers. Rock Edict III says that the people (*Jana*) and subjects (*Praja*) were in charge of Rajukas as a child was in that of a nurse with full control. They went out on tours every five years to supervise works of public utility.

Dharma Mahamatras

Dharma Mahamatras were responsible for the execution of the Law of Piety. They looked after the moral standards of the public. They also regulated the royal charities and took care of the holy and the learned. *Stryadhyaksha* Mahamatras looked after the queens, court ladies, maids of honour, maid servants, and also guarded courtezans, prostitutes, actresses etc.

Dutas

Dutas were the imperial agents to the courts of independent rulers. In Rock Edict XIII Asoka desires to achieve the conquest of Dharma in the territories of independent rulers through them.

Justice

There were civil and criminal courts. Criminal offences involved arrest, imprisonment and death. In as many as six different edicts Asoka advises the convict's relatives, friends and neighbours to plead with the judge on his behalf.

Nagaraka and Mahamatras

Nagaraka was in charge of the capital city, and was reprimanded by Asoka for his rash actions. *Mahamatras* were the provincial governors.

Advice to Officers

In Rock Edict VII Asoka strongly advises his officers to exercise self-control, purity of mind, feelings of gratitude and firmness of devotion. Performance of public duty was to be considered as the paying off one's debt.

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Ideal of Kingship

Asoka's ideal of kingship was to serve his people as best as he could. In Kalinga Edict II he says: "All men are my children, and, as I desire that my children should enjoy every kind of prosperity in this world and the next, so I desire the same for all my subjects." He was no longer interested in pleasure tours. He was busy with the state work to the maximum of his capacity. The reporting officers (*prativedikas*) were allowed to disturb him at all hours and at all places. His sole concern was the public welfare.

Beneficent Departments

Roads were built. Banyan trees were planted on both sides. Wells were dug at every half *kos*, resting houses were erected and water-ponds were provided for men and beasts. Hospitals both for men and animals were opened to give comfort to the sick. So keenly was he interested in the welfare of his people that his was indeed a welfare state.

Section IV—His Law of Piety

Its meaning

Asoka was a Buddhist. He openly confessed it in his inscriptions. What he actually propagated with the help of his officers, including the *Dharma-Mahamatras* was not Buddhism. It was the ethical code, almost common to all the great religions of the world. It did not deal with any matters of faith. It was to be lived and practised.

This is clear from the inscriptions of Asoka which did not contain the basic principles of Buddhism. There was no reference to the four Truths or the noble eightfold Path. There was no expounding of the doctrine. There were no persecutions attached to it if the people did not follow it.

The Dhamma Stated

Asoka stated the *Dhamma* in his inscriptions. His rock Edict VII speaks of, (*a*) *Sanyama* or self-control or true conquest, (*b*) *Bhava Shuddhi* or pure thoughts, (*c*) *Kritagyata* or gratitude to elders, and (*d*) *Dridh Bhakti* or firm faith. Pillar Edict II added, (*e*) *Dana* or charity, (*f*) *Daya* or compassion, (*g*) *Satya* or truthfulness, and (*h*) *Shancha* or pure-mind. Pillar Edict VII, while enumerating (*e*) to (*h*) adds one more as (*i*) *moda* or toleration.

Thus the whole thing can be divided into two parts the practical aspect and the doctrinal aspect. In the practical aspect

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the whole thing amounted to, (*a*) the obedience to elders, (*b*) truthfulness, (*c*) due respect to everybody, and (*d*) charity.

By pursuing these four principles Asoka wanted to transform this world full of sorrow into something celestial.

As regards the doctrines they included (*a*) *Ahimsa* or non-injury to living beings, (*b*) Toleration, (*c*) True conquest of mind, and (*d*) Self-exertion.

Measures for spreading it

Asoka's going on pilgrimages and thereby drawing the attention of the public toward religion was an important step in this direction.

Then he started leading a good life. The use of meat in the royal kitchen was decreased to only two peacocks and an antelope a day and later on this also was stopped. He set down a code for protection of animal life. The jungle tribes (aboriginies) were given a better treatment.

The toleration was given a practical shape. Although he himself was a Buddhist, he cherished no hatred against non-Buddhists. His charities flowed to the Buddhists and the non-Buddhists alike. One of his inscriptions speaks of the setting apart of a few villages for the maintenance of the *Ajirikas*. These *Ajirikas* were the followers of *Makkhali Gosala* who was considered by Gautama to be the worst possible teacher.

Section V—Asoka's inscriptions and monuments

General

Asoka's inscriptions number 154. They are probably the earliest inscriptions discovered in India. Most of the inscriptions all over the world have been used as a record of the achievements of various kings. A typical example of the same is Samudragupta's inscription at Allahabad, which describes his conquests. Asoka's inscriptions aimed at conveying to the masses and reminding the officers of the orders of the king. Therefore these were inscribed at places most suitable for the purpose, *i.e.*, high roads and other prominent places.

The medium used for the inscriptions were huge uncut rocks or finely polished monolithic (single piece stone) pillars. In the far flung corners of the empire the rocks were used, while

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the pillars were erected at places near the capital, or where the population was sophisticated.

The language used was not the high flown Sanskrit. Usually it was local *Prakrit*, a form midway between Pali and Sanskrit. It remained the language of the masses for centuries and out of this the modern Indian languages were developed. In areas where this was not spoken, the local form was used as *Kharoshthi* in north-western regions of India. This language was developed from the Qranaic script under the influence of the Persians.

The script used was the Brahmi which was the forerunner of most of the modern Indian scripts.

Groups of Orders

The orders or edicts were issued from time to time and these were inscribed at various places. They conveniently fall into eight groups.

The Minor Rock Edicts

These were probably the first to be issued and can be placed at about 258 or 257 B. C. The first one gives the personal history of Asoka and the second gives the summary of the Law of Piety.

The Bhabru Edict

This was also issued about the same time or slightly later (257 B.C.). It gives some extracts from Buddhist scriptures and shows that Asoka was a Buddhist.

The Fourteen Rock Edicts

They are one of the most important orders ever issued by Asoka. These were issued about 257 or 256 B.C. They have been discovered at Shabbazgarhi, 40 miles north-east of Peshawar, Mansehra, 15 miles from Abbottabad (both the places in N.W.F.P. of Pakistan), Kalsi, near Dehra Dun, Sopara in Thana district of Bombay State, Girnar in Kathiawar, Dauli in Orissa and Jangada in Ganjam district. In certain places some of the edicts are omitted. The final places of the inscriptions indicate that these were put up in fourteen provinces of Asoka. These edicts contain an exposition of principles of government by Asoka. Edict XII records the conquest of Kalinga and the remorse that struck him. Each one of the edicts is devoted to a certain subject.

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The two Kalinga Edicts

These have been discovered in two recensions and can be dated at 256 B. C. They are supplementary to the Fourteen Rock Edicts and define the principles of government for the newly conquered province of Kalinga. They were discovered at Dhauli and Jangada.

The Cave Inscriptions of Barabar

Three important caves were discovered in the Barabar Hills of Gaya District. The cave is considered to be as old as Dashratha of Ramayana fame.* Here lived the *Ajirikas* and some villages were dedicated to them for their maintenance. These inscriptions might have been put there between 257 and 250 B. C.

The two Tarai Pillar Inscriptions.

Next we come to the pillar inscriptions. Asoka had visited several places associated with the life of Buddha. At *Rumindei* (Nepal) and *Nigliva*, (Nepalese Tarai) two pillars were discovered bearing a small inscription commemorating the visit of Asoka to Gautama's place of birth. These were put up about 249 B. C.

The Seven Pillar Edicts

These edicts were issued several years after the issue of Fourteen Rock Edicts. They contain a review of the king's policy and reiterate the *Dhamma* of Asoka. These were discovered at Delhi-Topra, Delhi-Meerut, Allahabad, Lauriya Qraraj, Lauriya Nandangarh, and Rampura (last three in Champaran district of Bihar). The first pillar was originally located in Topra in Ambala District and was shifted to Delhi by Ferozshah Tughlaq. Similarly the second inscription was shifted from Meerut to Delhi. These edicts were issued and pillars erected about the year 243-242 B. C.

The Union Pillar Edicts

The Allahabad pillar contains two minor orders of Asoka condemning the schismatic tendencies of the Buddhist monks. A part of these edicts was also inscribed at a broken pillar at Sanchi and a small pillar at Sarnath.

The Value of these Inscriptions

The value of these inscriptions for a student of Asokan history is very great. They tell us a lot about him and but for these inscriptions Asoka might have remained comparatively unknown figure. True the Buddhist tradition would have given us lot of informa-

*Itihas Parvesh p. 106.

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tion about him, but it could not be so authentic and so unimpeachable.

The location of these inscriptions has told us the extent of his empire. They have given a list of his contemporary kingdoms with which Asoka had cordial relations. They contain interesting chronological details about Asoka. They provide a summary of Asoka's *dhamma* and his tolerance of other religious sects. There are several autobiographical details about Asoka.

Section VI—Asokan and Mauryan Art

General

Megasthanes and other contemporary writers credit Chandragupta Maurya for erecting a large number of buildings. As the material used was essentially wood, all these have absolutely perished. It is only with the reign of Asoka that we come across some really fine specimen of Mauryan art.

The Asokan Art is often called the early Buddhist Art, as it provided inspiration to him.

Asokan monuments stood the ravages of time as he used stone for the medium. These monuments can be divided into three groups (*a*) *Stupas*, (*b*) Pillars, (*c*) Caves.

Stupas

Asoka is credited by Fahien to have built 84,000 stupas and 84,000 monasteries. Although the figures appear to be rather conventional than real, it means that he did build a number of *Stupas*. We remember that the ashes of Gautama were divided into eight parts and *stupas* were built over each one of them by the people who took it away. It is said that the ashes were redistributed over again and stupas were built over them. We have two good examples of the Asokan stupas and they are in a fairly good state of preservation. One of them is at Sanchi in Bhopal state of Madhya Bharat. Here we have a stupa 56 feet high and having a diameter of 110 feet, with a large number of smaller stupas, pillars and temples around it. The other one is at Bharut. The sculpture on the stone railing round the stupas is of a high order.

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Pillars

Asokan pillars have been discovered at several places. These pillars consist of a single piece of sand stone and vary in height from 40 to 50 feet. They are highly polished and the workmanship is superb. According to Dr. Vincent Smith, they deserve, "our attention and admiration as monuments of engineering ability, perfect examples of the highest skill of the stone cutter, and vehicles of a brilliant display of fine art". Dr. R. K. Mookerji regards them as the 'high water mark' of Mauryan art. Besides the foundation and the column they are surmounted with a bell-capital and a symbolic figure of a lion, horse or an elephant. The Sarnath pillar capital is the most beautiful of them all. It has four lions standing back to back facing cardinal points and four racing animal figures with *dharma chakras* in between. These rest on a lotus with inverted petals. Smith, Sir John Marshall and Fergusson, all art critics, have bestowed the highest praise on this capital. Another authority describes it as, "a significant poem on stone conceived by a master mind." Free India has paid homage to this fine piece and its symbolic value by accepting it as the state emblem.

The Caves

The earliest historical caves in India can be attributed to 257 B. C. or the 12th regional year of Asoka. Asokan caves have been discovered at Karna Chopar, Lomas Rashi and Barabar hills. Some of these caves are carved out of a solid rock usually granite. They are plain and hardly possess any artistic decoration on them. They are finely polished. The cutting of these caves out of hard rocks like granite was a no mean achievement for people of these days. As such Asokan art is counted as one of the finest arts of the world. Fahien saw a beautiful palace of Asoka at Pataliputra. This no longer exists. The excavations done at Pataliputra also reveal a number of minor structures of Asokan days.

Persian Influence

The Asokan art was influenced to some extent by the Persian art. It did not borrow much. The Asokan art developed independent tendencies which were purely Indian.

The Asokan art's chief characteristics were accuracy and precision. The art of polishing hard stone was carried to a perfection seldom achieved in the history of stone cutting. The

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technical skill displayed is superb.

Other achievements of Mauriyan period

Besides art and architecture, the Mauryan period's achievements in other fields were by no means ordinary. The movements of huge monoliths and their erection was a remarkable achievement. The composition of the edicts of Asoka speak highly of the literary achievements of the age. Moreover these inscriptions were essentially meant to be read by the masses and hence they indicate a fairly high percentage of literacy.

Owing to the uncertainty of chronology in Indian literature it becomes almost impossible to ascribe any literary works to this age. *Arthashastra* of Chanakya, *Kalpasutra* of Bhadrabahu and the *Katha-Vathu* a work on Buddhist philosophy, are attributed to the Mauryan age. Similarly it is evident that parts of *Mahabharata* and *Ramayana* were composed in this age, but their authorship and preciseness is not clear. The age in which the attention of the public was drawn to intense religious and moral activity could not have been barren of literary activity.

Section VII—Character and Estimate of Asoka

Character

Asoka is one of the most unique personalities of Indian History. His achievements in the field of conquest are not so important, but as an apostle of peace he outshines almost every other king and saint of the world. He was a saint-sovereign of India. He placed all the resources of his empire at the disposal of Buddhism and made it a world religion out of an ordinary sect. In fact it is very difficult to say, whether Buddhism owes more to Asoka or to Gautama. Above all he placed greater stress on moral values of life rather than on material values.

Thus by his personal example, pilgrimages, edicts and foreign missions he served Buddhism ; while by his humanitarian activities, ethical code and selfless devotion he served humanity. He was really a great king. He was untiring in his efforts to alleviate the sufferings of the teaming millions. He realized as few kings ever did that the greatness of a king lay in the moral and material progress of his subjects and not in military conquests. By his policy of peaceful contacts with the world he opened the way for Indian trade and laid the foundations of the Indian colonial empire.

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Asoka's place in History

Almost all students of Asokan history have tried to compare him with one or the other kings and saints of the world. He has been compared with Alexander, Ceasar, Akbar, Napolean, Constantine, Charlmague and even St. Paul. None of these comparisons is fair or proper. Asoka was an institution by himself. None of these great kings or monks would come anywhere near him in greatness or humility. His conquests by peaceful methods were superior to the conquests of any of the world-conquerors. Their conquests did not outlive their lives, but the name of Asoka was once revered by one and all from the Volga to Ceylon and from Hindukush to Japan. He was a builder of human values, all that is noble and sublime in life. Life would not be worth living if the values for which Asoka strived were ignored.

Scholars have bestowed the highest compliments on him. "Amidst the tens and thousands of names and monarchs that crowd the columns of history," writes H. G. Wells, an English Noble Laureate, "the name of Asoka shines, and shines alone like a star." Could greater compliment be paid by a student of world history ?

Asoka's tolerance was superb. He was a Buddhist by faith, but patronised other religions also, and showed as much respect for them as anybody could do. The very epithet used by him, *devanampriya* (one who is dear to gods) suggests that he was as much a Hindu as he was a Buddhist. In fact he was cosmopolitan in outlook. His tolerance had no ulterior motives. Constantine, the Roman Emperor, followed a policy of religious tolerance as a political game. Akbar was influenced by the presence of his Hindu wives and was moved by his dynastic interests. Asoka had no such motives. He was a genuine lover of humanity, born of large heartedness or an enlightened soul.

Section VIII—Later Mauryas and the Downfall of the Empire

Successors of Asoka

In a world which only acknowledges brute force, the achievements of Asoka remained more or less personal. As soon as he died, the disintegration started.

The chronology of the successors of Asoka is not clear from contemporary sources. The Brahmanical traditions

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(Purasias), the Buddhist and the Jain traditions all differ a great deal from each other. Thus Kunala, Jaluka, Mahendra and Tivara are mentioned as his sons, while Dashratha and Samprati are mentioned as his grandsons.

In the absence of any definite information scholars are of the opinion that after the death of Asoka his empire was divided amongst his sons, one of whom became the king of home provinces and another became independent in the north-west including Kashmir. Samprati is mentioned as master of Patali-putra and Ujjain and as a great patron of Jainism.

The last of the flock was Brihadratha. He was murdered by his commander Pushymitra, who laid the foundations of the Shunga dynasty.

Causes of the Downfall of the Mauryas

Many causes contributed to the downfall of the Mauryas. Asoka's responsibility is admitted by all. His concentrating the state interest on moral and spiritual uplift led to a neglect of the other aspects of administration. Although these forces did not manifest themselves in his lifetime, yet they became clear soon after his death. There was an alround degeneration and the superstructure built by Chandragupta, his son and grandson crumbled to dust in a short time.

Neglect of Defence

The most important factor for the maintenance of an empire is its defence. Asoka's Buddhist policy led to the neglect of defences. The money which should have been spent on the army was expended on religious and humanitarian activities. Hence revolts started soon after Asoka's death.

Pacific Policy of Asoka,

Dr. Bhankarkar accuses Asoka for his pacific policy which was the direct cause of the downfall of the empire. It softened the martial spirit of the people and weakened their sense of patriotism.

Brahmanical revival

M. M. Harparshad Shastri thinks that the Buddhist policy of Asoka made the Brahmans his enemy and they all combined to spread hatred amongst the masses. That Pushymitra, the Shunga, called himself the defender of Brahmanism does lend support to this view. However, scholars like Dr. Roychoudhri do not see eye to eye with this view.

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Weak Successors

The student of history by looking into the traditions, however, feels that the weak successors of Asoka were the major cause of the downfall. That there was a division of the empire soon after Asoka is clear and this alone must have been the greatest cause. The division of any empire has always led to the destruction of the empire. This is a universal truth in history.

Foreign Invasions

Foreign invasions have as much to do with the downfall as anything else. The foreign invaders consisting of Indo-Bactrian, Indo-Scythians and Indo-Parthians destroyed the Indian power in the north-west. The rise of Andhras in the south caused another drain on the Mauryan empire. All these factors combined to sap the life-blood out of the Mauryan empire.

Thus with a short history of only 137 years the Mauryas disappeared from the map of Indian politics.

Questions

1. Write a critical note on Asoka as a man and monarch. *(P. U. 1937)*
2. What is in your opinion, the debt which the modern world owes to Asoka. *(P. U. 1937)*
3. Give an estimate of the achievements of Asoka. What place does he occupy in the history of Buddhism and why ? *(P. U. 1939)*
4. Give a brief account of the Mauryan administration.
5. Asoka has been acclaimed as one of the greatest monarchs of the world. What is the justification of this assertion ? *(P. U. 1943)*
6. 'Asoka is one of the greatest monarchs in History.' Discuss the statement. *(P. U. 1947)*
7. Asoka's victories were victories of peace and not of war. Discuss. *(Sup. 1949)*
8. Write a brief account of the administrative system of Mauryas. *(P. U. 1949)*
9. Give your estimate of the character and achievements of Asoka. *(1950)*
10. Describe briefly the Mauryan system of administration and show in what respects it differed from that of the Guptas. *(1951)*
11. Discuss Asoka's claim to greatness. *(Sup. 1951)*

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CHAPTER XV

SHUNGAS, KANVAS & ANDHRAS

Section I—Shungas

Introduction

The two centuries after the Mauryan rule are comparatively darker chapters of history. The information is quite scanty and the details disputable. The whole of India was split up into a number of kingdoms which were often at war with one another. The fortunes of these dynasties fluctuated a great deal. The immediate successors of the Mauryas in Pataliputra were the Shungas.

Sources of their history

(*i*) The most important source of their history is the *Puranas*. Many notable scholars have accepted their chronology as given in the *Puranas*.

(*ii*) The *Buddhist tradition* has also made a note of the Shungas especially because of the Brahmanical revival under them.

(*iii*) *Patanjali's Mahabhashya* is a book on grammar, but the casual references in it are considered to be absolutey reliable as Patanjali was a contemporary of Pushyamitra, the founder of the dynasty.

(*iv*) *Later Sanskrit Literature.* The *Malrikagnimitram* of Kalidasa and *Shri Harshacharitra* of Bana Bhatta have preserved some stories of the Kanvas, which should be quite reliable.

(*v*) *Inscriptions.* We have come across two important contemporary inscriptions which though not actually belonging to the Shungas tell us about them indirectly. One of them is the Hathigumpha inscription of Kharavela and the other is Besanagar inscription.

(*vi*) *Skabo.* This Greek writer gives us information regarding the invasion of Menemder of Sialkot in the second century B. C.

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(*vii*) Some coins bearing *mitra* names have been discovered in Rohilkhand area. Except for Agnimitra other names are not traceable in Puranic literature. Hence it is not very certain that these *Mitra* coins refer to the Shungas.

Founding of the Dynasty

The later years of the Mauryas were marked by the disintegration of the Mauryan empire. In the south Andhras or Satovahanas became independent. Kalinga broke away under the Chetas. In the north-west Antiochos the Great of Syria had penetrated into the Kabul Valley. Demetrios made extensive conquests in the lower Indus regions and the Panjab.

Under these circumstances the Mauryan kings lost all respect. Brihadratha the last of the Mauryas was invited by Pushyamitra, his commander-in-chief, to inspect an army review and there in the face of all those soldiers killed him in 184 B. C. and himself became the king, presumably with the consent of his soldiers.

The Origin of Shungas

Various views have been put forth as to their origin. The presence of the word *Mitra* (Mitra of the Iranians ?) has led scholars like V. A. Smith to assert that they were of Iranian origin. Mention of Bainbaha as the progenitor of the family makes people connect Bimbisara with them. Panini the great Sanskrit Grammarian suggest that they were Bharadwaja Brahmans while Taranath also refers to them as Brahmana kings. The latter view is considered to be more reliable.

Pushyamitra

Pushyamitra was a vigorous ruler and soon made his mark in the field of conquest. Although his empire was not as big as that of Asoka or Chandragupta, yet it was fairly extensive. The Western Punjab was beyond his dominions. Although Taranath makes us believe that Jullundur and Sakala (Sialkot) were under him, yet these are disputable points. In the south, the Narbada formed his boundary. To the west he had Vidisa (Bhilsa) in eastern Malwa, under him.

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Conquest of Vidarbha

Vidisa was governed by his son Agnimitra. His neighbour, Yajnasena the king of Vidarbha, would not submit to the demands of Agnimitra. In 170 B. C. a battle followed in which Yajnasena was defeated. Besides ceding a part of his state, Yajnasena also accepted Pushyamitra as his overlord.

Fight against the Yavanas

At the time Pushyamitra became the king the *Yavanas* or Greeks were knocking at the gates of India. These Greeks were making great advances. Patanjali makes us believe that they had besieged Saketa (Ayodhya) and Madhyamika, Nagari near Chittor, and had threatened even Pataliputra. The Greeks were defeated and forced to retire. According to Kalidasa the battle was fought on the banks of the *Sindhu* river which scholars identify with a small river in Bundelkhand.

Fight with Kharavela

The Hathigumpha inscription of Kharavela tells us that Kharavela the king of Kalinga humbled the pride of Magadhan king Brihaspetimitra. Several scholars assert that this was the same as Pushyamitra. This assertion does not seem to hold good, as a person defeated and humbled by so near a neighbour as the king of Kalinga would not have dared perform a double *Asvamedha* sacrifice.

The Horse Sacrifice

The victories over Vidarbha and the *Yavanas* were celebrated by the performance of two horse-sacrifices. Vasumitra, the king Pushyamitra's grandson, followed the horse. It is said that its smooth passage was checked by the *Yavanas* who were defeated.

Thus Pushyamitra tried to revive the glory of the old Hindu kings by the performance of these sacrifices and he was successful to a large extent. The Buddhist tradition declares him a persecutor of the Buddhists, but several Buddhist structures of the age do not let us accept the statement at its face value.

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Section II—Pushyamitra's successors and Kanvas

Pushyamitras' Successors

The dynastic lists in the Puranas allot about 112 years, *i.e.*, from 184 B. C. to 73 B. C. During this period ten kings occupied the throne. Out of this lot only the names of Agnimitra, Vasumitra, Bhaga and Devabhuti are important. Some of them carried on struggle against the Greeks. The last king Devabhuti was too weak to inspire public confidence, and his minister Vasudeva murdered him about 73 B. C. Pushyamitra's successors were as much responsible for the Hindu revival as Pushyamitra himself. We have some interesting monuments of the age which point out to the great progress in the field of art. The rock cut caves of the period at Karli near Poona are one of the finest examples of this art.

The Kanvas

The posterity has made a very little note of this dynasty. Excepting for the fact that Vasudeva the founder of this dynasty—murdered his master and became the king, nothing much was known about him. The *Puranas* allot a period of forty-nine years divided amongst four kings of this dynasty. The last of the dynasty was Susarmana who was overthrown by the Andhras. During this short period of forty-nine years there was hardly any stable government or political security. The Kanvas professed the Brahmanical faith.

Section III—The Andhras or Satavahanas

(280 B. C. to 236 A. D.)

Sources of History

Most of the sources whichare available for the story of the Shungas give us information regarding the Andhras as well. In addition we have a lot of coins of this period. The *Matsya Purana* gives us their story. There are plenty of inscriptions which corroborate the evidence of the Puranas and the coins.

The Origin

Simuba who broke away from the Mauryan yoke is mentioned as an Andhra. The contemporary records use the word Satavahanas or Satirahanas. Thus all these three names are synonyms. The word

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Andhra is today used to indicate that group of South Indian people who speak Talagu today. The decision to create an Andhra State on the 1st of October, 1953, has made the study of their history all the more important and interesting. In history this dynasty is considered to be of Brahman origin and may have had a tinge of *Naga* blood in them. This view is held by scholars like Dr. Roychaudhry. The Andhras are ancient people. In the days of Megasthenes they are mentioned as an important people with a large army. During Asoka's reign they occupied the territory lying between the Krishna and the Godavari.

Simuka

There are conflicting accounts regarding the length of this dynasty's rule and the number and names of the kings. Some believe that the dynasty began about 220 B.C. and ruled for about 450 years with 30 kings. Others suggest 300 years and 19 kings. All agree that Simuka the founder came to the throne after Kanvas. Hence the tradition giving 300 years as the period of Andhra rule is more reliable. This also agrees with some other details which cannot be reconciled if the beginning of the dynasty is accepted at 220 B.C. Simuka overthrew Susharmana the last of the Kanvas.

Kanha

Simuka was succeeded by his younger brother *Kanha* or Krishna. It was he who extended the boundaries of the state in the south and became the master of *Dakshimapatha*.

Sri Satakarni

After a rule of 18 years Kanha died and was succeeded by Sri Satakarni, the son of Simuka. It was this king who raised the status of the family. An inscription of his queen Naganika, at Navaghat pass describes him as a contemporary of Kharavela. He is also said to have performed two horse-sacrifices. His empire comprised Maharashtra, Malwa and the deltas of Godavari and Krishna. His capital was Pratishthana or modern Paitan in Hyderabad State.

Gautamiputra Satakarni

Sri Satakarni's successors were comparatively obscure. In the second century A. D. one Gautamiputra Satakarni came to the throne. He retrieved the old glory of the family. In 106 A. D. he inflicted a crushing defeat on the Sakas of Malwa and Kathiawar.

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The Nasik inscription gives us details of the achievements of this great king. His empire included Maharashtra, Kathiawar, Berar, Western Rajputana and even Central Gujrat.

Pulumayi

Gautamiputra was succeeded by his son Pulumayi. He spent most of his time in fighting with Rudradaman the Saka Chief. Rudradaman defeated him twice and took away a large slice of his empire, although Pulumayi was his son-in-law. He died in 155 A. D.

Yajna Sri

The most important of the later Andhras was Yajna Sri who ruled from 165 to 195 A. D. His inscriptions and coins have been recovered from an extensive area extending from the Bay of Bengal to the Arabian Sea. Probably he had dominions beyond the seas even, presumably in Malaya Archipelago.

After his death the Andhra empire started going down and the weak successors could not check the disruptive forces and soon the empire fell to pieces.

Section IV—Andhran culture and civilization

Society

Various inscriptions and other contemporary records throw a flood of light on the social conditions of the period. The society was divided into four groups. The highest class consisted of *Maharathis, Mahasenapatis*, and *Mahabhojas*, who were feudal lords and had vast jagirs under them. The second class consisted of officials like *Amatyas, Mahamatras* and *Bhandagarikas*, and non-officials like *Shresthis*. In the third group were included *Lekhakas* (clerks), physicians, farmers and goldsmiths. The blacksmiths, carpenters, fishermen and gardners, etc., belonged to the fourth class of the society.

The most important feature of the society seemed to have been the metronymic titles, or titles derived from one's mother adopted by various Andhra kings. It is difficult to say whether it was under the influence of matriarchal families of the Malabar coast people or whether they had a tinge of such blood in them.

The Economic conditions

The stable government seems to have contributed a lot towards the economic prosperity of the Andhras. Trade and industry flourished. Both inland and foreign trade was brisk. Broach and

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Bassien were active ports and several important trade centres like Parithan and Tagara existed. In the economic field corporate life had been developed in the form of guilds. These guilds managed their own particular industry or trade and often acted as bankers to their members. They played a very important role in the economic set up of things. Their traditional number was put down at 18, but it generally went up to 27. They refer to architects, blacksmiths, goldsmiths, barbers, washermen, perfumers and traders, etc. The guilds possessed considerable executive and judicial authority over their members.

Religions

The Andhra kings were Brahmans by faith and as such revived the old religion. Various inscriptions point out that they performed sacrifices and offered gifts. They were champions of Brahmanism. Their orthodoxy did not mean any persecution of the non-believers. Numerous gifts made to the Buddhists and the number of Buddhist caves and monuments built by them speak for their toleration and enlightenment.

Political

The Andhra kings did not interfere very much with the life of a man in the street. They were enlightened people. They were content with the title of a *raja* and would associate their womenfolk with their administration. Some of the feudal lords were quite powerful and even struck coins in their own name. The army was paid by the *jagir* system. This system according to modern standards cannot be called good, but it worked efficiently in those days.

Literature and Art

The Andhra kings were patrons of Prakrit. The literature produced was not of a high order as it was in Sanskrit ; but this patronage led to the development of provincial languages. Two of the most important books of the time were the *Sapta-Shataka* by Hala and the *Brihat-Katha.*

They attained a high degree of efficiency in the field of art. Beautiful caves carved out of single pieces of rocks speak for the patience and artistic attainments of the people. The paintings on the walls of these caves were the beginning of an art, the culmination of which was reached in the fresco of Ajanta.

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Questions

1. Write a short account of the achievements of Pushyamitra, the Shunga.
2. Give an account of the rise and fall of the Andhras.
3. Describe the condition of Southern India under Satavahanas.
4. Write short notes on :—
   (*i*) Kharavela.
   (*ii*) Sri Satakarni.
   (*iii*) Gautamiputra Satakarni.

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Chapter XVI

INDO-BACTRIANS, INDO-PARTHIANS AND THE INDO-SCYTHIANS

Section I—Indo-Bactrians

Sources

Coins form the most important and reliable sources of their history. Very few inscriptions or evidence in contemporary Greek literature is available for the history of these Greek kings. Only Strabo and Plutarch mention facts about them. The *Gargi-Sanhita*, a Sanskrit work on astronomy helps us a bit, so does Taranath, the Tibetan historian.

A little can be gleaned from the Buddhist traditions as well. *Malindapanha* or the Questions of Menander is one of the most important books in Buddhist literature and it gives us some references of the contemporary political activity.

Their origin

The Greeks who came to conquer the north-western regions of India belonged to Bactria and Parthia. Bactria or Balkh was one of the earlist Aryan settlements. It had been occupied by Alexander and remained with Seleukoid dynasty for some time. About 250 B. C. Diodotus, the governor of Bactria became independent. Parthia was another neighbouring province which also broke away from the Syrian empire and became independent.

Early Indo-Bactrians

It was Diodotus who founded the new dynasty now called by the historians as Indo-Bactrian. He and his two immediate successors Diodotus II and Enthydemos were more busy in the work of consolidation and hence did not take up the work of conquests very seriously. It was the next ruler Demetrius (200-175 B. C.) who undertook the conquest of India. He left one of his sons in charge of Bactria, and with his two generals, Menander and his own brother Appollodotus, marched to India. He conquered Afghanistan. To the Greeks the main idea of the Mauryan Empire was that of the territory in northern India dominated

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by three capital cities, Pataliputra, Taxila and Ujjain. Demetrius aimed at occupying all these three places. At the time of the invasion the Greeks were treated by Buddhists of the North-West Frontier Province and the Panjab not as invaders but as friends and saviours from Hindu rule, and the Sibi tribe gave them even military help, Demetrius took Gandhara with its capital Pushkalavati situated at the junction of the Swat and Kabul rivers, crossed the Indus and seized Taxila where he established his base.

Menander was sent towards Pataliputra. He took Sialkot, Mathura, Panchala, Oudh and Pataliputra. Demetrius and Apollodotus marched to Sind. Apollodotus advanced to Gujrat and Kathiawar. He occupied Broach, Ujjain and Chittor. Demetrius returned home, Apollodotus appears to have died about this time.

In the absence of Demetrius, Menander became king. He consolidated his position by marrying Demetrius's daughter. Agathocleia is one of those few foreign kings whose memory is so sacred to the Buddhists. He established his capital Sagala about the year 160 B. C., and ruled for forty years *i.e.*, 120 B. C. He is considered to be a contemporary of Pushyamitra.

Menander was a great conqueror. The wide extent of his coins, which have been discovered from Afghanistan, the whole of the Panjab and even further east, speaks for the strength of his aims.

The long peaceful rule of this great king brought prosperity to his people. Sagala became a very important centre of learning and art. Patanjali is all praise for this town. It became a great centre of trade and commerce and vied in magnificence with Pataliputra of old.

His Religion

The *Malinda Panha* (or the Questions of Malinda) gives us the story of the conversion of Menander to Buddhism. He had a long discussion with Nagasen and after the latter had fully satisfied him, he became a Buddhist. He became a great patron of Buddhism. The stories of his justice became legends and he was respected by one and all. Like the ashes of Gautama, his ashes also were divided amongst the representatives of various states and stupas were erected over them.

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His Successors

Amongst his successors the best known is Antialkidas of Taxila. Soon the hold of the Greeks over the north-western districts of India began to give way.

Indo-Scythians and Indo-Parthians

The Greeks in India were supplanted by three main groups of foreign conquerors. These were the Scythians or Sakas, the Parthians or Pahalwas, and the Yueh-Chis or Kushans.

The Sakas

The Sakas were driven out by the Yue-Chis from their home in Central Asia. After a good deal of tossing from place to place, they winded their way down the Indus Valley and settled in Western India. On the way they had colonised Sakas Thana or modern Siestan ; while migrating Sakas and Parthians got mixed up, and came to be called Saka-Parthians or Indo-Parthians. Greek language and titles were adopted by them for their coins.

Mithradates I

The first important king of this family whose name is connected with Indian history is Mithradates I. His date is still a matter of dispute. There are scholars who think he ruled from 171-136 B. C. while others would put his rule from 123-88 B. C. He occupied a large slice of the Indo-Bactrian empire in India.

Gandopharnes

His successors, Mauez, Mithradates II, Azes I and Azes II continued to exist amongst various viscissitudes. Gandopharnes was the most famous king of this group. His coins and inscriptions help us to fix his reign between 20-45 A. D. He was essentially a north-western king, having Afghanistan. Kandahar and Taxila under him. His name is associated with St. Thomas, the earliest Christian missionary to India. He is said to have converted the king and finally went on to South-India (Travancore and Cochin) where he preached Christianity. The story appears to be a myth.

Fall of the Indo-Parthians

Soon after the death of Gandopharnes there was a weakening of the control and a regular confusion ensued. This enabled the Kushans easily to conquer this area and the Indo-Parthians ceased to be a power. These Saka kings with their capital at Taxila are known in history as northern Satraps. One of the Saka Satraps shifted to Mathura and founded a dynasty there. Raju-

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vula is mentioned as one belonging to this dynasty. Except for the name of his son, not much is known about this family.

The Western Satraps

Another branch was able to build an important State in western India comprising Saurashtra, a part of Maharashtra and Malwa. These were known as Western Satraps. The use of the word Satrap by these kings indicates that at one time they were just governors.

Satraps of Maharashtra

Amongst the Western Satraps there were two houses, one of them the house of Bhumaka ruled in Maharashtra and the other in Malwa at Ujjain. Amongst these Satraps the most important one was Nahapana who extended his dominions at the expense of the Andhras. There is a suggestion that the Saka era beginning in 78 A.D. was started by this house. As for the date of Nahapana there is a difference of opinion, and it is difficult to assign any definite date to him.

The Satraps of Ujjain

The most important of these Satraps were those of Ujjain. Chashtana was the founder of this dynasty. He lived about 120 A. D. and might have owed allegiance to the Kushan kings. Rudradaman (120-150 A. D.) was the most important of the family. He was the grandson of Chashtana.

Rudradaman and his Achievements

The Girinar Rock Inscription of this great king gives us information regarding his achievements. Possibly the fortunes of the family had been eclipsed by the Andhra kings. Even Rudradaman had married his daughter to one of these kings, but this did not prevent him from inflicting a defeat upon his son-in-law, and thus retrieving his family position. There is a difference of opinion amongst the scholars as to whether this Andhra prince was Gautamiputra Satakarni or Pulumayi.

The inscription describes his kingdom consisting of Malwa, Kathiawar, Gujrat, Cutch, Marwar, North Konkan and the Lower Indus Valley. The Yandhevas of Sonepat (near Delhi) were also defeated by him.

His achievements in the arts of peace were superior. He was a great scholar, having studied polity, grammar, logic and

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music. He also repaired the lake Sudarshana in order to solve the vagaries of the rain-god. There was no forced labour and no extra taxes. He was a popular king.

The fall of Satraps

With the death of this great king the Satrapa empire lost a great deal of its old grandeur, but the family continued. With the rise of the Guptas the whole empire disappeared from the political map of India.

Questions

1. Give some account of the Indo-Greek and Indo-Parthian dynasties of India. *(P.U. 1941)*

2. Write what you know about Demetrius and Menander.

3. Who were the Scythians? What do you know about the Western Satraps of Ujjain?

4. Describe the work and achievements of Gandopharnes and Rundradaman.

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CHAPTER XVII

THE KUSHANS

Section I—Sources and Early History

Sources

It is one of the darkest chapters of Indian history so far as dates and recorded information is concerned. Some coins have come down to us. These and a few unimportant inscriptions are all that we can fall back upon for the sources of the period. There are a few references to this dynasty in Chinese history as well. The largest sources is the Indian literature both religious and secular which tells us about Kanishka and his achievements. Thus Ashvaghosa's works, *Buddhacharitra* and *Saundernanda* are counted amongst the best of Sanskrit literature, throwing light on this age. Similarly the works of Nagarjuna, Vasumitra, and Ehoraka give us a peep into the greatness of the period.

We have also recovered a very large number of art pieces and monuments of this age. They form a landmark in the history of Indian art. None of them can give us a reliable date for the various kings of this dynasty and the age of Kanishka is still the subject of historical research.

Early History

In north-west China there lived a nomadic people called Yuch-chis. In the second century B. C. (about 165 B. C.) they were driven out of their homes by the Huns. They moved south-west. They in their turn drove away the Sakas from Siestan. Sakas then moved to India where they founded new states, whose history we have already traced.

The Yuch-chis came into contact with the Greek culture, lost their nomadic habits and adopted this culture with slight modifications. Here these people were split up into five tribes. One of them was called the Kushans. Towards the beginning of the Christian era, this tribe had become the most important one. There are scholars who believe that the Kushans were

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Sakas, but the Chinese history refers to them as Yuch-chis.

Kujala Kadphises

The task of this unification and carving out an important state was done by Kujala Kadphises or Kadphises I. He occupied Kabul, Kandhar and Afghanistan. There is reason to believe that he succeeded to a portion of the empire of Gandopharnes and he became master of Taxila.

Vima Kadphises

The Chinese tradition refers to Vima Kadphises to be responsible for the conquest of Indian interior. He is said to have ruled it with the help of a governor. His beautiful coins of pure gold point out to the prosperity of his empire. On these coins appear the titles *Mahishvara*, and *Shahan-i-Shah* or the Great Lord and the 'King of kings'.

Vima was a great conqueror. In the north-west his empire extended beyond the Hindukush ; in the east it touched Banaras and in the south went up to the Narbada. He defeated the Sakas Satraps in western India.

The Chinese Expedition

The Chinese history records that a Kushan king demanded the hand of a princess from the Chinese Emperor. The Chinese Emperor refused. At this the Kushan king attacked China. Pan-Chao the Chinese Commander was too strong and he defeated the Kushan king who was forced to sign a humiliating treaty and pay an annual tribute. This event took place about the year 90 A. D. Scholars are of opinion that it was none else but Vima. Another section of these scholars thinks it was Kanishka.

Envoy to Rome

The Roman history records that ambassadors were sent by Indian kings to the Roman Emperor Trajan (98-117 A. D.). It is not certain whether it was Vima or Kanishka. It points out to the fact that the Kushans had cordial relations with the Roman emperors.

The dates of two Kodphises and the Saka Era

We have a very popular era in India known as Saka era beginning in 78 A. D. Some scholars ascribe it to Vima, others to Kanishka and a few else to other kings of India. There is every reason to believe that it was founded by the Kushans. Then

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the question arises who founded it. We have scholars assigning 25=40 A. D. to Kujala, 40-78 A. D. to Vima and 78-120 A. D. to Kanishka. According to this the Chinese expedition, the sending of the envoy to Rome and the establishment of the Saka era all fall in the reign of Kanishka. Another group of scholars ascribe 40-78 A. D, to Kujala, 78-110 or 120 A. D. to Vima and 120-160 A. D. to Kanishka. As there are most points we would let them alone.

Section II—Kanishka and his Achievements

His Conquests

The most important of the Kushans was Kanishka. He was great both in war and peace. During the early part of his career as a king, he conquered Kashmir. The Chinese and Tibetan tradition makes us believe that he successfully waged war against Saketa and Pataliputra. He even conquered the Pahalva king and Sakas Satraps. The height of his achievements was reached when he waged a war against China. By this time Pan Chao, who had defeated the Kushans previously was dead and Kanishka with a large army avenged the previous defeat. As a result of this he annexed Tashkand, Khotan and Yarkand. Some Chinese hostages are also mentioned at his court.

The Extent of his Empire

Kanishka's empire assumed huge dimensions, comprising areas lying beyond the Pamirs and the Hindu-kush areas which had never been and have never been thereafter conquered by any Indian king. He is mentioned in a number of inscriptions as the conqueror of northern India extending from Peshawar to Banaras.

His Religion

Kanishka's predecessor Vima was a worshipper of Shiva. His own earlier coins indicate that he showed respect for the Hindu, Buddhist, Greek and the Persian deities. It may well have been a loose form of Zoroasterianism. But later on he adopted Buddhism.

After his conversion, Kanishka devoted almost his entire energy to the spreading of Buddhism. During the last three centuries the Buddhism had been losing ground before the old Brahmanism. Most of the kings of the minor dynasties which ruled India after the fall of the Mauryas professed the Brahmanic

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faith. It was therefore a herculean task for Kanishka to undertake the spread of Buddhism.

The monks during these last centuries had adopted several Brahmanical practices, which according to the old standards were heretical. In order to settle these disputes Kanishka convened the Fourth Buddhist Council at Kundalvana near Srinagar in Kashmir. To this council flocked more than five hundred monks headed by such intellectual giants as Nagarjuna, Ashvaghosha and Vasumitra. The council met under the chairmanship of Vasumitra. After eighteen days of deliberations, they took decisions in favour of the new type of Buddhism called the Mahayan or the Greater Vehicle. The decisions were inscribed on copper plates. They were buried in mound and a perchance discovery would settle many an important detail of the issue. Most of these decisions were also incorporated in *Mahavibhasha* which is considered to be the Encyclopedia of Buddhism. Like Asoka he built a large number of new monasteries and repaired the old ones. Money grants were made to them for their upkeep. Missions were sent abroad, especially beyond the Pamirs. The spreading of Buddhism in China and Japan must have been due to this activity of Kanishka. Kanishka's services to Buddhism were in no way inferior to those of Asoka. He is called the second Asoka.

Patron of Art and Learning

Besides this Kanishka was a great patron of art and learning. He is said to have erected a large number of buildings including monasteries. At Peshawar, his capital, he built a huge tower four hundred feet high over the relics of Buddha. As the structure was essentially of wood it was destroyed easily. He is said to have built some towns too. Kanishka-pura in Kashmere and that part of Taxila which is now known as Sirsukh were built by him.

The story of sculpture under him is the most fascinating one. Four different schools of sculpture almost uninfluenced by one another were developed. The Sarnath, Mathura, Amaravati and the Gandhara area became the centres of four different styles of sculpture. Of these the Gandhara School of Art produced some of the finest specimens of Indian sculpture

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The life-size headless statue of Kanishka discovered at Mathura speaks amply for the Mathura–School of Sculpture. Many other specimens of this school have been discovered near Mathura. The beautiful and elaborate base reliefs at Amaravati speak creditably of this unique art. The statues at Sarnath although resembling to some extent the Mathura school, speak for themselves. Thus during the reign of Kanishka and his successors chisels and hammers were busy carving the finest pieces of art, out of lifeless stone.

Paishupura, The Capital

The capital of his vast empire was at Paishupura or modern Peshawar. This town was adorned by the erection of a large number of buildings by Kanishka. There was a ground monastery. A very beautiful golden casket containing a few bones was discovered from near Peshawar a few years ago. An inscription on it mentions the name of a Greek architect employed by Kanishka for his buildings. It was under the supervision of this architect that the stupa which housed this casket was built.

Men of Learning

Kanishka's court became a heaven for scholars. Many notable men of learning lived at his court. Ashvaghosha was a monk, philosopher, musician and a superb poet. Mahayanism owes a lot to him. His two epics *Buddhacharitam* and *Saundarnandam* in Sanskrit are well known. They are superb from the point of view of imagery and simplicity of language. He also wrote *Sutralankara* and *Vajrasuchi*, besides some other works on Mahayana Buddhism. *Nagarguna* was another great scholar of the age. Master of the *Vedas* and other Brahmanical literature, he was soon converted to Buddhism. His two works *Sotasahasrika* and *Madhyamika Sutra* are considered to be standard works on Mahayana Buddhism. *Vasumitra* presided over the fourth Buddhist Council and wrote a book entitled *Mahavibhasha Shastra*. *Charaka* was one of the greatest exponents of Ayurveda and lived at his courts.

Thus the achievements of Kanishka in almost all spheres eclipsed many a great king of India. He was a great conqueror and empire builder. Indian goods found their way to Central Asian and European markets. Indian culture spread to Khotan and Kashgarh and added a golden link to the Chapter of Indian expansion.

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Section III—His Successors and the decline of the Empire

Successors of Kanishka

Three more rulers of this dynasty are mentioned, *viz.*, Vashishka, Harishka and Vasudeva. Vashishka and Harishka were brothers. Vashishka's rule was short. We have two inscriptions pointing out to his rule over Mathura and eastern Malwa. He was succeeded by Harishka, who ruled for thirty years. Several inscriptions point out to his achievements. An inscription has been found at Ara which mentions one Kanishka son of Vajheshka (Vashishka ?). He was the son of Harishka's elder brother. This Kanishka assumed all the great titles of his grandfather including that of 'son of gods' (*devaputta*). He added one more, *viz.*, *Kaisara* (Ceasar). Beyond this and a couple of references in later books not much is heard of this Kanishka.

The last well-known king of the Kushandy nasty was Vasudeva. He shifted his capital to Mathura. His coins have the effigy of Shiva. After his death disintegration overtook Kushan Empire, and soon it disappeared from existence.

Section IV—The Transformation of Buddhism

Mahayanaism

The birth and expansion of the new form of Buddhism has been considered as a very important landmark in the history of religions. The old Buddhism as propagated by Gautama and Asoka did not take into account several psychological aspects of religion. It was too impersonal, something rigid, devoid of real contact with life.

Under the influence of Brahmanical revival and Greek contact a new approach to religion was evolved in course of time. This new approach was called the *Mahayana* or the Greater Vehicle *i.e.*, a bigger path for the attainment of *Nirvana*. The older form was called as the *Himayana* or the Lesser Vehicle. The older form had spread in India and countries to he south of it. Hence it is called by modern historian the Southern Buddhism and the new Buddhism as the Northern Buddhism. The decisions to regularise it were taken at the Fourth Council held in Srinagar and its exponents lived in Peshawar. It was this form of religion which winded its way to China, Korea and Japan. Later on it became the most popular form of Buddhism. There remained no hard and fast demarcations between the Southern

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and the Northern Buddhism. This change from Hinayanism to Mahayanism has been called the "Transformation of Buddhism."

Cause

The early history of this form is not clear. There appears to be no Luther (who brought in Reformation) or Bhadrabahu (who brought in Svetambarism in Jains) connected with it, who broke away from old forms as a matter of protest. Ashvaghosha and Nagarguna's contributions were of a different type. They gave it a regular form. The practices that had been incorporated by this new Buddhism must have been already there. What was needed was that it be regularised, if it be justified.

The main cause of this change was the impact of the new followers on the old faith. A very large number of people with different cultures, different religious practices and with different mental and psychological attitudes had adopted the old Buddhism. Automatically some new practices were bound to creep into this religion as a matter of course. These new practices were extremely popular and agreeable to the masses. Hence the doctors of religion did well to accept them. This made Buddhism a living organism rather than a fossilised mass denying changes.

Its main beliefs and Practices

The new religion accepted several beliefs and practices which almost made it akin to other religions in many ways.

1. *Faith in Buddha as the God.* The other religions had their 'almighty' gods. This religion accepted Buddha as one who was to be worshipped and this worship in itself was enough for salvation.

2. *Belief in Bodhisatvas.* The *Jataka* tales or the 'Birth Stories' had been developed by now. In these the stories of Gautama in his previous births, when he was on the way to become *the Buddha* had been given. Such previous births were called *Bodhisatvas.* The faith in the Bodhisatvas became essential in the new religion.

3. *Idolatory.* Under the influence of Greeks idolatory had come into India. It had been accepted by almost all sections of thought. The Buddhists were not slow in accepting it. Idols were carved in order to help the individual in the concentration of thought.

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4. *Prayer and worship.* The old religion was essentially a personal achievement. No help was to be sought from any body. There was to be no prayer and no worship of anybody else. Now with the beliefs in Gautama as a God, prayers and worships started. This became as much ritualistic as the one against which Gautama had revolted. There was a tendency to rely on formulae and charms.

5. *Sanskrit instead of Pali.* Pali was simple and devoid of that suppleness which made one write beautiful poetry and superb literature. The number of sounds, tenses and forms of words was far less in it than in Sanskrit. The new religion accepted the superior language as a vehicle of expression and study.

6. *Belief in Buddhas.* Even the earlier Buddhists had believed in the seven Buddhas—Gauatama being the last. They were not supernatural beings. Now they became as much supernatural as any incarnation of Vishnu.

7. *Beliefs in good deeds and swarga.* The earlier form of Buddhism was more selfish as the individual was essentially concerned with one's ownself. Now an altruistic attitude was developed with *swarga* as its aim.

Thus the new religion was a synthesis of new thoughts and ideals. It was more akin to Brahmanism. Mahayanism became a living faith with a much wider appeal, reaching every nook and corner of Asia. A prominent authority remarks: "It was less monastic than the older Buddhism, and more emotional; warmer in charity, more personal in devotion; more ornate in art, literature and ritual, more disposed to evolution and development; whereas the Himayana was conservative and rigid, secluded in its cloisters, and open to the plausible, if unjust, accusation of selfishness". Under the influence of this new religion the Buddhist art found ample scope for its display and development.

Section V—The Gandhara School of Art

Its Beginning

One of the very important results of the Indo-Greek contact was in the sphere of art. The ancient Greeks and Romans had developed a very fine sculpture and architecture. The ancient remains of the old town of Rome are still a marvel. This Graeco-Roman art had used their gods and goddesses for the subject of sculpture and had produced some of the finest images of the world. Their elaborate

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dress styles have a feature of their own. So far the Indian art was almost primitive. A few statues that have come down to us of pre-Asoka days are primitive. Even Asokan art with all its greatness was not so vigorous. The statues of Sanchi and Mathura of Kanishka's days are nothing as compared to the contemporary Gandhara sculpture.

Under the influence of the Greeks the Indians took long strides in the art of sculpture and a very vigorous and ornate style of sculpture was developed.

Its Chief Features

This new art used Indian subject matter for their artistic creations. Its features, the elaborate hair styles, the superb drapery are all Greek in origin. This has often been called the Indo-Greek art. It used several mediums. *Stone* of all kinds, *tena-cotta*, a composition of clay and sand hardened like bricks by fire, *stucco*, a plaster of lime and fine sand, and *clay* were all used by them to execute the scenes from the life of Gautama and Bodhisatvas. Unluckily most of these fine specimens were destroyed by the Huns in the fifth century. We have come across literally thousands of broken and defaced statues in areas extending from Rawalpindi to Peshawar and beyond. This was the Gandhara province after which this art has been named. Various estimates have been formed of the influence of this art on the later Indian art. Scholars think that it was under the influence of this art that the later fifth century Mathura school of art produced sublime pieces of sculpture. This is admitted by all that it did influence the Indian art. It flourished in the days of the Kushans in north-western India.

Section VI—Greek Influence on India

No story of this foreign domination in India is complete without evaluating the influence of the Indo-Greeks on our culture, trade, commerce and art. The western scholars have always tried to over-emphasise the influence of Greeks on India.

Alexander's contact with India was very short. His plans to make India a part of his empire ended in smoke. The contact was with the borders and that too was of a very short duration. Three or four centuries following the fall of the Mauryan Empire witnessed a large number of foreigners trying to carve out king-

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doms on the borders of India. Even though some of them were not of Greek origin, such as the Kushans, yet they had imbibed Greek culture while they were staying on the north-west border of India. This contact was of military nature. Thus the cumulative influence on Indian culture of Greeks, Indo-Bactrian, Indo-Parthians, Indo-Scythians and the Kushans was very little.

Trade and Commerce

The immediate effect of the Greek contact was the enlargement of the commercial activity. This trade activity continued for a very long time. It was through these trade relations that Indian merchandise became very popular on the continent. So popular were they that the European nations vied with one another for direct trade contacts with India. Large supplies of ivory, spices, ebony, peacocks, dogs and cattle were exported. While displaying his wealth, Antrochus IV exhibited 800 elephant tusks obtained from India. Indian pepper was in great demand. In 88 B.C. Aristion, the tyrant king of Athens, declared he had so much pepper in his palace that he could easily spare two quarts of it for a mean practical joke. The imports on the other hand besides gold, included parchment used for writing purposes, a large number of girls called the singing or flute girls. These girls were often employed by the kings as their body-guards and orderlies. The presence of a *yavani* a Greek girl, is noticeable in almost all the Sanskrit dramas of those and the later days.

Little Effect

The Greeks could not produce any effect on Indian civilization. Supported by two great religions, Hinduism and Buddhism, it was too strong for them. No Indian wished to become Greek. He never looked to Greece as his spiritual home and Greek culture as his own. He was convinced that Indian civilization was far superior to that of Greece. The only territories where Greeks settled in some numbers were Gandhara, Northern Panjab and Gujrat. To the Greeks strong government meant the support of their own people. Consequently they established at convenient places military colonies. It was in these cantonments that some Indians had adopted a few external Greek forms. No Indian seems to have taken up Greek names. Indragnidatta, a Panjabi merchant, who was a Buddhist and who had gone to Sind in dedication

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used the Greek form "father and mother" instead of the regular Indian form "mother and father". A few common Greek words found their way into Sanskrit, such as *mela* (ink), *kalamo* (pen), *pustaka* (book), *khalina* (horse's bit) and *surunga* (mine). The Greeks borrowed three Sanskrit military terms for camp, army and general. Many Greeks had become Buddhists, and they were generally becoming Indianised. Helidorus, a Greek ambassador, in the Besnagar column inscription, does not use Greek. He declares himself a follower of Indian religion, quotes Indian epic, and records it in Brahmi.

Astronomy and Astrology

The Greeks were quite advanced in these two branches of science. The author of *Gargi-Samhita*, a Sanskrit work on astronomy says, "The *Yavanas* (Greeks) are barbarians, yet the science of Astronomy originated with them and for this reason they must be revered like gods." The names of Greek planets and certain Greek terms were adopted by Indian astronomers. The very name of two books, *Ramaka Siddhanta* and *Paulisha Siddhanta* clearly point out to Greek influences. Even the Greek method of horoscope casting was taken on by the Indians.

Coins

Another sphere in which the Indians learnt a good deal from the Greeks was in the field of coinage. Indians had been striking coins, even previously but these were very crude in form and execution. Their punch marked coins as they are called have hardly anything to commend themselves. The Greeks taught them the system of striking coins with double dies, obverse and reverse. Thus coins with effigies on one side or even both, with inscriptions came into existence in India. It must be admitted that Indians were never able to strike as good coins as those of the Greeks.

Sculpture

In the art of sculpture the Indians learnt a lot from their Greek friends, stone-carving had been better developed by Greeks. Scholars are of opinion that the capital of Asoka was carved under the influence of Greek arts. The Gandhara School of Sculpture was developed under their influence. Scholars have even gone to the extent of noticing Greek influence on the Gupta sculpture.

Religion

The Greek effect on Mahayanism is evident. It was the Greek polytheism which brought in the worship of Buddhas and Bodhisatvas. This

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image-worship soon found its way into Hinduism.

Drama

The Sanskrit word for the 'curtain' is '*yavanika*' which clearly points out to the fact that it was of Greek origin. The word is not derived from any Sanskrit root. Thus it appears that the Indians did not use any curtains in their dramatic performances. The 'Greek tragedy' could not find even a single supporter in India and there is a complete absence of tragedy in Sanskrit Drama.

Literature

The Greek scholars like Plutarch and others thought that "Indians sang the poetry of Homer" in local language. Probably they were pointing out to the heroes of *Ramayana*.

Philosophy

There are many common points between Greek and Indian Philosophy. This may be due to their contact in the Panjab and elsewhere.

Conclusion

Thus we find that the Greek influence on India was very superficial. It did not leave any permanent imprint on our life. It touched only the fringes and as such was not very important.

Questions

1. Sketch the character and achievements of Kanishka. Why is his reign specially celebrated in the history of Buddhism ? (*P. U. 1938*)
2. Briefly describe the reign of Kanishka and draw a map to show the extent of his empire. (*P. U. 1942, 1944 and 1946*)
3. Describe the career of Kanishka, and estimate the character and value of his services to Buddhism. (*P. U. 1949*)
4. What do you know about the transformation of Buddhism ? What were its main features ?
5. How far did the Himayana and Mahayana differ ?
6. Write a short but clear note on Gandhara School of Art.
7. How far was India, hellenised by the Greeks ?
8. What does India owe to the Greeks ?

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CHAPTER XVIII

THE IMPERIAL GUPTAS

Section I—Sources and Early History

Inscriptions and Coins

The age of the Guptas is considered to be the golden age of ancient India. In order to arrive at such a decision we must have drawn upon the information from a large number of sources.

We have come across a number of inscriptions dealing directly and indirectly with the age of the Guptas. Of these the Allahabad Pillar Inscription of Samudragupta and the Maharauli Inscription of king Chandra (identified with Chandragupta II) are most important. The coins of the age have been discovered in very large number and throw a flood of light on the history of the period. Only recently a huge collection of Gupta coins was unearthed in Bharatpur. The information supplied by the coins has been considered unimpeachable and is very detailed.

Travels and Literature

Fahien a Chinese pilgrim who visited India about the beginning of the 5th century has left a very detailed account of his travels. This forms a very important source. The literature of the period is plentiful. Several important writers flourished in the age. They give us a lot of indirect historical information. In fact most of the Puranas were written at this time. The Buddhist and Jain traditions were committed to their present book form and numerous works on almost all subjects came to be written.

Art and Architectural Remains

Several pieces of art of the age have come down to us. The architectural remains of buildings have been recovered. All these sources supply an overall picture of the age that is fairly detailed and extremely interesting.

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India on the eve of Guptas

The third century, *i.e.*, the century immediately preceding the rise of the imperial Guptas was considered to be a comparatively dark age for a long time. The Kushans and Satavahanas had become almost extinct. In their wake came the *Nagas* and *Vakatekas*.

Nagas ruled at Mathura, and also over a part of *Madhya-desha*. Several inscriptions have come down to us pointing out to the rule of the Nagas in the eastern Panjab and the Central India. Besides Mathura, Vidisa and Padmavati were their centres. They are said to have performed as many as ten *ashvamedha* sacrifices. Their power was finally destroyed by Samudragupta and at least three Naga kings were destroyed by him. The important kings of this line were Vivasena and Chandramsa. One of these dynasties was called the *Bharshiva* dynasty of Banaras. They were also of Brahmanic faith and there was revival of Hinduism under them. They brought Madhya Pradesh under the influence of northern culture. Later on their territories were merged into the Vakataka empire.

The Vakatakas

This dynasty was founded by Vindhyashakta in the present Bundelkhand district. He was originally under the Nagas but soon rose to prominence. Pravarasena, his son, was another important ruler who started calling himself a *Samarat*. The Vakatakas continued to rule for a long time through various vicissitudes. Finally they were eclipsed by the Guptas. Their contribution to the Hindu culture was in no way less. In fact the two dynasties of Nagas and Vakatakas contributed a good deal to the glory that was attained by India under the Gupta rule.

Section II—Rise of the Guptas

Their Origin

The origin of this dynasty is shrouded in mystery. They might have been of the Vaishya caste, as the word *Gupta* seems to suggest. They may have belonged to the south as many Gupta officers are mentioned in Satarahana inscriptions. Dr. Roychoudhri holds that they belonged to the Panjab. He bases his opinion on the famous Sanskrit drama *Kaumudi Mahotsava*. Whatsoever the truth, it is clear that they were some obscure people. Their rise began when one of them was able to marry in the ancient ruling family of the Lichhavis.

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Srigupta

The first king of this family about whom we are able to glean a little from later pages of history, was Srigupta. Itsing, the famous Chinese scholar, mentions him for having built an important temple near Mrigasikhavana and granted four villages for its maintenance. According to him he was ruling in Magadha. Srigupta ruled in the 3rd century A.D. He was an ordinary chieftain.

Ghatotkacha

Srigupta was succeeded by his son Ghatotkacha. Many scholars think it is a foreign name. We have no reason to believe any such suggestion, as there is a character named like that in the *Mahabharata*. Ghatotkacha used the title of *Maharaja*.

Chandragupta I, 320-35 A.D.

The king who raised the prestige of the family and put it on the road to glory was the third in the line, Chandragupta I. He assumed the title of *Maharajadhiraj*—king of kings—as he was not content with the title of mere *Maharaja*. Another important feature of his reign was his marriage to Kumara Devi, the Lichhavi princess. The Licchavis were a very old dynasty, and was very prominent in the days of Gautama. Chandragupta's marriage with this princess raised his status both socially and politically. Scholars like Smith would make us believe that Pataliputra came into the hands of Chandragupta because of this alliance. Itsing says that it was with the family from the days of Srigupta. This marriage considerably added to the prestige of the family. This event was celebrated by Chandragupta's striking new coins in the name of the king and the queen.

As regards the extent of his empire, it is clear that Chandragupta was the master of Allahabad, Tirhat, Oudh, and Southern Bihar including Pataliputra. The king Chandra of Mahrauli inscription has been identified by some as Chandragupta I ; but most of the scholars believe that this was Chandragupta Vikramaditya or Chandragupta II. If the first suggestion is accepted it would mean that the extent of Chandragupta I's empire was very large.

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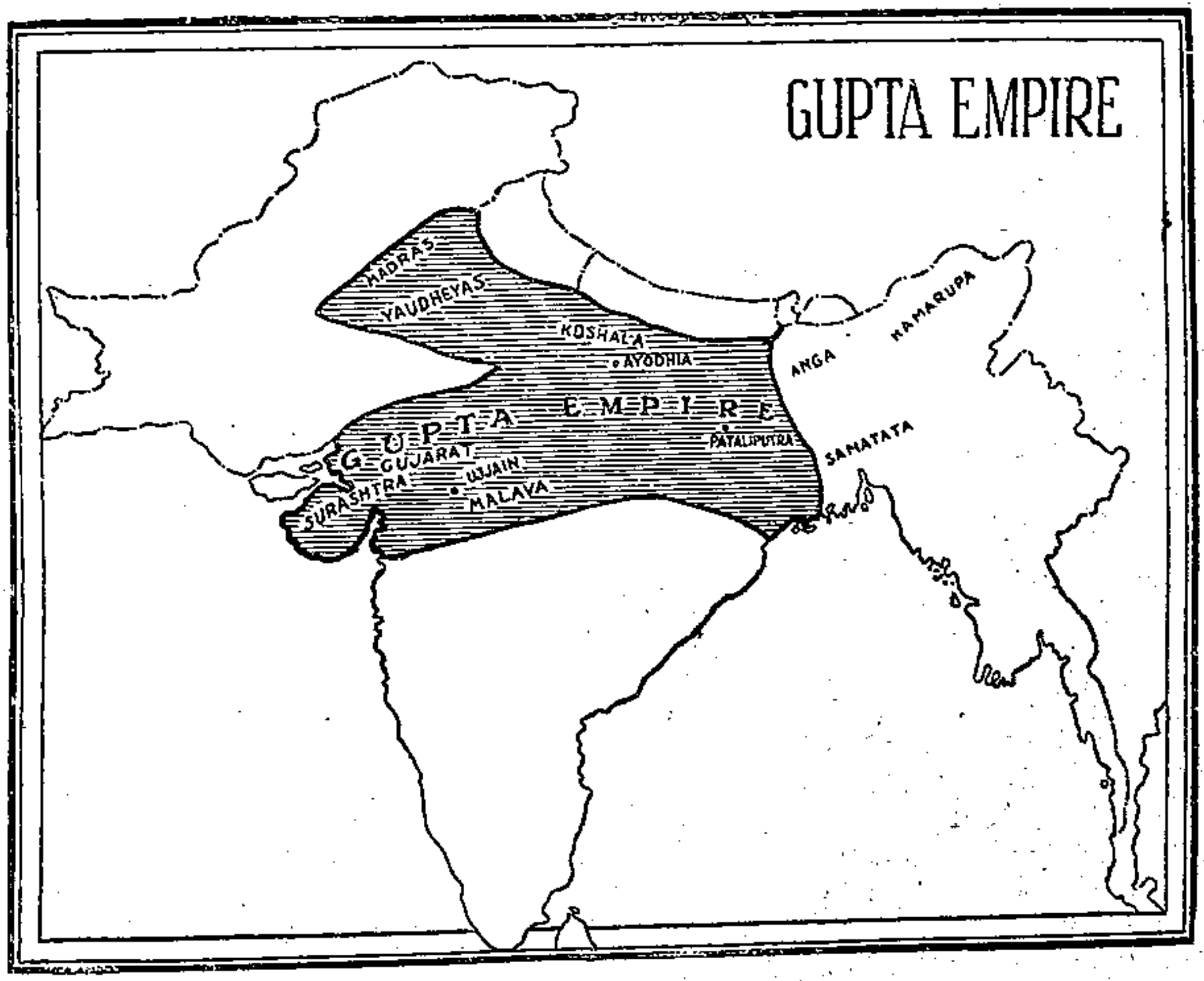
GUPTA EMPIRE
MADRAS
YAUDHEYAS
KOSHALA
AYODHIA
ANGA
KAMARUPA
GUPTA EMPIRE
PATALIPUTRA
SAMATATA
GUJARAT
UJJAIN
SURASHTRA
MALAVA

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We have an important era in our country, known as the Gupta era. This began on 26th February 320 A.D. It seems that it coincided with the accession of Chandragupta I and he started the era. Other scholars dispute the suggestion and ascribe it to Lichhavis, but such a suggestion is not based on facts.

The Gupta Era

Towards the close of Chandragupta's reign he convened meeting of his feudatories at which Samudragupta was formally anointed the successor.

Section III—Samudragupta and his Conquests

The fact that his father had to call a special meeting of his feudatories suggests that there was a better claimant to the throne. The presence of *Kacha* inscribed on coins, exactly like those of Samudragupta, has given rise to some controversy. It is suggested that Chandragupta was succeeded by his elder son Kacha who is said to have ruled for some time. Some believe that Kacha and Samudragupta are one and the same person.

His Accession

Soon after his accession Samudragupta started his conquests. At Allahabad we have discovered an inscription on the pillar of Asoka. This gives the details of the conquests of Samudragupta. The data of inscription is not given. Another minor inscription of Samudragupta's reign is found at Eran.

Allahabad Inscription and his Conquests

We have discovered many varieties of his coins. They contain references to his many-sided activities : (*i*) depicting the king as an archer, (*ii*) the king carrying a battle axe, and (*iii*) horse sacrifice coins.

The Allahabad inscription tells us that Samudragupta conquered nine kings in Northern India—Rudradeva, Matila, Nagadatta, Chandraverman, Ganpati Naga, Naga Sena, Achyuta, Nandi and Bala Varman. In the north he followed the policy of extirpation, *i.e.*, complete annihilation of these kings. Further it records that Samudragupta fought a bloody battle near Allahabad. The

Conquest of the North

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site of this battle has been identified with Kausambhi. It appears that the Naga kings of northern India who were still quite strong had joined hands with Achyuta of Ahicchatra. They were defeated and killed. This made him the master of the north. Conquest of other kings followed. Thus Rudradeva the Vakataka king, Chandraverman of Pushkarana, Matila of present. Bulandshahar area, Balavaman of Assam, etc. were all uprooted and their states annexed. Another important king captured by Samudragupta was the prince of Kota family. The location of this family is still a matter of dispute. It might have ruled at Pataliputra, or Sravasti (Allahabad) or even in the northern Rajputana, as some scholars believe.

Conquest of the South

After having mastered the north, the great conqueror started on his southward journey. Here he did not follow the policy of extirpation *i.e.*, he was no longer interested in the policy of annexation. He merely subjugated them. This journey of over 3,000 miles through the densest woods and unchartered lands was a wonder in that age. Seldom has any Indian king repeated these exploits. For this achievement scholars have compared Samudragupta to Alexander the Great or Napolean Bonaparte.

It is very difficult to decide the route followed by Samudragupta in his campaign. His panegyrist poet Harisena enumerates twelve kings who were subjugated by him. Thus Mahendra of Kosal fell before him. His domain has been identified with the region lying along with the banks of Mahanadi in the Sambhalpur region. Vyagraraja of Maha-kantara was the next victim. His was the forest region adjoining Kosala. Probably the areas of Betul and Chindwara in Madhya Pradesh were included in it. The next attack was on Mantaraya of Kerala. Kerala is the name given to Cochin, Travancore and Malabar coast. This is one of the richest areas in the south and its conquests made Samudragupta the master of the Deccan up to Cape Camorin. King Mahendragine of Pishtapura whose dominions have been identified with Pitharpuram in Godavari districts of the Madras State, fell next.

The fifth name in this list is that of Swamidatta of Kottur. Scholars are of the opinion that this Kottur was the present

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Coimbatore area. This was a very big commercial centre in ancient days.

Vishnu Gope of Kanchi (Conjeevaram) and king Nilaraja of Avarunkta were neighbours and were subjugated by Samudragupta. Their dominions were in the Madras State. The next king was king Hastivarman of Vengi. Vengi was an important State, situated between the Krishna and Godavari. Probably the Pallavas ruled there.

Another victim was Ugrasena of Palakka whose dominions have been identified in Nillor district of Madras. King Kuber of Devareshtra also fell before the strong arms of Samudragupta. Probably he was the king of Maharashtra. King Daman of Airandapalla was another victim. His dominions have been identified with Khandesh in Bombay State. The last name in this list of twelve kings was that of Dhananjaya of Kasthalapure.

Thus we find that the entire area from the valley of the Mahanadi to Cape Camorin and then northward to Maharashtra and Khandesh surrendered to the mighty arms of king Samudragupta. These kings were reinstated after they had agreed to pay a regular annuity. Thus Samudragupta displayed considerable statesmanship in being satisfied with the formal acceptance of suzerainty on account of the difficulties of distance and administration.

Tribes and Neighbours

In addition to these northern and southern Indian Kings several tribes were subjugated by Samudragupta. Most of them were organised on democratic lines. They included the Malvas who occupied the land named after them *i.e.*, Malwa. Probably they originally belonged to the Panjab. Arjunayanas were another people. They were the neighbours of Malvas. Probably they occupied Bharatpur and Alwar, etc. The next people to fall in line were Yaudheyas. They occupied southern Panjab, with their capital at Sonepat. They were a very brave people. Madrakas, probably of Saale (Sialkot) in the Panjab also submitted. The others were the Abhivas who lived to the south of Malwas. Prarjunas lived to the south-east of Abhivas, possibly in the Narsinghpura districts of Madhya Pradesh. Similarly Sankanikas, Kakas and Kharparikas, occupying regions to the South of

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Narbada were defeated and forced to accept Samudragupta's suzerainity.

Samatata (the regions between the Ganga and the Brahmaputra, *i.e.*, Calcutta and Jassore districts), Dvaka (north of Samatata), Kamrupa (Assam), Nepal, and Kartiapur (Kartarpur in the Panjab), all accepted his overlordship and Samudragupta occupied one of the strongest empires of ancient India.

In addition to all this the neighbours sent goodwill missions to him. This list included the Devputra (some Kushan prince), Shahis (of West-Panjab), Shahanushahis (of Persia ?), Shakas (Western Kshatrapas) Marunda (?) and Ceylone. The extent of of their dominions is not clear from the Allahabad inscription. It clearly means that these were independent kings ruling in areas, which were almost beyond the reach of Samudragupta's arms.

Ashvamedha Sacrifice

Samudragupta after his extensive conquests, performed the Horse Sacrifice and in order to commemorate it he issued coins on which was inscribed, "King of kings, having conquered the world, conquers heaven—the unopposed warrior".

The Extent of his Empire

Although Samudragupta had overrun almost the whole of India, yet he allowed most of the defeated kings and tribes to carry on almost independently. Comparatively a small area was directly held by him. This lay between the Brahmaputra in the east and the Chambal in the west, Himalaya in the north and the Narbada in the south. This area was divided into a number of provinces (*vishyas*).

A patron of Art and Learning

Besides being a great conqueror, Samudragupta was a man of many personal accomplishments. His panegyrist Harisena extols his poetry and music. There are coins pointing out to his being well-versed in the art of playing on the *Veena*.

Samudragupta's coins indicate that he was a worshipper of Vishnu. It is said that in his early age he was placed under the care of a Buddhist scholar Vasubandhu. But the image of

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Garuda on his banner clearly indicates his attachment to Brahmanism. His horse sacrifice and gifts also indicate that he was a supporter of Brahmanism.

Section IV—Chandragupta Vikramaditya

Ramagupta ?

Samudragupta died about the year 375 A. D. For a long time it was believed that he was succeeded by his famous son Chandragupta II. The date of accession of this great king has been fixed at about 380 A. D. Thus there is a gap of 5 years. Of late some scholars have tried to argue and not without some reason, that Samudragupta was succeeded by his son Ramagupta. He was a coward. When the Saka king of Western India demanded his beautiful wife Dhruvadevi, Ramagupta agreed to surrender her. The lady was saved by Chandragupta, the younger brother of Ramagupta, who in the disguise of a woman killed the Saka king. Then he returned safely, killed his elder brother and married Dhruvadevi. This story is mentioned in the *Harshacharitra* of Bana of the seventh century, and by poet Vishakhadatta of the eighth century. It lacks a few important features. There are no coins of Ramagupta, not even in the heap of coins of the Gupta age discovered only recently. Moreover, the contemporary literature is silent about it. It was a wonderfully good material for a poet to weave a fine drama around it.

Chandragupta II, and his Conquests

It is beyond doubt that Chandragupta II was securely seated on the throne of Pataliputra in 380 A. D. and if the story of Ramagupta is wrong, he had become the king in 375 A. D. As his father left a very compact kingdom, he did not indulge in many wars. From the various inscriptions and other sources, we know that he waged war against the kings of Bengal and the Saka (*Kshatrapas*) of western India.

We have discovered an iron pillar at Mahrauli (near Delhi just besides the Qutb Minar). It bears an inscription referring to king Chandra. He has been identified with king Chandragupta II. He is credited with having fought against the chiefs of Bengal. Dr. Smith thinks that these were the revolts of petty princes rather than of important independent kings. This view has great force as Samudragupta did not leave any notable king to be

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conquered, especially in his immediate neighbourhood.

The greatest military achievement of Chandragupta II lay in the conquest of Western Satraps who had been ruling in western India since the time of Rudradaman. They had been the opponents of the Kushans, Nagas, Bharsivas, Vakatakas and Andhras. Even Samudragupta had been content in having friendly relations with them.

It fell to the lot of Chandragupta II to measure his strength with the Satraps. He won over the Vakatakas to his side by marrying his own daughter Prabhavati to Rudrasena II, the Vakataka king, whose dominions lay on the route to Malwa. Hence the support of Vakatakas became a great asset to Chandragupta II. Rudrasena III, the Saka Satrap of western India was a powerful prince; but he was defeated and killed. The conqueror then moved forward and occupied Saurashtra and Kathiawar.

As a result of these conquests his empire touched the Arabian Sea and he gained a lot from the rich trade that western India was carrying on with the west. Chandragupta used the titles of Vikramaditya and *Sibasi* (the enemy of Sakas) for himself. The dates of these conquests may be put anywhere between 388 A. D. and 401 A. D., *i.e*, around 395 A. D. He married a Naga princess named Kubernaga.

Shifting of the Capital

A large number of Chandragupta II's coins and inscriptions have been discovered in Malwa and there is a strong reason to believe that Ujjain was the most favoured spot of the king. The early Gupta kings remained in Pataliputra. In the beginning of Chandragupta II's reign Ayodhya became a more popular town in the empire. Later on the scene shifted to Ujjain, because of the western campaigns. Probably it served as the second capital.

His Administration

"Probably India has never been governed better, after the oriental manner, than it was during the reign of Vikramaditya." Thus observed Dr. V.A. Smith about Chandragupta II's administration. During his rule of 38 years India was efficiently governed. The country was divided into *desas* and *bhuktis*. These units were governed by

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Jopities and *Uparikas* who were often of royal descent. The smaller units were called the *Vishyas* or *Pradesas* presided over by *Vishyapatis.* Fahien, the famous Chinese scholar, visited India during his reign. He showers the highest compliments on the administration of the day. There were no spies. The people were contented and happy, and the law was mild. The king ruled with the help of a *mantri parishad* (council of ministers), and was no despot.

His Religious Toleration

Like other previous Gupta rulers he too followed the Brahmanical faith, in particular the Vaishnava sect. Brahmanas were the favoured children of the State and were given big grants. This does not mean that the king ignored other sects. Fahien bears testimony to the fact that the Buddhists were as much recepients of his bounties as the Brahmana. Many of his officers were Shaivites and his commander-in-chief Amrakar Deva was a Buddhist. Thus for the king all his subjects were equal.

The Nine Gems

As a result of the peace that these kings gave to the country, the liberal arts were studied with avidity. Sanskrit was revived and many Sanskrit writers lived during the Gupta period. The court of Chandragupta attracted many great artists to it. The tradition attaches the *navaratnas* or nine-gems to his court. Although all the names mentioned in this list were not contemporaries, yet it indicates that his reign was important in this sphere. Thus he was a great patron of learning. His capital Ujjain became a great seat of learning and attracted foreigners to it.

His Estimate

Although it would be rather unfair to the other kings of this dynasty, if all the credit for 'Gupta golden Age' was given to Chandragupta II, yet he must take a major share of it. His justice became legendary. The condition of the people was so good, and the conduct of the king so perfect, that his name has become a legend in Indian History. Scholars may quarrel about the existence or non-existence of the 'nine-gems' of his days; but all agree that the king Vikramaditya of Indian legends was none else than Chandragupta II. The Indian folk tales credit him with almost superhuman powers and intelligence. Even if most of these stories are wrong, they at least show that he was a great king.

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Asoka may be considered the greatest Indian king by a modern scholar of Indian History. But Indian tradition never accepted him as an ideal king. Raja 'Bir Vikram' stands head and shoulders above all others.

Section V—Fahien's Account of India

No story of the Gupta period is complete without recounting the description of this age as given by Fahien.

Fahien was a Chinese traveller who was a Buddhist.

Objects of his Visit

To the Buddhists, India, the land of Lord Buddha, had a special charm of its own. Many of them came to visit the places of Buddhist pilgrimages. Fahien came in search of the original texts of *Vinaya Pitaka.*

His Route

He left his home in 399 A. D. and travelling through the Gobi Desert, he visited Khotan and Tashkand. After crossing the Pamirs, he entered the Swat Valley, whence he moved to Peshawar and Taxila. He visited Mathura, Malwa, Kapilavastu, Gaya, Sarnath, Kusinagara and Pataliputra. At Pataliputra he stayed for about three years. He did not go back by the way he came. He went to Tamralipta which was a very important port in Orissa. As the Indian colonies had been established in the East Indies, rich trade passed between this part and the South-East Asia. Fahien stayed at Tamralipti for nearly two years. Finally he sailed to Java and reached China in 414 A. D. The whole journey took fifteen years, out of which nine years were spent in India.

Value of his Description

Although a very detailed account has been handed down to us by this great traveller, yet most of it is not of great use for historical purposes. As he was essentially a missionary, he made observations which were mostly religious. The references to society, administration and general condition of India are only casual in character. So absorbed was he in the study of Buddhism that although he lived in India for over nine years, out of which six years were spent in the Gupta empire, yet he never mentioned the name of Chandragupta. As he was a disinterested

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and impartial observer, his opinions have a great historical value.

His Observations

Fahien was struck by the high state of our moral life. He praised the people in glowing terms. They did not destroy life, nor did they take wine or other intoxicants. They did not even use onion and garlic. They kept no fowls or pigs and there were no butcher's shops and distillaries. Only the *Chandalas* did not follow this code of life. They were treated as outcastes and made to live outside the city. They were not mixed with and if they entered the city they had to strike a piece of wood as a sort of notice of their approach. The people were charitably disposed and Pataliputra benifited a lot because of public charity. Even the king often gave a lot in charity.

Fahien had all praise for the government of the Madhyadesha, *i.e.*, the empire of Chandragupta Vikramaditya. There was no control on traffic and transport. He congratulated the people on the amount of freedom they enjoyed. They had not to get their property entered in government registers. They could freely move from place to place, and needed no passports. They had few taxes to pay.

The criminal law was very mild. Most of the crimes could be commuted for money, which varied with the nature of the crime. Physical pain was seldom inflicted while capital punishment did not exist. Even a repeated act of treason involved only amputation of right hand. Throughout the nine years of his stay in India Fahien was never accosted by a thief. The mildness of the law combined with the absence of crime is the greatest tribute which can be paid to the Gupta culture.

In theory the land belonged to the king and the people paid land revenue in cash or kind to king's officers. The officers received cash salaries and were paid regularly. Although gold currency was used, yet the usual currency were *couries* (chank shells). This picture points out to a very efficient administration.

As Magadha was very closely associated with Gautama and Asoka, it became a very important spot for Fahien. Pataliputra, although bereft of its former glory, was still quite an important town. It was still a big and flourishing town. The old Asoka

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palace, although now more than 600 years old, was still so beautiful and grand that the pilgrim thought it was the work of supernatural beings. The people of the town were very pious and vied with each other in giving gifts. There was a grand hospital where patients were kept free of cost till they got well. It was maintained by public endowments. There were rest-houses for the public.

The city contained two monasteries, one for Himayana and the other for Mahayana monks. Here a large number of monks (over 600) lived. They were considered to be important seats of Buddhist learning and attracted students from all over Asia. These monasteries were originally built by Asoka. Fahien himself stayed here for about three years and studied Sanskrit. In the town every year a procession of images was taken out. The images were decorated and carried in about 20 carts.

Other towns were now deserted. Sravasti was in ruins. The Lumbini Gardens, the birth-place of Gautama, had lost their charms. Vaisali was another deserted town. So were Rajagriha and Gaya.

Malwa was a very prosperous area. The climate was salubrious and the government benevolent. He liked the area very much.

Buddhism was still a flourishing religion. He saw several monasteries in and around Mathura. He talks of other monasteries in other parts of India. Though he never openly admits that Buddhism was on the decline, yet the decayed condition of the places of pilgrimage unmistakably points out to the fact that it was on the decline. Even in big cities the number of monasteries mentioned is seldom more than one or two.

Section VI—The Later Guptas and their Downfall

Kumaragupta

After a rule of about 35 years Chandragupta Vikramaditya died in 414 A. D. He was succeeded by his son Kumaragupta, born of the famous Dhruva-devi. Kumaragupta was able to retain completely the dominions acquired by his forefathers. As the sources of his reign are very inadequate we cannot correctly form an idea of his achievements. He celebrated the horse sacrifice and continued the use of the

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title, "*Parambhattaraka Maharajadhiraja Sri*" indicating thereby that he continued to govern the old dominions in undiminished glory. He ruled for about forty years and died in 455 A. D. His regin is considered to be a part of the 'Gupta Golden Age'.

However, there are indications that towards the closing years of his reign, *i.e.*, about 450 A. D. he had to face the revolt of Pushyamitras. The Pushyamitras were his neighbours. The opinion of scholars is divided whether they lived in the Narbada valley or in the north-western India. Even though Skandagupta was able to conquer them after a prolonged fight, yet the very fact that a people were able to revolt, is an indication that all was not well with the Guptas.

Another danger that he had to face about this very time was the Huna invasion. For the first time this "Scourge of Humanity" visited the borders of the Gupta Empire. Although Skandagupta, the hero of the war with Pushyamitras, again rose equal to the occasion and defeated them, yet a very heavy blow was struck at the roots of the Gupta empire. The next reign had to face the danger to a greater extent and the empire almost scummbed to the injuries inflicted by them.

Skandagupta

The credit of upholding the prestige of the Guptas was due to the crown prince Skandagupta. It is said that he was out fighting the Hunas when his aged father died. So he ascended the throne at the moment when all was not well with the empire. The rule of Skandagupta, even though comparatively a short one (only thirteen years), was responsible for re-asserting the Gupta superiority.

Throughout the thirteen years of his rule he was busy fighting the enemies of the empire. So far as his personal bravery is concerned, he ranks as one of the great Guptas. But the continued incursion of Hūnas bore heavily on the resources of the Gupta empire and as soon as the king died in 468 A. D. fighting the invaders the empire crumbled to pieces.

The economic disintegration of the empire is noticeable from the Gupta coinage. The old standard of weight and purity was replaced by a different one which is a sufficient proof of the economic strain.

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Later Guptas

The Huna storm burst forth on the Indian soil with great ferocity. The old Gupta empire gave way before it. The later Guptas were rulers in name only and had a small area under them. Skandagupta was followed by Purugupta, his step brother, who set up an independent empire in Magadha. The line continued for a fairly long time and the names of several other Gupta kings can be gleaned from the coins and other sources. Yet none of them was competent enough to hold on the empire or give peace and security to the country. Narsinhagupta, Kumaragupta II, Budhagupta, Bhanugupta and other kings are mentioned. It appears as if the old empire had been split up into small states with rival houses or families, all called Guptas.

It is interesting to note that several of these later Guptas were of Buddhist leanings. Thus, the Huna invasions, the revolt of the fuedatories, the internal quarrels and the Buddhist leanings, all combined to wipe out the Gupta Empire.

Section VII—The Hindu Renaissance or the Gupta Golden age

Why so called

The age of Imperial Mauryas has been considered to be the most glorious chapter in Hindu History. Asoka was perhaps the greatest king; but the people were happiest in the Gupta Age. Almost in all walks of life the achievements of the Guptas were superior to Mauryas. Foreign scholars have compared this age to the age of Pericles in Greece (469-429 B. C.) and to that of Augustus in Rome (29 B. C.-14 A. D.), or that of Elizabeth I in England. If we look at it more closely, we would find it superior to all of them. The achievement in the field of economics, civilization, art, literature and religion were far too great for any one of the comparisons to be a real one.

Political Aspect

The years following the downfall of the Maurayas saw the whole of India disintegrating into a number of small states. Minor dynasties continued for about five hundred years. During this period hardly any king was able to give the country a single state and the result was that the country as a whole never made any headway. With the advent of the Guptas the whole scene changed. The country was united under one government and administration. Not only

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that, the defeat of Sakas was the culmination of our renaissance. By driving out the foreigners from Indian soil the Guptas won the gratitude of all.

Administration

The Gupta administration may not compare favourably with the modern welfare state, but it was the best of the age. There was very little interference on the part of the state in the lives of its subjects. The roads were safe, taxes light and there was no spy system. People avoided litigation. There were few crimes even though the criminal code was mild. The country was divided into *Desas, Mandalas, Khandas*, etc. The bigger units were placed under the king's blood relatives. A large number of ministers and officers are mentioned in inscriptions. The army was well organised with a large number of officers of different ranks.

There was a separate department of police. Several officers are met with in contemporary literature. A regularly graded judiciary was in existence. Forests were well looked after. Several tax officers are met with. Even some sort of octroi was collected.

Religious Condition

This period is often called the period of Hindu Renaissance. There are scholars who argue that this is a misnomer, as Hinduism was never dead. Many of the Shungas, Kanvas, Andhras, Vakatakas, Bharshivas and several of the foreign kings followed the Brahmanic faith. The Gupta Renaissance did not involve the revival of religion alone, but it was the revival of the best that was in Hinduism. In fact all the three religions, Hinduism, Buddhism and Jainism were no longer the same old faiths. A lot of changes had taken place. Thus idolatory, belief in many god and goddesses, *Yoga* and ritualism all had become common to these religions and there was hardly anything that distinguished them from one another.

Under these circumstances Brahmanism, which had become obsolete, was revived. The Gupta kings were *Vaishnavites* and as such they encouraged Brahmanism. *Ashvamedha* and other sacrifices were revived. Brahmanas were honoured and given liberal grants. The followers of other religions also received plenty of alms and gifts from the king.

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The most important feature of this Brahmanic Renaissance was that religion came to pervade almost the whole life and art of Indian people. We can as well say that all the arts were used to serve and enrich religion. Temples were built, fine idols sculptured, poetry written in praise of gods, prose, music and dancing all joined in giving their best to the religion and in deriving inspiration from it. Thus religion and fine arts became wedded to each other, enriching the mind and intellect of the people.

Literature

Probably the richest treasure of the Gupta age is found in literature. Very little literary activity had been noted in pre-Gupta period. From the 7th century B.C. upto 4th century A. D. there were very few great writers. Buddha and Asoka had been patronising the local languages. Even the Andhras, though following the Brahmanic faith, favoured the Prakrit literature. The Sanskrit literature produced by the Gupta period is prodigious. The religious literature got its final shape at this time. Even the *Puranic* tradition became fixed. Sanskrit was never able to produce a better literature in its history than during this period. Though Sanskrit had been used by several writers and kings even before the Guptas yet they simply carried on the old traditions. The heights its literature achieved under the patronage of the Guptas was never attained before and surpassed afterwards.

Secular Literature

Besides religious literature several poets produced secular literature. Thus Kalidasa under the patronage of the Gupta kings wrote three dramas, two epics and two lyrics and became the greatest dramatist of India. Ancient and modern scholars have showered the highest praises on him and called him the 'Indian Shakespeare.'

Similarly Bhavabuti another great dramatist, Vakapatiraja, Shudraka author of *Mricchakatika*, Vishnusharma the writer of Panchatantra, Gunandhya, and Bharvi all belonged to the Gupta age. Some scholars insist that Vishakhdatta lived in this age and not in the eighth century A. D. Dewdina and Harisena also flourished at this time enriching the Sanskrit language and the Indian heritage.

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Religious Literature

Scholars agree that the present recension of *Manusmriti* was composed in the Gupta period. *Yagnavalkya* and *Narada Smritis* were compiled then. The *Vayu*, *Vishnu*, and *Shiva Purana* were written at this time. The commentaries of Hariswami, Skandaswami Kshivaswami and several others on the *Vedas* and *Nirukta* were written in the Gupta period. Similarly the famous *Kashika-vritti* (a book on grammar), was compiled then. Aryabhatta, Varahmitran and Brahmagupta, famous Indian astronomers lived in those days.

As regards the Buddhist literature the *Dipavamsa* and *Mahavamsa*, the famous Buddhist histories were written in these days. Buddhaghosha and Dharmapala's commentaries on the Buddhist scriptures were also produced then. Most of the Jataka tales also were compiled at this time.

Architecture

Literature apart, the age produced the finest specimens of paintings, sculpture, architecture, metallurgy and music. We have come across works on architecture in which details are given of the designs of temples and other important public buildings. We have not discovered many Gupta buildings. Probably the ravages of times, the Huns and the Muslims all had their toll and not much was left. Scholars like Smith have been able to ascribe with confidence only two temples to the Gupta period. One of them at Deogarh in Jhansi District is built of stone. It contains beautiful sculptures on the panels of the walls. The other is built of bricks and is at Bhitargaon in District Kanpur of U.P. In addition several other buildings are mentioned, but opinions are divided regarding the dates of their construction. Probably the most important feature of the Gupta buildings was the introduction of spire or *Shikhara* style in temples. Before the Guptas the temples had a *Stupa* like dome type roof.

Sculpture

In a preceding chapter we noticed the development of the Gandhara School of Art under the influence of the Greeks. Thus for some time our sculpture remained under the influence of foreigners. By the time of the rise of the Guptas this foreign influence disappeared. The artists were able to carve out original art pieces with a vitality and technique entirely Indian. The figures were

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tall and graceful. The drapery depicted was so fine that the limbs could be easily seen through them. Most of the statues that have been unearthed deal with Buddhistic and Brahmanic subjects. Very few Jain statues have been discovered. We have found many of these statues at Sarnath. Some of them even bear the Gupta era. One of them is Gautama Buddha in a sitting pose $5\frac{1}{4}$ feet tall. Another was traced at Mathura. It is that of Gautama in a standing pose, 7 feet $2\frac{1}{2}$ inches long. These two statues are typical specimens of the Gupta sculpture.

Paintings

The Gupta paintings have come down to us from two centres, Bagh (Gwalior) and Ajanta (Hyderabad State). At Ajanta there are several caves which are of greater antiquity; while others belong to Gupta period. Besides throwing light on the architecture of the day, these caves tell us about Gupta paintings. They contain fresco paintings *i.e.*, paintings on the walls, done in coloured plaster. The technique is extremely complicated, much more difficult than that of water or old colour paintings. The paintings on the caves belonging to Gupta period are of very high order and can be compared to the best in the world today, and are by far the best in the ancient world. The development of this difficult art in the Gupta days is a great credit to the age. The greatest artists have conferred the highest praises on these frescoes. The subject matter of the paintings is Buddhist stories. The frescoes of Bagha are also superb. These painters were certainly masters of their trade.

Metallurgy

It appears that the people had made great advances in the field of metal casting. The famous iron pillar of King Chandra at Mehrauli is the finest example of the iron casting. This pillar is 23 feet and 16·4 inches in diameter. Its purity is almost unrivalled. It has stood in sun and rain for over fifteen hundred years without rust. It speaks very highly of the period. Similarly a huge copper statue was discovered at Sultanganj in Bhagalpur District (Bihar). It is seven feet high and about a ton in weight. It is now lying in the Birmingham Museum and is considered a feat of accomplishment. Another similar brass statue of Lord Buddha about one foot in height was recovered from Kangra District.

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Music

Music too was not a neglected art. Although very little attention has been paid to the history of Indian music, yet it is beyond doubt that the art flourished in the Gupta days. Samudragupta himself was a musician of high order.

Trade and Commerce

The country had developed a very brisk trade. At a time when most of the European countries were far too primitive, the demand for Indian goods was always very great. Its spices, textiles and luxury goods were always in great demand all over the European and Asiatic markets. The port of the Broach fed the European markets, while the port of Tamralipti supplied the East Indies and other eastern markets.

Indian Colonies

In the wake of this trade activity came cultural and political activity the story of which is described in a separate chapter below.

Section VIII—The Huns

Their Early History

The Huns have been called the scourge of humanity. Their destruction of civilization has hardly been equalled by the Mongol invaders who brought untold misery to people in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. The Huns were the original residents of Central Asian Steppes and were associated with the Chinese. They were a nomadic people. Probably because of the increase in population they were compelled to leave their home and spread out in different directions. They divided themselves into two streams, one moving towards the Oxus valley and the other towards the Volga. In about 375 A. D. the latter attacked Eastern Europe and drove the Goths (a fierce German race) towards the Danube river. The Gothic chief was killed and the Huns spread over Europe.* After a career of conquest and savagery under their leader Attila they were defeated in 451 A.D. at Chalon. Probably they gave their name to Hungary.

The other branch which moved into the Oxus valley was known as Ephthalites or the White Huns. In 420 A. D. they crossed the Oxus river and proved to be a source of trouble to the Persians. Bahram II was able to resist them for a short time ;

* Gibbon : *Rise and Fall of the Roman Empire* : Chapter 35.

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but later on in 484 A. D. King Feroz was defeated and killed. Soon they destroyed the last remnant of the Kushan empire in Kabul and started making short inroads into India.

First Attacks on India

The first attacks of the Huns on the Indian soil were made about the year 455 A. D., *i.e.*, about the close of Kumaragupta I's reign or the beginning of the rule of Skandagupta. Skandgaupta was able to beat back the Huns. The Huns settled down on the borders of India. In 466-67 A. D. they again attacked the Gupta empire. This time they under Khinkhila were more successful and were able to defeat the Guptas. The internal dissensions of the Guptas especially those between Skandagupta and Purugupta were responsible for this defeat.

Torman

By this time these nomadic people had also become monarchical in nature and their military leader had become king. The person who was responsible for the conquest of India was King Torman. He has left for us some coins and inscriptions. These tell us that he assumed the title of *Maharajadhiraj*.

One of Torman's inscriptions has been discovered from Airan in Madhya Pradesh, Sagar District. The other was found in the salt-range (Khewra in Pakistan Panjab). In addition his silver coins have been discovered in Malwa, Gwalior and some parts of the Panjab. Thus it is definite that he ruled over such a vast area. If Kalhana the author of *Rajatarangini* is to be believed Kashmir also formed a part of his empire. When did his reign terminate? Nothing definite is known. It is presumed that about 510-11 A. D. he died and was succeeded by his son Mihiragula.

Mihirakula or Mihiragula

Mihiragula or Mihirakula ruled his father's empire for a fairly long time with varying fortune. He was a typical Hun, *i.e.*, merciless and unscrupulous. He took pleasure in torturing humanity and one of his favourite sport was to roll down an elephant from a hill top.

In the early days Mihiragula ruled the Gandhara, the Panjab and the Malwa. His capital was Shakala or modern Sialkot. So obnoxious did he become for the rulers of India, that many

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chiefs, although usually fighting amongst themselves, joined hands in order to fight him. The confederacy was led by Baladitya of Magadha, and was joined by King Yashodharman of Central India. In the battle that followed Mihiragula was beaten and taken prisoner by Baladitya, who released him shortly afterwards.

The story has come down to us from Hiewn Tsang who came to India about a century later. It is said that in an earlier engagement Baladitya was defeated by Mihiragula, and it was to avenge that defeat that Baladitya formed a confederacy. Moreover we have no more information about King Yashodharman of Central India. He must have been an important ruler, but about his family or empire we have no idea whatsoever.

During his absence, his younger brother usurped the throne of Shakala and the vanquished Mihiragula had to take refuge with the king of Kashmir. He was given a small *jagir*. The ungrateful wretch usurped the throne of Kashmir by putting his benefactor to death. Soon he recovered his old empire and became the master of a big domain.

The Ceylone Expedition

Again Kalbana gives us an interesting story. It is said that in order to acquire a certain medicine from Ceylone, Mihiragula invaded Ceylone. He conquered Ceylone and on his way back conquered some other states. There appears to be very little truth in this statement of *Rajatarangini*. No coins, inscriptions or any other corroborating evidence has been discovered regarding this point. About 540 A. D. he died and according to Hiewn Tsang even the nature was happy over his death.

His Religion

Mihiragula was a worshipper of Lord Shiva, the Destroyer and the Sun. He was an enemy of Buddhists. He destroyed their monasteries and temples wherever he went. During the last few decades hundreds of broken statues of Lord Buddha and Bodhisatvas have been recovered from the Gandhara area (Rawalpindi to Peshawar) and it is presumed that all of them were destroyed by Mihiragula and his followers.

Their Collapse

Soon after the death of Mihiragula the Hun empire disappeared. Their power was destroyed in the Oxus valley when the Turks and the Persians

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attacked them. On the Indian soil also these Huns were not able to maintain any hold and their small states were soon wiped out.

Sung Yun's Accounts of Huns and their Civilization

A very interesting account of Mihiragula and his contemporary Huna king has been left to us by a Chinese traveller Sung Yun. He met the king of Gandhara (probably Mihiragula) in 520 A. D. He was busy fighting in Kashmir. He had also met the Great Hun Emperor in Central Asia in 519 A. D. This Emperor, Yun tells us, used to receive tributes from forty countries and his empire extended from Persia to Khotan.

The civilization of the Huns was of low standard. They did not know the art of writing. They had no system of calendar months, nor did they possess any musical instruments. They only carried fire and sword wherever they went.

The result of all this was that India suffered nearly in all walks of life. Politically it destroyed the Gupta Empire. The Guptas had been able to establish a very sound and good administration and economic and social stability. All that was undone to be followed by confusion and anarchy. *Indian culture* was the worst victim of their rapacity. As they themselves had not enjoyed the benefits of good culture, they did not let others enjoy them. Most of the Buddhist monuments in north-western India were destroyed by them. Taxila which had been almost the biggest seat of Indian learning for the last one thousand years or more, disappeared and only a few minor broken monuments were left to indicate the glory that was Taxila. The art and literature so fondly nursed by the Guptas suffered most at their hands. The absence of any historical material may be due to them to a large extent.

The infusion of the foreign blood was another important feature. It is evident that these people were soon lost in Indian society, several sub-castes grew out of this intermixing of the blood and soon they had their positions in the social set up. Some of these very people later claimed Hindu origin. Scholars like Havel are correct when they assert, "There can be little doubt that the numerous ramifications of the Rajput clans of the present day are the result of the many foreign elements which were assimilated by the Indo-Aryan Society from the fourth to the sixth centuries."*

*Havel—*Aryan Rule in India.*

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Another important feature of these people of low civilization was that the Hindu Society which had always kept its ranks open all through the last thousand years of foreign invasions, now became close-fisted by adopting strict caste rules which almost shut out foreign contact.

Lowering of moral standards was another result of this new blood. The high standard of morality which had been a marked feature of the Indian life from time immemorial was lost. The introduction of this poisoned blood into the veins of Indian people, almost killed all that was good in us. Scholars are also of opinion that the rise of despotic states in India were also due to them.

Questions.

1. 'Samudragupta, the second Gupta monarch was one of the most remarkable kings who ever ruled India." Discuss the statement. (*P. U. 1938*)

2. Mention the causes which led to the downfall of the Gupta empire, and give a brief account of the petty kingdoms that sprang upon its ruins. (*P. U. 1939*)

3. "Samudragupta was one of the most celebrated rulers and conquerors of India." Discuss and draw a map to show the extent of the empire of Samudragupta. (*P. U. 1940*)

4. Show how the Gupta epoch may be regarded as the 'golden age' of Northern India. (*P. U. 1941*)

5. Give a brief description of the cultural achievements of Chandragupta's period. (*P U. 1944*)

6. Discuss the salient features of social and cultural conditions in Northern India during the period 300-800 A. D. (*P.U. 1945*)

7. Why is the period of the Gupta known as the 'golden age' of India ? (*P. U. 1946 and 1948*)

8. Describe the progress made by Indians in arts, letters and architecture during the Gupta period. (*P. U. 1949*)

9. Describe briefly the home and foreign policy of Samudragupta. (*P. U. 1951*)

10. What light does Fahien throw on the condition of India in the fourth and early fifth century A. D. ?

11. Who were the Huns and what was the effect of their incursions into India ?

12. Write short notes on :—

(*i*) Kalidas, (*ii*) Coins of Samudragupta, (*iii*) Mihiragula, (*iv*) Yashoraman, and (*v*) The Vakatakas.

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CHAPTER XIX

GREATER INDIA

or

INDIAN COLONIAL AND CULTURAL EXPANSION

Section I—India and the West

The Term Explained

'Greater India' or 'Further India' is a term of comparatively recent origin. For almost a century and a half *i.e.*, from the last quarter of the eighteenth century to the first quarter of the twentieth century, it was asserted time and again by Western scholars that India being shut up by the northern mountains and the southern seas, developed a "unique civilization" owing to its isolationist attitude. Neither was it able to influence others, nor was it influenced by others. Such was the belief that was instilled into a school-boy's mind. This belief was further strengthened by the popular belief amongst the Hindus in the nineteenth century, that all those who crossed the high seas lost their caste.

So it is almost a pleasant surprise when the modern historian tells the tales of Indian empire overseas, and of spreading of the Indian culture and civilization both in the east and the west. The credit for all this goes to that band of research scholars who have helped us in digging up this glorious chapter of our history. Probably the earliest victim of this misconception was Alberuni who writing in the eleventh century A.D. condemned Indians as 'stay-at-home' people, and all this at a time when Indians still held a vast empire in the East Indies and Malaya Archipelago. Nor can the students of Eastern culture and civilization under-estimate the influence of India in various spheres of life in the East.

Earliest Contact with the West

Probably the earliest contact with the West took place in the days of Indus Valley Civilization. The presence in Egypt of marble and terracota seals, similar to those discovered in Harappa

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and Mohanjodaro shows that both the peoples had some sort of contact.

The next stage of this contact with the West came when Aryans moved into the Indo-Gangetic plains. This is proved by the Boghaz Koi inscriptions of the fourteenth century B.C. which contain the names of several Indian gods.

With the Persian and Greek invasions of the sixth and fourth centuries B. C. the contact between India and the western countries became all the more close and intimate. In earlier chapters we have already noted the extent of this contact.

After this the eastern and western kings often exchanged envoys. Asoka's missions carried the banner of Buddhism to western countries and it is often accepted that Christianity 'owes something to the Indian thought'. Not only Buddhism but even Brahmanism spread in the West and many a reference to Brahmanic gods is found in early Armenian history. Similarly several of the heretic thoughts confronted by the early Christians were similiar to the Indian beliefs. This also proves the early contact between the East and the West.

Commercial Activity

A Greek book *Periplus of the Eurythrean Sea* written in the first century A. D. mentions that the western coast of India was studded with a large number of harbours which were humming with trade. Ships carried goods from these ports to Persia, Arabia, Africa, and Red Sea ports. The author of the book mentions that a large number of Indian colonists had settled down in an island near the African coast for purposes of trade.

Authentic evidence is available from Roman history as Indian articles of luxury found their way to Roman markets. Pliny, a Roman writer of the first century A. D., laments that India was draining Rome of about 50 million Sesterces (£10,00.000) per year. To think that this trade was carried on by Arabs and not Indians is not fair.

It may further be added that several Indian kings exchanged envoys with Roman and other Western kings. This intimate contact led to both the countries influencing each other in literature, art and religion.

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Northern Countries

India's relations with the north are very old. We have already noted in the chapter on Races in India how our people living on the slopes of the Himalayas have distinct traces of Mangoloid blood. This contact with the north was both through the north-western passes as well as the northern passes across Himalayas which remain open for a very short period only in the year. Through the north-western passes the Indian caravans crossed over to Balkh, which was the meeting place for Chinese, Indian and western merchants. The commercial contact was followed by political activity. Besides the conquest of Kabul, Kandhar and Herat, Indians carved out a state in Khotan. Sir Aurel Stein in his monumental works *Ser India* and *Innermost Asia* gives a very detailed account of the excavations done in these regions. He has conclusively proved that vast areas in Central Asia owed their civilization to India. The art of writing, religion and other important features of civilization and culture were taken over from India.

China

Contact with China was established both by sea and land route. Of course the land route was mostly used. The contact with China was actuated by religious zeal. Several Buddhist preachers went to China to spread the message of Buddha. On the other hand bands of Chinese pilgrims came to India to visit the holy places and study the scriptures. The contact with China can be traced at least to second century B. C., if not earlier. This contact continued for several centuries and scores of Chinese travellers came and carried away Buddhist texts to their own country. These texts are new being re-translated into Indian languages. The names of Fahien, Heiwn Tsang and Itsing are well-known in the list of the Chinese who visited India.

Tibet

In the case of Tibet the contribution of India is even greater. About the seventh century A. D. Tibet became Buddhist. Not only did the Indians give this country their religion, but also the art of writing. The Tibetans were regularly inviting priests from India to teach them more about Buddhism. Scores of Sanskrit books were translated by them into Tibetan language. In this list of Indian scholars who played an important role in cultural life of Tibet the names of Lipidatta (one who gives the Script), Shanta Rakshita, the High Priest of Nalanda, Kamalsila and Atisa are very important.

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CHAPTER I

THE RAJPUTS

Harsha was the last of the great Hindu rulers of ancient India. After his death in 647 A.D. India plunged into confusion and disorder. There was no paramount power. The country was parcelled out into small independent kingdoms always warring among themselves. The chiefs and nobles of Harsha, and all those tributary *rajas* who had been subdued by him now set themselves to the task of establishing their independent authority. It was in this general chaos that a warlike people, the Rajputs, who were unheard of before, suddenly leapt into prominence. They dominated the political scene from the beginning of the eighth century to the end of the twelfth century. Hence this period is generally called the Rajput Period.

India after Harsha.

The picture of the social conditions is equally bad. The caste system was becoming rigid, and change from one caste to another was becoming almost impossible. Each caste was further divided into new sub-castes. Several factors such as new occupations, migration, and marriage into other castes were responsible for this sub-division. Freedom of women was gradually decreasing. Widow marriage was considered dishonourable. The practice of *Sati* or self-immolation of widows was slowly growing. Untouchability was rearing its head. Foreign travel came to be looked down upon. We lost touch with the developments taking place in the neighbouring countries. The general absence of foreign invasions bred in us a false security.

Social conditions.

In the religious domain we lost creative life intellectually and spiritually. In place of high philosophical flights we sank into rites, ceremonies and superstitions. Buddhism practically died out; but Jainism continued to hold sway

Religious conditions.

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in Gujrat, Malwa and Rajputana. Hinduism also underwent a change. The Vedas were ignored, and their place was taken by the worship of Shiva, Vishnu and Shakti. Idol-worship also became widely prevalent, many superstitions like fasts and sacrifices crept into the Hindu religion. This brought still greater dissatisfaction to the low-caste people already groaning under various handicaps.

Several leaders sprang up to crush Buddhism and to revive Hinduism. Kumarila Bhatta, the renowned new Hindu missionary fought Buddhism and revived Vedic rites and ceremonies. The greatest sage of the age was Shankaracharya. He was a Nambudri Brahman of Malabar. He travelled throughout the country. He condemned Buddhism and preached Vedantism. He insisted on the path of knowledge and asceticism to attain salvation. Shankaracharya almost entirely neglected the *Bhakti marg* or the path of devotion as a means of salvation. This need was met by other philosophers notably Ramanuja. He felt that most of the people required a personal God at times of difficulties and troubles. He, therefore, preached devotion, service, love and self-surrender to personal God. He was the founder of new Vaishnavaism. The most popular of the personal Gods of this period were Vishnu, Shiva, Rama, Krishna, and mother-power called by various names such as Lakshmi, Devi, Durga, Kali, Chandi and Uma.

General.

As regards economic life the people were happy and prosperous, with the accumulated wealth of five centuries of peace, commerce and colonisation. There was no sense of unity and common brotherhood. The ideal of Bharat Varsha had faded into oblivion. The sentiments of patriotism did not exist. Nobody thought of the country's unity and independence. The political structure of the State was based on a corrupt bureaucracy. Thus India at the opening of the eighth century was politically divided, socially decadent, religiously resurgent, and economically prosperous.

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The term Rujput means the son of a Raja. Originally it was applied to those people who belonged to the martial races of Rajasthan. In modern times Rajput descent has been claimed by a host of people belonging to all sections of society. According to Dr. V. A. Smith "the term Rajput, as applied to a social group, has no concern with race, descent or relationship by blood. It merely denotes a tribe, clan, sect or caste of warlike habits, the members of which claimed aristocratic rank and were treated by the Brahmans as representing the Kshatriyas of the old books."

Meaning of Rajput.

[Oxford History of India, 2nd edition, p. 175.]

The pre-Harsha Sanskrit literature does not mention the word Rajput. This shows that the Rajputs came into prominence in the beginning of the eighth century A. D. There are various theories regarding the origin and composition of the Rajputs. (1) According to one view, advocated among others by Colonel Tod, the famous historian of Rajasthan, they are the descendants of foreign tribes who settled in India during the period of the break-up of the Gupta empire. (2) The other group of historians, mostly Indians, headed by Vaidya and Ojha, believe that they are not foreigners but Indians, and most likely the descendants of the ancient Kshatriyas. (3) There is also a tradition of mythological origin of the Rajputs. (4) The general opinion, however, is that the Rajputs had a mixed origin.

Origin of the Rajputs.

Numerous invaders have been coming to our country from time immemorial. Most of them settled here, and in course of time, were completely absorbed in the Indian people. The prominent among such invaders were the warlike tribes of the Bactrians, the Sakas, the Pailtrians, the Kushanas and the Hunas, etc. Colonel Tod is of the view that these tribes after some lapse of time became the sword arm of India and became the champions of Hinduism and Brahmanism. The Brahmans, therefore, pleased their protectors by giving to the leading tribes the high

(a) Foreign origin.

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sounding title of 'Rajput'. The humbler ones among them came to be known as the Jats, Ahirs and Gujars, etc., although essentially they also belonged to the same racial stock as the Rajputs. This view appears to be nearer truth, although it does not say the whole truth.

(b) Descendants of Ancient Kshatriyas.

A group of historians led by Gauri Shankar Ojha and C. V. Vaidya, refuses to accept Colonel Tod's view. They hold that the Rajputs are the descendants of the ancient Kshatriyas, who had fallen into oblivion during the last few centuries. They argue that the customs, manners, habits and ethnology of the modern Rajputs, all show that they are typically Aryans and as such they could not have descended from the foreign tribes. Their origin is further connected with the "Suryavanshi" and "Chandravanshi" (Solar and Lunar) dynasties. The modern ruling families of Bikaner, Udaipur, Jaipur and Jaiselmer have a tradition of such a descent. As there is no sound basis to support this theory, we are unable to attach much importance to this view. It is possible that some of the Rajputs might have some connection with the Kshatriyas of old times but not all. No importance can be attached to the "Solar" and "Lunar" descent traditions.

(c) Agnikula Theory.

There is also a legendary account of the origin of the Rajputs given by the well-known bard of Rajputana—Chand Bardai—in his famous book "Prithvi Raj Raso" which belongs more to fiction than to history. According to this legend, when Parshu Ram in his fit of rage axed all the Kshatriyas , there was no race of warriors left to protect Hindu religion. The Brahmans, therefore, assembled in a big gathering at Mount Abu in Rajputana to perform a *Havana* to pray for the birth of a new race of warriors and champions of the Brahmanical faith. Out of the cauldron of fire sprang forth four warriors—the Parihars, the Ponwars, the Chalukyas and the Chauhans, who became the forefathers of their respective Rajput clans. Most probably this story pertains to the rite of purification by fire which might have been performed when some of the foreign tribes were initiated to Hinduism.

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None of the above-mentioned theories appears to be wholly true. Historians have given much thought to all these views and generally most of them are of the view that the Rajputs are neither wholly foreigners nor are all of them the descendants of the Kshatriyas. The truth lies somewhere in between, and they conclude by saying that the Rajputs are a mixed race. Racially, they belong to the same stock as the Panjabis, the Sindhis or any other North Indians do. We can conclude the controversy in the words of Dr. V. A. Smith, "Thus the Kshatriya or Rajput group of castes is at present essentially an occupational group composed of all clans following the Hindu ritual who actually undertook the work of government; consequently people of most diverse races were and are lumped together as Rajputs; and most of the great Rajput clans now in existence, in spite of their hoary pedigrees are descended either from foreign immigrants or from indigenous races such as the Gonds and Bhars."

(d) Mixed origin.

[V. A. Smith, Early History of India, 4th edition, pp. 480-81.]

QUESTION

Give reasons that led to the rise of the Rajputs. What do you know about their origin ?

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CHAPTER II

THE RAJPUT CIVILISATION AND CULTURE

The Rajputs practised hereditary monarchy in their political life. The Rajput King exercised unlimited powers, although generally in practice his rule was humane and benevolent. He had no Council of peoples' representatives to guide him in administration or war. He, however, appointed ministers to help him in administration and could dismiss them at his will. The minister was more like a secretary rather than an adviser. Generally the number of the ministers was in the neighbourhood of ten. The various portfolios included peace and war, foreign relations, army, land revenue and religious endowments, etc. Legislation was not necessary as the guiding principles were taken from Manu.

Administration (a) The King.

Each kingdom was divided into provinces known as 'Bhukti', 'Mandal' or 'Rashtra'. The province was further divided into districts called 'Vishaya' which was made up of a number of villages, known as 'Gramas'. The Viceroy of each province was called 'Rajasthaniya', the district head as the 'Vishayapati' and the village headman as the 'Gramapati'. The villages enjoyed local autonomy under their Panchayats. The Panchayats collected land revenue, dispensed justice and looked after works of public good and other necessities of villagers. An officer appointed by the king supervised the work of the Panchayats. The punishments were severe, and trials by ordeal were common. The Brahmans and Kshatriyas were not awarded capital punishment; they were banished from the country.

(b) Division of Kingdom.

The armies of the Rajput kings consisted of the levies of the Rajput nobles known as 'Samantas'. The standing armies were rare and small. The soldiers generally fought on foot with swords, bows and arrows. The nobles used

Army and warfare.

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elephants or chariots. Cavalry was also employed but on very rare occasions. The soldiers recognised their chief as their only commander. Generally different sections of the Rajput army were trained and looked after by separate systems, so there could be no unity of command. The soldiers were generally unconscious of their loyalty towards the king or country. They owed allegiance to their immediate chief and clan. The absence or death of the chief created confusion in the Rajput camp and was more often than not, the cause of Rajput defeats in their battles. They fought most enthusiastically against the invaders, but once beaten, they remained loyal to them.

A Rajput was always ready to fight for the weak and the oppressed. Even in the battlefield the Rajputs followed a high code of honour. A Rajput would never take advantage of the weakness of the enemy. For example, he would not attack the enemy while he was asleep or unprepared for battle or running away from the battlefield. He hated treachery, deceit and falsehood. As the foreigners did not observe these scruples, the Rajputs always suffered defeats. Another trait of the character of a Rajput soldier was that he would not run away from the battlefield, He always preferred death to dishonour. When the enemy was too strong, he would not sue for peace but would die fighting to the bitter end by performing the famous 'Jauhar'. The womenfolk would perform 'Sati' (self-immolation in flames). It was this chivalrous character of Rajputs which endeared them to every Indian.

Social Life: (a Organisation of society.

The Rajputs formed one community without distinction and they freely inter-married. They, however, had fullest belief in caste system. They were also socially divided into clans and tribes. They offered implicit obedience to their chief, although they all considered their chief to be just equal to them, having the same blood in his veins as they had. They also had some sense of communal property. They married their daughters into a higher clan and themselves married into an equal or slightly lower family. They held their women in high

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esteem and staked their lives to protect their honour and life. The women regarded their husbands as their god. They considered life worth living only so long as their 'Swami' (husband) lived. The women would burn themselves alive on the pyre of the husbands. They did not observe *purdah*. A Rajputani out of sheer patriotism would not admit her husband to home if he were defeated and ran for safety. She was a very well-dressed lady—wearing jingling ornaments, gaudy dresses and ornamented shoes. No Rajput would like to perform any manual labour. The lower castes did the ploughing and other odd jobs.

The Rajputs were deeply religious. It was due to the Rajputs that Hinduism received new vigour and strength.

(*b*) Religion.

Buddhism and Jainism declined, the former almost completely vanished from the land of its birth during this period. Brahmans also were highly respected. The Rajputs were the worshippers of Vishnu, Aditya, Siva, Ganpati, Bhagwati and Kali. They built great shrines in the honour of these gods and goddesses. The Puranas were re-edited and amplified.

The Rajput kings were great patrons of literature and art. They patronised every branch of learning—sciences, medicine, philosophy and law. The Rajput Age produced eminent writers like Bhavabhuti, the author of *Malati Madhava*; Kalhana, the chronicler of Kashmir; Chand Bardai, the author of *Prithvi Raj Raso* and the poet King Bhoj of Malwa, etc., etc. There flourished great centres of learning in different parts of India. Beautiful temples, which are living examples of high Rajput taste and perfection, are found all over India. The most famous of these temples are those at Bhuvaneshwara in Orissa, the temples of Siva at Udaipur and Khajuraho in Bundelkhand.

Learning and Art

The ninth, tenth and eleventh centuries in Northern India can be called the Golden Age of Rajput civilisation. The country achieved such tremendous heights in art, literature and the general condition of the people was so good that it almost reminds the reader of the Gupta Age. Trade was on the increase

A Golden Age.

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and various new vocations and crafts were developed. Poets, bards and learned men received lavish patronage from kings and nobles. Beautiful new temples were built, which were richly endowed by the rulers. There were no foreign invaders during the earlier half and no feuds or strifes. India was, for some time at least, 'Swatantra'. We get glimpses of the prosperity of the land from the writings of Arab travellers who write that the kingdom of Kanauj was particularly free from robbers. The people were law-abiding, peaceful and contented. But unfortunately this state of affairs could not continue for long. Soon mutual jealousies of the Rajputs combined with foreign invasions, destroyed the structure that had brought the people so much relief and happiness.

Causes of the downfall of the Rajputs.

With such chivalry and well-organized system of government, why did the Rajputs fall before the Musalmans? It is not true to say that the Rajputs had become slothful, lazy or weak due to the tropical climate they were living in. On the other hand, as far as personal bravery and heroism is concerned, the Rajputs fought with the same endurance, courage and strength as their opponents. The reasons of their defeat lie in a different sphere.

The foremost cause of the success of the Muslims was their better social structure. The Muslims belonged to one brotherhood of Islam, whereas among the Rajputs there was the distinction of high, low and lower on the basis of caste system. This created class divisions among the Indians and so they could never stand together—not even before a common enemy. Again, there could not be much strength in a society where the business of defending the country was entrusted to a handful of peoples while the rest of the community looked on the struggle unconcerned. Moreover, the lowest castes were averse to the results of the struggle. For them Indian victory or defeat made no difference. They had to act as the beasts of burden, whether for the old masters or the new ones, and it meant little change to them. Indian defeat might as well please them because they would have the satisfaction

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of seeing their previous oppressors coming under the same yoke along with them ! Why should they fight the enemy? They had nothing at stake !

Another cause of the failure of the Rajputs was inferiority of their military organisation. The Indians had no unity of command. Their soldiers were a mass of undisciplined hoards brought together in a hurry. Their modes of warfare were out-of-date and too well-known to the enemy. They would not exploit the weakness of the enemy. The use of elephants always proved harmful. The Muslims fought on horseback. So their movements were quicker. Their method of warfare was more elastic.

Thus the superior social structure of the Muslims, which evoked stronger sentiments of union and a higher sense of human worth and the superior military tactics of the Muslims combined with their zeal and vigour, were responsible for the triumph of the invaders.

QUESTIONS

1. Describe the civilisation and culture of the Rajputs.
2. Why were the Rajputs not able to build a strong Indian empire ? Give the causes of their defeat at the hands of the Muslim invaders.

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CHAPTER III

THE KINGDOMS OF THE DECCAN 1200 A.D.

Meaning of the 'Deccan'.

The word 'Deccan' is 'Dakohina' in Sanskrit, which means the 'South.' Roughly, the Deccan or South India is further divided into two distinct parts—the Maharashtra, the Canarese Districts of the Bombay State, the State of Hyderabad forming one part and the Tamil-speaking lands of Far-South, across the rivers Tungabhadra and Krishna up to Cape Comorin, forming the other.

Although the table-land of the Deccan is as old as any other part of India, but due to its distance from the seats of Northern Indian powers, its history has remained comparatively obscure. The Deccan became the shelter of the original Indian culture and people. No invaders, not even the Aryans, could penetrate into the South.* It was mostly due to the geographical barrier—the Vindhyas—that no foreign invaders ever felt encouraged to enter the hazardous South. In the South was, therefore, preserved the original Indian culture and blood. In the long history of our country only a very few North Indian monarchs—Asoka, Samudragupta, in the ancient period ; and Ala-ud-din Khilji, Muhamad Tughlaq, Akbar and Auangzeb in the medieval and modern periods, attempted the conquest of the South. But barring one or two of these, the others found the occupation of the South, not only very difficult and uneconomical but politically unwise also. They allowed the South to run its own course. That is the reason why the history of Southern and Northern India is so radically different.

*Dr. Sir R.G. Bhandarkar is, however, of the view that some exploratary parties of the Aryans did penetrate into the South as far as Tanjore and Madura by the year 350 B.C. But no Aryan colonisation of the South took place at that stage. (Bombay Gazetteer Vol. I, Part II, p. 141).

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History of the Deccan before third century A.D.

(a) Political Affairs.

Our knowledge about the history of the South becomes definite after the establishment of the Mauryan rule. The inscriptions of the Asokan period clearly show that the whole of the Deccan and South India as far as Madras was conquered by the Mauryans. After the death of Asoka, however, the Andhras became independent.

The Andhras became the first great power of the Deccan. Gautamiputra Satakarni was their great ruler who held sway in the whole of Mysore plateau. Vashisthputra Sri Pulymayi succeeded Satakarni and he contracted matrimonial alliance with Rudradaman the great king of the Sakas. But Pulymayi and Rudradaman could not remain on good terms for long and the former received two reverses at the hands of the latter. Yajna Sri Satavahana, who succeeded to the throne in the latter part of the second century B.C. continued to fight against the Saka Satraps and recovered some of the territories conquered by Rudradaman. But the dynasty came to an end during the third century A.D.

In the farther Tamil South, the Cholas occupied the north eastern portion, the Cheras or Keralas occupied the south-western region and the region between the two was occupied by the Pandyas. These three Tamil kingdoms were constantly at war with one another. In the first century A.D. the Cholas acquired ascendancy over the others, and in the second century A.D. the Cheras had the upper hand. Lastly the Pandyas overthrew both and held power from the second to the fourth century A.D. (For fuller details, see next chapter).

(b) The condition of the People.

The country was very prosperous. The chief products were pepper and other spices, besides pearls and precious stones. Merchants from far and near came to carry these goods. Even Romans came to trade with the Tamils. The result was that the country became very rich and it helped them to develop their art and crafts. Hinduism,

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(c) Religion. Jainism and Buddhism were all practised by the people. But Hinduism was growing in popularity. The Satavahanas (Andhras) and other kings performed the typically Hindu rite of Asva Medha Yagya. Siva was the chief deity. There was, however, no intolerance. The King, patronised Buddhism as well.

(d) Economic Life. It was a period of great prosperity. Indian trade and commerce was at its highest pitch. Merchants from distant lands like China, Rome, Persia and Arabia came to carry Indian goods in exchange for gold and silver. The chief exports were spices, pearls, precious stones and textiles of the finest quality.

(e) Art and Literature A new style of architecture very beautiful in design, lofty in structure, decorated and massive, was coming into existence. There was very little of foreign influence in this style and it was typically Indian. In sculpture, however, the influence of the Gandhara school of art was manifest.

In literature also the people were quite progressive. The language of the court was Prakrit, although Sanskrit was also used in literary sphere. All important books dealing with religion, science and philosophy were written in Sanskrit. As a matter of fact this language was widely understood. Even Buddhists and Jains employed Sanskrit in their works. It was probably due to the growth of the Mahayanist ideas. Nagarjuna and Asvaghosa, the two great Buddhist sages lived during this period. Thus on the whole this period marked an all-round progress of the people.

History of the Deccan from A.D. 300 to 700

On the fall of the Satavahana dynasty the Deccan became divided into numerous small states. In the Eastern Deccan several small dynasties held sway. It can be surmised that Samudra Gupta led his expedition against them.

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In the central region the Vakatakas came into prominence. They produced two great rulers—Rudrasena and Harisena. The dynasty was replaced in the 6th century by the Kalachuris.

(a) Vakatakas.

In the western region, in the third century the Abhiras ruled in the North, the Rashtrikas in the centre and many other small states also came into power.

(b) Abhiras and Rashtrikas.

The most important of these were, however, the Chalukyas, who rose into prominence in the middle of the sixth century. As Dr. V.A. Smith rightly remarks, it is with the rise of the Chalukyas that the regular history of the Deccan begins. They dominated the South from the fifth to the eighth centuries and again from the latter half of the tenth to the twelfth centuries. Their first king was Gayasimha, a military adventurer who wrested Maharashtra from its native rulers the Rashtrakutas.

(c) Chalukyas.

The next important ruler was Pulakesin I who ascended the throne in 550 A.D. He was a great general and added many valuable territories to his kingdom. He made Vatapi in Bijapur district of Bombay State, as his capital and assumed the proud titles of 'Prithivi Vallabh' (lover of Earth) and 'Satyasraya' (Supporter of Truth). He built beautiful buildings including magnificent temples dedicated to Siva. Pulakesin died in 567 A.D. and was succeeded by his son Kirtivarman who continued to rule peacefully till his death in 591 A.D. As his son who succeeded him was a minor, he appointed his brother Mangalisa the regent. Mangalisa was foolish enough to try to usurp the throne for his son. His nephew took up arms against the uncle and the latter was defeated and slain. This nephew was the famous Pulakesin II.

(d) Pulakesin I.

Pulakesin II was the greatest king of this dynasty and his authority was dreaded by all kings of the South. His fame spread to distant lands because of the vast conquests. He subdued the whole of the Deccan in 23 years from 611 to 634 A.D. He

(e) Pulakesin II.

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also subjugated the Rashtrakutas who were striving to re-establish their power. He next reduced the Kadamba and Ganga rulers. The kings of Konkan, Malwa and Gurjara also submitted. His greatest achievement was the successful resistance of the authority of the mighty Harsha Vardhana, the Emperor of the North, who sought to subdue the South. Harsha was defeated. This was a great event in the history of the South. This is a great tribute to Pulakesin's generalship, organisation and administrative system. Pulakesin is also credited with the conquest of the extreme southern States of the Cholas, the Pandyas and the Keralas. He is also believed to have attacked the Pallava King Mahendravarman, but the outcome of the attack is not clearly known. It is possible that Pulakesin was not successful in occupying the Pallava capital.

The King of Persia, Khusrau II, hearing of the greatness of Pulakesin, sent him an embassy with rich presents in 625 A.D. It was also in his time that Hiuen Tsang, the famous Chinese traveller, visited the South. Hiuen Tsang has left a graphic picture of what he saw at Pulakesin II's court. The pilgrim has bestowed lavish praise on his system of administration which brought happiness to the people and worked very well.

The end of Pulakesin was, however, not very happy. Most probably he was killed in an attack on his capital by the Pallava ruler, Narasimhavarman, the son of Mahendravarman in 653 A.D.

Vikramaditya I succeeded Pulakesin II in 653 A.D. He is believed to have avenged the death of his father by attacking and defeating the Pallavas but the result of the battle is not certain. The Pallava records state that he was defeated thrice. Vikramaditya was succeeded by Vinayaditya I, Vinayaditya II and Vikramaditya II, all of whom carried on incessant struggle against the Pallavas. The last king in 740 scored a splendid victory over the Pallava king, Nandipotavarman, who was forced to run away from his capital. Vikramaditya also subdued the Pandya, Chola, Kerala and Kalabhra kings of the Far-South.

(f) Successors of Pulakesin II.

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(g) The rise of the Pallavas.

The Pallavas were another powerful ruling family of the South. When the Satavahana kingdom broke up in the third century A.D., the Pallavas were the feudatories of this kingdom. They soon carried out independent territories for themselves and thus they laid the foundation of their Empire. The first great king was Sinhavishnu who succeeded to the throne in 590 A. D. He defeated the Cholas and Pandyas and also the king of Ceylon. His successor, Mahendravarman, was, however, defeated by Pulakesin II, as has been seen above. His son, Narsinhavarman was more successful against the Chalukyas. Later on internal quarrels led to the defeat of the Pallavas, who were forced to pay tribute to the Chalukyas. Their power continued to wane till by the ninth century they ceased to exist as a political power. All of the Pallava Kings were followers of Siva. They gave great impetus to the revival of Sanskrit. They built beautiful Hindu temples.

(h) State of society and culture.

During this period education in the Deccan and South India seems to have reached a high pitch. There was the University of Kavehi which like Nalanda, the University of the North, dominated the intellectual life of the South. There were other schools and colleges also. The most famous was the Salogti College, built and endowed by the foreign minister of Kristina III of the Rashtrakuta dynasty. The college was supported by public subscription which was paid at the time of religious ceremonies. The students were given free education. Other colleges were generally attached to Hindu temples.

The Pallavas made great contribution to Indian culture. They created a style of architecture which later became the basis of the style of the South. Painting also developed new technique and some of the modern trends. Many Pallava kings were also poets and patrons of literature.

In the religious sphere new changes took place. The Siva and Vishnu cults of the South, resembling Bhakti, took birth during these days. The Jain and Buddhist

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religions lost ground. The Aryanisation of the South was also completed during this period. Sanskrit now became more popular.

The economic development of the country during this period was great. Agriculture was the principal industry, but arts and crafts were also flourishing vigorously. The writers of the age speak of 64 *Kalas* (arts) among which were included metal, cloth, leather, stone, wood, gold and many other industries. The art of ship-building and navigation was also popular. This was indeed the golden age of Southern India. The people were prosperous. Art and literature also made similar progress.

History of the Deccan A.D. 700—1200

(a) Revival of the Rashtrakutas : Dantidurga.

The last of the Chalukya kings Kirtivarman II was defeated by one of his own vassals Dantidurga, who was a Rashtrakuta chief. Thus once again the Rashtrakutas got ascendancy in the Deccan. They dominated the Deccan for two hundred and fifty years from the middle of the eighth century when Dantidurga came to power near about the year 754 A.D. He also forced into submission the rulers of Kanchi, Kalinga and Srisaila. But he became unpopular and was consequently deposed by his uncle Krishna I.

(b) Krishna I

Krishna reigned some time between 754 A.D. and 775 A.D. A great achievement of Krishna was the construction of a huge temple of Siva at Ellora—a rock-cut, marvel representing Siva's Himalayan Paradise.

(c) Govinda II, Dhruva and Govinda III.

Govinda II succeeded Krishna but was soon supplanted by his brother Dhruva. Dhruva ruled very successfully and he even entertained thoughts of invading the Ganga and the Jumna valley. Govinda III, who came to the throne after Dhruva may justly claim to be the most remarkable king of the line. He defeated the Gunjaras and the Malavas. His dominions extended from the Vindhyas to the river Tungabhadra.

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It was during the reign of Amoghavarsha, the son of Govinda III, who ruled from 815 to 870 A.D. that the Rashtrakutas reached the height of their glory. It can be called the Golden Age of the dynasty. Art and literature greatly prospered under him. An Arab merchant, Sulaiman who visited his court in 851 A.D. regarded him as one of the four greatest kings of the world—the others being the Caliph of Baghdad, the Emperor of China and the Emperor of Constantinople.

(*d*) Amoghavarsha.

The next ruler of note was Krisnna III (940-966 A.D.). He fought against the Cholas and defeated their king Rajaditya.

(*e*) Krishna III.

The end of the Rashtrakutas was brought about dramatically enough by a scion of the old Chalukyas whom the Rashtrakutas had overthrown about three centuries before. The new dynasty was known as the Later Chalukyas.

The Rashtrakutas were great patrons of art and learning. They were also no religious bigots. Although they were the worshippers of Siva and Vishnu, yet Buddhism and Jainism greatly flourished. Under them trade with Arabia developed to a considerable extent. The people were happy and prosperous in their regime.

(*f*) Achievements of the Rashtrakutas.

As has been seen above the Chalukyas revived their power by the end of the tenth century A.D. They continued in power till about 1200 A.D. During this period the dynasty was engaged in a continuous struggle against its neighbours in particular the Cholas. Their kings of note were : (1) Somesvara I (1042-1068) who scored important victories against the Chola kings,—*Rajadhiraja*, (2) Vikramaditya VI (1076-1126) was perhaps the greatest of the line. He had an eventful career fighting against rebels and enemies. He was a great patron of letters and religion. Famous poets lived at his court. The most famous of these was the Kashmiri poet Bilhana and Vijnaneswara, the author of 'Mitakshara'—the great authority on Hindu Law. After

(*g*) The later Chalukyas.

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him the Chalukyan Empire suffered a decline and towards the end of the twelfth century it came to an end.

(*h*) The Yadavas of Devgiri.

The Yadavas of Devgiri were one of the successors of the Chalukyas. They claimed descent from Lord Krishna. The Yadavas ruled for long and out of a list of about twenty-five kings, the most powerful was Bhillama who ruled from 1187 to 1191. He fought against the Hoysalas of Dwarsamudra, who were forced to retire across the river Tungabhadra. His grandson Singhana (1210-47) was also very powerful. He invaded Gujarat and other places and he was responsible for extensive additions to his Empire. But his power was short-lived.

The next important ruler of the line was Rama Chandra, during whose reign Ala-ud-din Khilji attacked the Deccan in 1294 and carried large booty from his capital Devgiri. Malik Kafur also sacked the capital in 1306. By 1318 the dynasty came to an end.

QUESTIONS

1. How do you distinguish between Northern India, the Deccan and South India ?

2. Give a brief account of the Chalukyas.

3. Describe the state of society and culture in the Deccan (*a*) before third century A. D., and (*b*) at the time of Harsha.

4. State what you know briefly about the Deccan kingdoms at the time of Muslim invasions of the South.

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CHAPTER IV

THE FAR-SOUTHERN OR TAMIL STATES TO 1200 A.D.

Introduction.

As has been pointed out elsewhere the term 'Deccan' and 'South India' are not interchangeable. Commonly, South India means that portion of the Indian peninsula which lies to the South of the river Krishna. This is also called Tamil-speaking areas. In this chapter this history of these Far-South Indian States known as Chola, Chera and Pandya, will be discussed.

South India consists of three well-marked natural divisions—the Malabar Coast, the strip of plain between the Eastern ghats and the Bay of Bengal, and the plateau between the Eastern and Western Ghats.

The population and culture of this land is non-Aryan. They are mostly Dravidian or pre-Dravidian people. They speak Tamil languages, which are non-Aryan languages. The study of the history of these people is, therefore, of special interest.

From the earliest times the South has been split up into three political zones—based mostly upon geographical demarcation—the Chera, the Chola and the Pandya. These States were constantly at war with one another.

In the present state of our knowledge, an accurate historical survey of these Tamil kingdoms before 700 A.D. is not possible. It is only in the beginning of the ninth century A.D. that some authentic records *i.e.*, copper plates and stone inscriptions begin to throw some light on the history of these kingdoms. Of these States the most famous was the kingdom of the Cholas and the history of this State covers the history of the entire region.

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Vijayalaya was the first ruler of the Cholas. Under him the Cholas became the leading power of the South.

Vijayalaya and Aditya.

His son Aditya, however, added more territories to the kingdom by defeating the last of the Pallava rulers, Aparajita.

It was, however, Rajaraja who was the greatest ruler of the line. He was not only a great conqueror but like Akbar the Great, a great statesman too.

Rajaraja the Great 985-1012.

He conquered the whole of the present Madras Presidency and also Mysore and some parts of Ceylon. He completely routed the Pandyas and the Cheras.

Rajaraja was a great builder like Shah Jahan. The famous Rajarajeswara Temple at Tanjore was built by him. He also reminds the reader, of Akbar in his tolerant religious policy. Although he himself was a Saivite he had given full freedom to the Buddhists and the Jainis. He also evolved an efficient system of administration.

Rajendra succeeded his father in 1012. He carried on the traditions of his illustrious father. He also expanded in the North and is credited with the

Rajendra 1012-42.

conquest of the Ganga Doab, Bengal, Bihar and Kalinga. Rajendra developed his naval power to a large extent. He possibly invaded Sumatra, the Malaya archipelago and the Nicobars.

Rajadhiraje was another notable ruler of the line. After the reign of Rajendra Deva, Raja Mahendra and Virarajendra, the throne was acquired by Kulottunga, the Eastern Chalukya Prince in 1070 because his mother was the daughter of Rajendra (1012-1042). In this way the Chola and Eastern Chalukya crowns were united under one head. Kulottunga was a great ruler. He was mainly a great reformer and consolidator. He, like Sher Shah Suri, gave peace and prosperity to the people and was looked upon by them as a great saviour. His age was also truly great in the sphere of art and literature. The famous Ramanuja also lived during

Rajadhiraje

Kulottunga 1070-1118.

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his reign, but he is said to have run away from his dominions to avoid persecution. The great Tamil classic *Kalingattupparani* composed by the court poet Jayangondan was also prepared during his reign. Other famous literary figures were Adiyarkkeinallar and Sekkilar.

With the death of Kulottunga, the Cholas began to decline. There were formidable rebellions in the frontier provinces. The Pandyas started invading the Cholas and the situation became more serious due to incessant civil strife. The Hoysalas declared their independence. The Nellore chiefs also carried out independent territories for themselves. Similarly the Sambuvarayan and Kakatiyas chiefs planted themselves in Kanchi and other southward areas. The Chola power ceased to exist by the middle of the 13th century. Thereafter political ascendancy passed on to the Pandyas.

Chola Administration

The administration of the Cholas deserves special mention. The system of administration was built on very scientific lines. There was remarkable resemblance between this and the later Suri and Mughal administration. Even Sivaji's administration appears to have been largely influenced by Chola system. It is, therefore, that we should study the system in detail.

(*a*) Importance

The empire was divided into six provinces known as *Mandalams*. The number of the provinces continued to fluctuate but it was never more than six. Each province was further divided into Districts and Tehsils known as *Kottams* and *Valanadus* respectively. Each *Nadu* was further subdivided into *Kurrams* or villages or zails. The village was the unit of administration. The *Mandalam* was under a Viceroy, who either belonged to the royal family or was a dispossessed chief whose kingdom had been annexed.

(*b*) Division.

It appears from the existence of various popular and semi-popular assemblies that the Cholas had entrusted the representatives of the people with the subjects which touched

(c) Representative Bodies.

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the interests of the people in general. The following popular assemblies existed :—

(*i*) **The Nattar.**—It was a district body which discussed subjects concerning the district as a whole.

(*ii*) **Urar or Village Assembly.**—This was the general assembly of the village. Most of the village administration was entrusted to it. It managed land revenue, village taxes, and looked after the safety and comforts of the people. Village sanitation and roads were also entrusted to it. Minor disputes and even serious cases with the consent of the parties were decided by it. The Assembly was independent in its jurisdiction. The King's officer only supervised and guided their activities. The members of the Assembly were elected by the people within their own localities. Various sub-committees for the discharge of some special functions were also constituted when necessary.

(*iii*) **Sabhas.**—There was another assembly of the village called *Sabha* or *Mahasabha*. This can be called the Council of Elders and Religious Heads or the Upper Chamber. It was composed wholly of Brahmans. Each holder of a share in a Brahman village had a right to a seat in the *Sabha*. The qualifications essential for a member were : (*i*) to be well-versed in Dharamshastras, (*ii*) to be resident of the village, and (*iii*) to be of sound mind and body. There were elaborate rules of qualification and disqualification. For example, candidates for membership must own more than a quarter of *Veli* of tax-paying land *i.e.*, about two acres. He must be chaste and good, must have honest means of livelihood and must not have been a member of the other body for the last three years. The method of membership was both by election and selection. There were four principal committees of the *Sabha* for (*i*) annual supervision, (*ii*) temple and tank supervision, (*iii*) garden supervision, and (*iv*) supervision of justice. These *sabhas* existed in the whole of South India including Chera, Pandya and Pallava Kingdoms, besides Karnataka.

The *Sabha* was also known as *Porumakkal* (the big men) and the *Parudai* or the *Parishad*. As a matter of fact it was an executive body—senior to the Urar.

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The Central Government

(*d*) The King.

The King was the head of the State. He had no popular Assembly at the centre to guide him in state matters. He had a large number of officers to assist him in the administration. The Private Secretary, known as the *Olai Nayagan* was most important.

(*e*) Military organisation

The army of the Cholas was very well-organised. No government in those days could hope to exist unless its army was not only well-disciplined and loyal and also large in numbers. There was no feudal system of army organisation. The army was organised in four branches—infantry, cavalry, archers and the elephants corps. Navy also existed. As a matter of fact the Cholas are famous for the development of naval power.

(*f*) Revenue and expenditure.

The revenue system of the Cholas was efficient. The land was measured and separate lists of tax-free lands were kept. Tax-free lands were either those endowed for religious purposes or which were unproductive. One-sixth of the gross produce was charged as land-revenue. It could be paid either in cash or kind, as convenient to the peasant. Many other taxes were also charged, such as professional taxes, octroi duties, sales-tax and *abiana*. The works of public utility and religious buildings received large grants. Irrigation was given special attention. Canals from Godavari and Caveri were taken out. The Cholas introduced, if not originated, a style of construction which was widely adopted even outside the empire. They also chalked out a plan of improving deltaic lands which aroused admiration even of foreigners. Modern dam construction idea was first conceived by the Cholas.

(*g*) Arts and crafts.

Arts and crafts made remarkable progress under the Cholas. Their special contributions in the field of art have come down to us in the form of the beautiful temples and also in the special genre of Indian plastic art known as the Chola bronzes. The portraits Nataraja figures and images of the

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period have now been included among the master-pieces of the world. Their temple architecture, embodied in the temple of Tanjore and Chidambaram has received tributes from the art critics all over the world.

In short, under the Cholas there was all-round development of art, craft and culture and the general condition of the people was quite good. This age remains a very bright interlude in the otherwise dark period torn with struggle and strife.

A Note on Dravidian Civilisation and Culture

We have seen that the inhabitants of the southern-most part of India called *Tamilakam*, are Dravidian in origin. Although the Aryans penetrated into this part of India, yet their culture, civilisation and institutions, have, to a large extent, remained unchanged. The study of their institutions, therefore, is not only very interesting but essential for understanding the history of this part of India.

(*a*) Division of Society.

The caste system in the Aryan sense did not exist. Society was divided into various categories on the basis of occupation and birth. The important categories were (*i*) rulers, (*ii*) sages, (*iii*) merchants, (*iv*) Agriculturists. There were no untouchables or lower classes. Passing from one class to another was allowed. There was social equality among the various classes. The absence of untouchables shows that equality governed the relations of one class of people with the other.

Society consisted of families, groups or clans, led by a chief, who later on came to be called a king. These various sections were frequently at war with one another for supremacy. The chief Tamil States were of the Cholas, the Chèras and the Pandyas.

(*b*) Political condition.

The king ruled over the people with the consent of the people. He gave enough local autonomy to the people in the shape of village assemblies and Sabhas which looked after their local affairs. Besides, there were guilds representing various classes like the priests, the astrologers and physicians etc., to advise the king. The king was not looked upon as divine representative but just one of the

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people elevated to the high position by the will of the people. The king lived in perfect pomp and show and his court was usually very splendid. Women could also sit on the throne. Minors could succeed. Monarchy slowly became hereditary.

(c) Justice.

The king dispensed justice and heard appeals from the village and district courts. Customary law was enforced. Severe punishments involving capital and amputation were given. Crime was very rare and people were law-abiding.

(d) Social conditions.

The ancient Tamils were a highly chivalrous people like the ancient Rajputs. They would prefer death to dishonour, hardship to ease, and would make any sacrifice to save the honour of their country. They were very generous, straightforward, honest and hospitable people. From the cradle the Tamil child was taught to defend the mother country. The Tamils were a romantic and care-free people believing in good things of life. The position of their women was very satisfactory. They enjoyed equal rights with men and marriage was arranged with their consent. Love marriages were also practised. Polygamy prevailed. People took wine, a cheap quality and a local production. They were fond of amusements, dancing, singing and cock-fighting. People generally lived in villages. The houses were well-built with burnt bricks. Sanitary conditions were good.

(e) Religion.

Like all other ancient people, the Dravidians in their earliest stage worshipped various objects of nature. Serpent and spirit worship was practised. After coming into closer contact with Aryans some of the Aryan gods like Vishnu, Indra and Varuna, etc., were also adopted. Linga worship also formed part of their religion. Northern influences gradually dominated the religious thought of the Tamils. In the second and third centuries A. D. Brahmanism was introduced and since then the Brahmans dominated their religious practices. Brahmanism was frequently assailed by Buddhism and Jainism at frequent intervals. As none of these religions could permanently appeal to these people,

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Brahmanism remained the abiding religion of the Tamils. The rise of the Bhakti cult was to a great extent responsible for the revival of Brahmanism. Sages like Shankaracharya, Ramanuja and Madhva did splendid work in this connection.

(f) Trade and commerce.

The Tamils had developed trade and commerce with other people. In very early times they traded with Chaldeans—teak and sandal wood being their chief exports. They had trade relations with ancient Egypt as well, where fine muslin, ebony and spices were sent. They imported silk and sugar from China. It is also certain that ancient Greece imported rice and pepper from the Dravidians. Traces of trade with Rome in the early Christian era are also available. Glass, brass, lead and wines were the chief imports. The balance of trade was favourable to the Dravidians. A Roman historian of the first century A.D., Plimy, in his book 'Natural History', has complained of the enormous drain of Roman gold to India, in return for costly goods of luxury. The Tamils also carried on flourishing trade with Java, Sumatra, Bali and other islands of Indonesia. As usual trade was followed by the export of Tamil culture abroad. In these countries, especially in the Eastern ones, traces of Dravidian culture can be found even in the present times.

(g) Literature.

The Tamils were highly accomplished in art and letters. The Tamil language is not very old but very rich too. Great classical works on law, grammar and poetry have been produced in this language. Among their great poems mention might be made of 'Ten Tens', 'Kalithokai', 'Patthupattu' and host of others. In the opening centuries of the Christian era, there existed in Madura a famous academy known as Tamal Sangam which was a body of literary critics. It was an institution which judged the works and offered criticism on literature. The famous writer Tirusalluvar, the author of Kinal, was a member of this Sangam. Another famous poet was Ilango Adigal, a Chera prince, who wrote the epic, Sitappadhikaram (the Epic of the Anklet) which is considered to be the finest specimen of

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Tamil poetry. Another equally great epic is Manimekalai (the Jewel-Belt) written by Sattanar, a Buddhist missionary. Among other epics were : Valayapathi, the Chintamani and the Kundalakesi. Most of the Tamil literature is didactic and religious but there are some beautiful love poems also.

Thus from the above account of the customs, manners, social, religious and political conditions and the great development of literature, it is evident that the Dravidians were a highly cultured people and they were in no way inferior to the Indo-Aryans.

QUESTIONS

1 Write a note on the Chola art and administration.

2 Describe briefly what you know about the Dravidian civilisation and culture.

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CHAPTER V

NORTHERN INDIA FROM A.D. 700 TO 1200

A very remarkable feature of the period from A. D. 700 to 1200 in Northern India of which very few Indians have taken notice is the total absence of foreign invasion. It was only in the extreme west that the Arabs launched an attack against the ruler of Sind, but that attempt too proved abortive and barren of all results. The much down-trodden Punjab and the Gangetic valley, which for centuries ever since the Aryan occupation had been subjected to frequent invasions, now enjoyed unbroken spell of peace for upward 500 years. During this long period the Punjabis and other North Indians even forgot that they had ever been invaded before. This feeling of security was good in itself. It gave to the people much-needed time to attend to peaceful activities.

Absence of foreign invasion.

As a matter of fact, this sense of security proved fatal. After a generation or two, Indians forgot the lessons of the past. They neglected their frontiers. They began to fight among themselves. They lost the sentiment of patriotism which is so essential for the growth of a nation. This sentiment could grow only under the stimulus of danger from outside. A free people have to be very vigilant.

Growth of complacency.

The feeling of complacency engendered by a false sense of security, made the Indians cynical and arrogant. They began to feel that the Indians were superior to all others and that their country, their learning and their religion were the best in the world. They thought that they had nothing to learn from the rest of the world. This made them self-centred and conceited. They lost touch with the outside world. The ways of the rest of the world were despised and looked down upon. Indians had never

Cynicism and arrogance.

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before been so much cut off from the rest of the world. Another result of this new attitude was that the Indians refused to absorb new elements within their society and culture. This not only deprived the Indians of new blood but it also banned the fusion of new ideas and systems in the Hindu society. India lost all contact with great neighbours like China and Iran. Her trade and commerce also suffered as a result of this insulation. No other country of the world was ever cut off from the rest of the world for so long a period.

General stagnation.

Without knowing what was happening outside, and quite unmindful of the progress made by others, the Indian people ceased to grow. Civilisation became stagnant and decadent. The age-long out-of-date ideas held control of the minds of the Indians. Their social, economic and political ideas remained the same which they had entertained in the seventh century. The caste system, which in the face of democratic Muslims, was a harmful institution, continued to be practised. Their means of warfare were as old and unavailing, as they were in the past.

Literature.

This decadence was visible in every sphere. The poets and writers forgot the great heights reached by Kalidasa and others. Now the poets indulged in useless narratives, artificialities in language, and flights of imagination which were hollow. Not one great book was produced during this period of 500 years. The morals of the people also suffered a steep decline. Obscene literature of which the Indians had never thought before now became very popular. Long descriptions of sensuous scenes of debaucheries were given by almost all authors in order to make their writings popular.

Religion.

In religion also this tendency became visible. Priests became ease-loving and led lives of immorality and vices. They frequently indulged in drinking and prostitution. In this age Tantric Books were written. In one of these books Buddha is represented in acts of continuous debauchery with angels. The monks and nuns became licentious. They gave up learning and

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piety. Hardly any of them was literate. The large majority of them were worthless men feeding on the superstitions of the ignorant and gullible masses. The growth of Devadasi system can also be traced to this period. Immorality was so much rife in religion as well as in other walks of life, that hardly anybody felt that he was doing something wrong. Under such circumstances the defeat and humiliation of a people by foreigners was not a difficult task.

Social condition.

Besides the caste system, the society was divided into three classes: the aristocrats, the bureaucracy and the general public. Out of these the aristocrats led luxurious lives. They were the owners of vast tracts of land and the entire business was in their hands. The bureaucracy was also very important and well-to-do. There was an official hierarchy rising from the village patwari to the provincial governor. The official class was dominated by the Brahmans but certain lower caste people who were well-versed in education, were also employed. The generel public was ignorant, poor and superstitious.

Conclusion.

It, therefore, follows from the above account that the political, social and religious conditions of the country were such as made the people slothful and self-complacent. There was no sense of unity or sentiment of patriotism. The poor masses did not identify themselves with the higher classes. For them it hardly meant any difference if they were ruled by any Indian or a foreigner. Especially when India was attacked by a vigorous and democratic people like the Muslims, such a divided country could not hope to withstand the enemy for long.

QUESTIONS

1. What do you know of the Hindu society and culture on the eve of the Muslim conquest of India?
2. Briefly outline the social conditions of Northern India in the eleventh and twelfth centuries A.D.
3. Was India open to foreign subjugation in the eleventh and twelfth centuries? If so, why?

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CHAPTER VI

RISE OF ISLAM AND THE ARAB CONQUESTS OF SIND

Introduction.

Islam was not only a great religion, but also a great political force. Within a century of its birth Islam spread in Syria, Palestine, Egypt, North Africa, Iraq, Iran and Afghanistan, also in some European countries such as Spain, Portugal and Southern France. It came to India in the beginning of the eighth century, but failed to strike its roots. It reappeared in the beginning of the eleventh century, but failed again. It made its appearance again towards the close of the twelfth century, and stayed here permanently.

The rise of Islam is one of the marvels of the world. It brought new ideas of equality and fraternity as well as spirit of aggression. For these reasons Hindu religion miserably failed to absorb it, as it had done before in the case of all other previous invaders. The Muslim rule dominated the Punjab for nearly a thousand years, the rest of Northern India for about seven hundred and fifty years, and the Deccan for a little over six centuries.

Birth of Islam.

Islam took its birth in the dry and sandy peninsula of Arabia. Its founder was Prophet Muhammad. He was born at Mecca in 571 A. D. His parents Abdullah and Aminah belonged to Qureshi tribe. Muhammad lost his parents early. They left him no wealth except the beauty of body and the vigour of mind. He suffered from neglect and want, and took apprenticeship under a shepherd. Then he took up service with Khadija, a wealthy widow, nearly twice his age. Muhammad's charming looks and manners, his intelligence and loyalty fascinated Khadija who even

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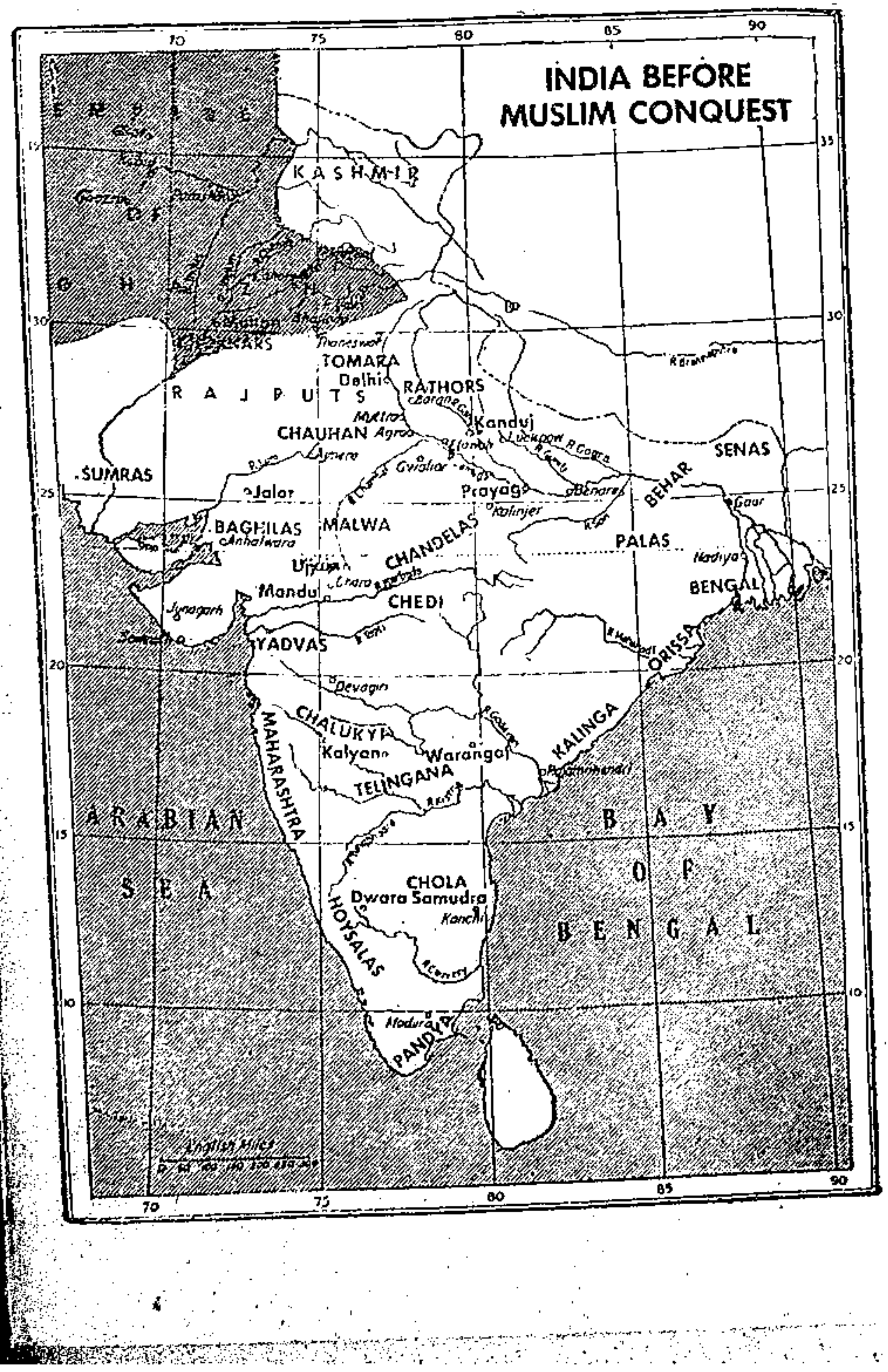
INDIA BEFORE MUSLIM CONQUEST
KASHMIR
RAJPUTS
TOMARA
Delhi
RATHORS
Kanauj
CHAUHAN
SUMRAS
Jalor
Gwalior
Prayag
Benares
SENAS
BEHAR
Gaur
BAGHILAS
MALWA
Dhanauara
CHANDELAS
Kalinjer
PALAS
Ujjain
Mandu
CHEDI
BENGAL
Jynagarh
YADVAS
ORISSA
Devagiri
CHALUKYA
Kalyana
Warangal
KALINGA
TELINGANA
MAHARASHTRA
ARABIAN SEA
BAY OF BENGAL
CHOLA
Dwara Samudra
Kanchi
HOYSALAS
Madura
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The last named Atisa or Dipankara Sri Jnana is held in very high esteem, only next to Gautama Buddha. He visited Tibet about the middle of the eleventh century A. D. He reformed the Tibetan Buddhism and restored it to its former grandeur.

Besides these several other *pandits* visited this land of snow. They translated hundreds of books into Tibetan. The Tibetan collections of texts known as *Kengur* and *Tengur* are a living monument to the memories of these scholars. Only recently scholars like Rahula Sankratyayana brought mule-loads of Tibetan manuscripts of books many of which had been lost to India. Thus Tibet is repaying that debt by restoring these books to us.

Through China the Indian culture spread to Korea and Japan.

Section II—India and the East

Far East

The story of Indian colonies in the Far East is one of the most glorious chapters in the history of colonial expansion in the world. Indians were able to develop a large number of Hindu states in the regions now known as South-East Asia. Even in the thirteenth century when India was whining under the Muslim heel, the Indians still held a large portion of this region.

Early Land Routes

There are a few passes in the eastern ranges of the Himalayas. Through these passes contact with Burma, China and Annam was maintained from time immemorial.

Upper Burma

These trade relations led to the establishment of Indian colonies in the "Upper Valleys of Irrawady, the Salween, the Mekang and the Red River as far as Yunnan". Yunnan even took on the Indian name of Gandhara and this name was used as late as the thirteenth century. Similarly further south along these rivers, many Hindu states 'were established in the hinter-zone of Indo-China'.

Sea Routes

The land routes were very hazardous, lie as they did through the head-hunting Naga lands and huge unmapped and unexplored jungles. Therefore the real contact was established by sea routes. It is very difficult to give precisely the date when the Indians contacted these 'spice

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islands for the first time'. But the contact must have been quite old, as relations with China through the ocean had been established long before the birth of Christ.

Thus the islands of Java, Bali, Sumatra and the Malaya Archipelago that lay on the route to the Far East were the first to be influenced by India. Here also the earliest contact was commercial or religious. The political flags of India followed in their wake and huge empires were established in this region.

Java

Indians knew of this island from very early days. It is mentioned in the *Ramayana*. The very name of the island Java (Yavadripa or the barley island) suggests that Indians had christened it according to its shape. This island had a Hindu kingdom in the first century A. D. and King Varman who ruled it about 132 A. D. sent an ambassador to the Chinese Imperial Court. Fahien who visited Java in the beginning of the fifth century A. D. tells us that Hindus ruled it and that Hinduism was the popular religion in this part of the country. From that day onwards we have a regular record of Hindu kings having Indian names ruling upto the fifteenth century A. D.

In the eighth century A. D. Java became a part of the Sailendra empire. It may be added here that the Sailendra's was one of the biggest empires that was built up in the east. At the close of the fifteenth century or the beginning of the sixteenth century Java became converted to Islam through the efforts of the Arab merchants.

Sumatra

As Sumatra was situated on the sea route to China, the contact established must have been very early and definitely before the Christian era. Sumatra came into importance with the establishment of the kingdom of Sri Vijaya about the fourth century A. D. Sri Vijaya remained a very powerful state at least uptil the seventh century A. D. The testimony of Ligor inscription as well as that of Itsing bears out the fact that the authority of Sri Vijaya was accepted by nearly all the neighbouring people. Sumatra was a very important part of the Sailendra empire. After the fall of the Sailendra, other Hindu kingdoms arose over here and in the fifteenth century a new State called Samudra came into prominence. From it the

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name Sumatra was derived. In the sixteenth century Islam penetrated into the country following the trade.

The Sailendras of Malaya

It was one of the largest empires in the East founded by Indians. It is said that the Indian literature or historical tradition does not contain any reference to this empire. Malaya had been one of the earliest to be colonised. Several Hindu States flourished in Malaya in the first five or six centuries of the Christian era. But the peninsula came into prominence with the rise of the Sailendras. It was established as a royal power about the year 775 A. D. In a short period their kings established their sway over Java, Sumatra, and other islands and also over Cambodia and Annam. Thus the whole of Malayasia came under one sovereign. Soon the empire became very important for its riches and grandeur. A large number of Arab traders who visited this region in the ninth and tenth centuries have given a detailed description of this great empire. Thus Ibn Khordadbeh puts its daily revenue at 200 *mans* of gold.

These Arab traders have told us in unequivocal terms that the Sailendra kings kept a regular contact with India and that many Indian families had come and settled down in these regions. It appears that these people were from Kalinga, as soon after the establishment of the Sailendras, this region came to be known as Kalinga or Kaling. These Sailendras had diplomatic relations with the kings of China.

These kings were Buddhist of the Mahayana school. There are innumerable references to the fact that they were maintaining a regular contact with India, especially with the kings of Bengal, Bihar, Orissa and the Chola kings of the Deccan.

There is a very interesting reference to this Chola-Sailendra contact. About the year 1025, Rajendra Chola, the king of the Deccan quarrelled with the Sailendra king. Rajendra Chola fitted up a huge armada and travelled thousands of miles by sea, attacked the Sailendra king and defeated him. This struggle continued for about fifty years. Finally because of the difficulty of holding such far off lands, the Chola hold became loose and finally Sailendras became free. But this incident has left us a record of our naval potentialities.

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The Sailendras continued to hold on up to the 13th century when the old rival, the Javanese king, was able to destroy this great kingdom and convert the people to Islam at the point of sword.

Borneo

Borneo the original home of the head-hunting Dyabs was also colonised by the Indians. Not only were these people civilized, but also it became the seat of a flourishing Hindu kingdom in the fifth century A. D. Hindu kingdoms continued till the fourteenth century when finally Borneo was conquered by Java.

Bali

Bali, a small island lying between Java and Sumatra was also colonized by the Hindus. Hindu kingdoms continued till finally the Javanese kings conquered it. But when the Javanese kings fled before the Muslim hordes, Bali offered refuge to the old family and uptil today it is Hindu in culture, civilization and religion.

Cambodia

Kamboja or Cambodia was also colonised in the first century A. D. Several Hindu kingdoms flourished in this region. The most important kingdom was called Funan. The kingdom of Funan included Cambodia proper, a part of Cochin China and the lower valley of Meking river. The Chinese tradition tells us that a Brahmin Kaundinya was the first to introduce civilization in this part of the country. His descendents ruled in this region upto 200 A. D. Later this kingdom of Funan achieved great heights and continued to flourish for a long time. All these years the people of Funan kept a close contact with India and mention is made of several hundred families of Indian origin living here.

Champa or Annam

To the east of Cambodia lies another state called Annam or Champa. Its colonization was started about the second century A. D. and the Hindu kingdoms continued till the fifteenth century. These people also took on the Indian religion and culture and thus Sairism, Vaishnavism and Buddhism fluorished in Annam side by side.

Ceylon

That Ceylon was well-known to the people of India from time immemorial has never been doubted. Not only is it mentioned in the *Ramayana* but also innumerable references are there in Indian literature to this

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Sinhala island. Asoka sent his missionaries to Ceylon in the third century A. D. Not only did this country accept Buddhism but also Indian languages. Thus Malyalam is the language of the country today and the old Buddhist *Bhikshus* speak Pali or Sanskrit.

Section III—The Cultural Aspect

Were they Indian

Even after going through this overwhelming evidence in favour of Indian colonies in south-east Asia, foreign scholars are apt to assert that all these colonies were not founded by Indians but by local chiefs who had accepted the Brahmanic or Buddhistic faith.

The unimpeachable and disinterested statements made by the Chinese and the Arab travellers point out that a large number of Indians were permanently settled in these regions. The epigraphic evidence is by far the most important. The earliest inscriptions discovered in these regions are not only in Sanskrit but also in Indian alphabet. Only when through the efforts of Indian colonists, the local people came into their own, we find many inscriptions in local languages and thus prove beyond doubt the fact that Indians were directly responsible for their colonization.

Moreover the inscriptions in all these regions show an intimate knowledge of Indian mythology, religion and rituals, Indian systems of measurements and dates were adopted. Even the geographical terms found their way there. All these things show that only these persons could have been responsible for them, who maintained a constant contact with India through several centuries. On the other hand Indian literature also contains a large number of references to the various localities in these islands.

Nature of Colonization

The very word 'colony' is obnoxious to modern mind. It is associated with the idea of exploitation of under-developed countries at the hands of clever masters. These colonies are used more for economic exploitation than for cultural expansion or bringing the benefits of civilization nearer to the 'natives' of the colonies.

If the same had been true of these Indian colonies, the story would have been hardly worth while telling. But no

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Indian needs hang his head in shame while relating the story of this colonial expansion. These did not serve as the outposts for the mother country. No surplus goods were dumped into them. No racial superiority was claimed. The natives did not serve as cheap labourers or mercenary soldiers to fight the wars of the mother country. Nor was mother country to be enriched at their cost. The story of Indian expansion in the far east was not the story of broken promises, forged documents, false black-holes or the hanging of innocent Nand Kumars. It was a clean and honourable record which any human being can be honestly proud of.

The Indians did not maintain any racial segregation and became readily merged with the local population. Their ranks were constantly swelled by the new immigrants and as soon as this stream dried off, the Indian colonial empire ceased to exist. They put more value on civilizing the people and bringing to them the benefits of culture. "They aimed at the uplift of the people, and not selfish gain by means of their exploitation ; and instead of wielding the rod of the masters they extended the hand of fellowship to the people among whom they found themselves."*

The Spread of Indian Culture

The Indians as we noted lay greater emphasis on the spread of Indian culture. They were eminently successful in this mission. Thus the Indian religion, language and literature, art and architecture spread in these regions and even today the monuments unmistakably point out to the achievements of Indians in this part of the world.

Language and Literature

Along with the Indians, Sanskrit also travelled to this part of the earth. We have discovered hundreds of Sanskrit inscriptions from these regions. The authors of these inscriptions had a fairly intimate knowledge of Indian Sanskrit literature and almost all important writers are mentioned. That Indian literature also affected the Indo-Javanese literature is a matter of common knowledge. The *Ramayana* and the *Mahabharata* were translated into local dialect with small variations. In fact the subject matter of most of the Indo-Javanese literature is Indian and their

* *Greater India.* R. C. Mazumdar 1941, p. 47.

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"Grammars, lexicons, metre, and medicine" all are based on Indian models.

Religion

So far as the religion is concerned the story is all the more interesting. As most of the colonial activity was noticeable during the Gupta revival, we find Puranic form of Hinduism as the dominant religion. Buddhistic relics are not absent. Idolatory became common and Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva and a host of other minor gods and goddesses can be noticed there. The large number of temples discovered in these countries points out to the fact that the religious beliefs of these people were wedded to the Indian religion and went on changing according to Indian beliefs. Even the various *avataras* of Vishnu are traceable and there is hardly a god or goddess in India to whom temples have not been dedicated in these regions.

Even the ritualism was taken on and the old Javanese texts as also the actual practices in Bali point out unmistakably to their Indian origin.

Buddhism was also prevalent, but to a lesser extent. The Mahayana form had been accepted and later Tantrik forms came into prominence. That these regions became important centres of Buddhist culture is clear from the fact that Atisa, who later on became famous in Tibet, was originally educated somewhere in the East Indies.

Art and Architecture

When we come to this part of our story, we tread on a firmer ground. We have discovered a large number of monuments in Java, Cambodia and Annam. Like language and literature, "the sculpture and architecture of these colonies were based on Indian models and originally inspired by ideals and technique of Indian art, though in course of time it was developed on independent lines without losing the essential Indian characteristics."*

The colonies soon excelled the land of their inspiration. Their art monuments are better than any in India. Thus the monuments of Borobudar, Angkor Vat and Loro Jongrang have a grandeur hardly found anywhere in Indian temples.

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* *Greater India*, p. 59-60.

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Loro Jongrang

In central Java we have a huge temple the outer boundaries of which are nearly 1200 yards by 1600 yards. Inside it there is a temple on the panels of which is sculptured the whole story of *Ramayana* and *Mahabharata* in pictures. These panels if put side by side would run into several miles.

Angkor Vat

Vat means a temple. It means the temple of Angkor city. It is a temple dedicated to Vishnu. It is situated in Cambodia. It was built in the twelfth century A. D. in the reign of Surya Varman II (1112-52). The model is Dravidian and many scenes, from the *Ramayana* and the *Mahabharata* are depicted there. It is one of the finest monuments in the colonial art. Dr. Finot asserts that it has few rivals anywhere in the world and is one of the noblest flowers of Indian national culture.

Borobudar

Borobudar means many Buddhas. It is one of the most wonderful temples dedicated to Gautama. The temple was built between 750 and 850 A. D. It is "a hill in nine stages (nine terraces) an epic in stone, the most wonderful Buddhist stupa in the world". It contains about 2000 sculptured stone panels illustrating the life of Buddha.

Besides these we have innumerable monuments which lend a charm of their own to this story of Indian colonial expansion.

Probably "in no other sphere the genius of Indian colonists shines more brilliantly."

As soon as the Indian springs of colonial migration dried out, the art which had expressed itself in these forms of huge temples and monuments became dead. Fergusson says, "as if the masons had thrown away their tools and the chisels had dropped from the hands of the carvers. From that time forward no building was erected in Java, and no image carved that is worth even a passing notice".

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Questions

1. Describe in outline only, the history of Indian colonies in Southern Asia. (*P. U. 1937*)

2. Describe the objects, nature and extent of Hindu colonization of Further India and Malaya Archipelago. (*P. U. 1934*)

3. Describe the contact of ancient Indians with the western people upto first century A. D.

4. Write a short and critical note on the Indian art in Java and Cambodia.

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Chapter XX

HARSHAVARDHANA AND HIS TIMES

Section I—Sources

After the fall of the Huns, the Indian scene became rather dark. A number of petty states grew up and there was no central authority. Out of this chaos the House of Thanesar was able to build up a state of considerable importance. This was the last of the glorious Hindu dynasties of northern India.

Bana's Harshacharita

Harsha had a court poet named Bana Bhatta, who was a great writer. Besides other books he wrote the biography of his imperial master Harsha. We do not possess many books of this type and hence this book is very important. But it has got its defects as well. It is more in the nature of panegyric than anything else and hence the information supplied therein has to be taken with a grain of salt. Except for a few statements most of the facts given therein are correct.

Hiewn Tsang's Journal

Hiewn Tsang or Yuan Chwang visited India about the year 629 A. D. He came out to India at the age of 29 and returned to his native land after a stay of nearly fifteen years in India. He is the most celebrated of the Chinese travellers who visited India. He was a learned scholar and King Harshavardhana was struck by his learning. Passing through Tashkand, Samarkand and Balkh, he arrived in India about 629 A. D. After about two years' stay in Kashmir he came to the Panjab and then moved towards eastern India. He visited almost all the important Buddhist places of pilgrimage such as Benaras, Kupila Vastu, Gaya and Kusinagara. He spent a few years at Nalanda as well. At Nalanda his fame spread and he was invited by Harsha who was simply charmed by him. He remained at his court for a fairly long time.

In 644 A.D. he got the permission to return to his homeland by the route he had come. His book on India is titled *Si-Yu-Ki* and contains all what he heard or saw in India. It is full of

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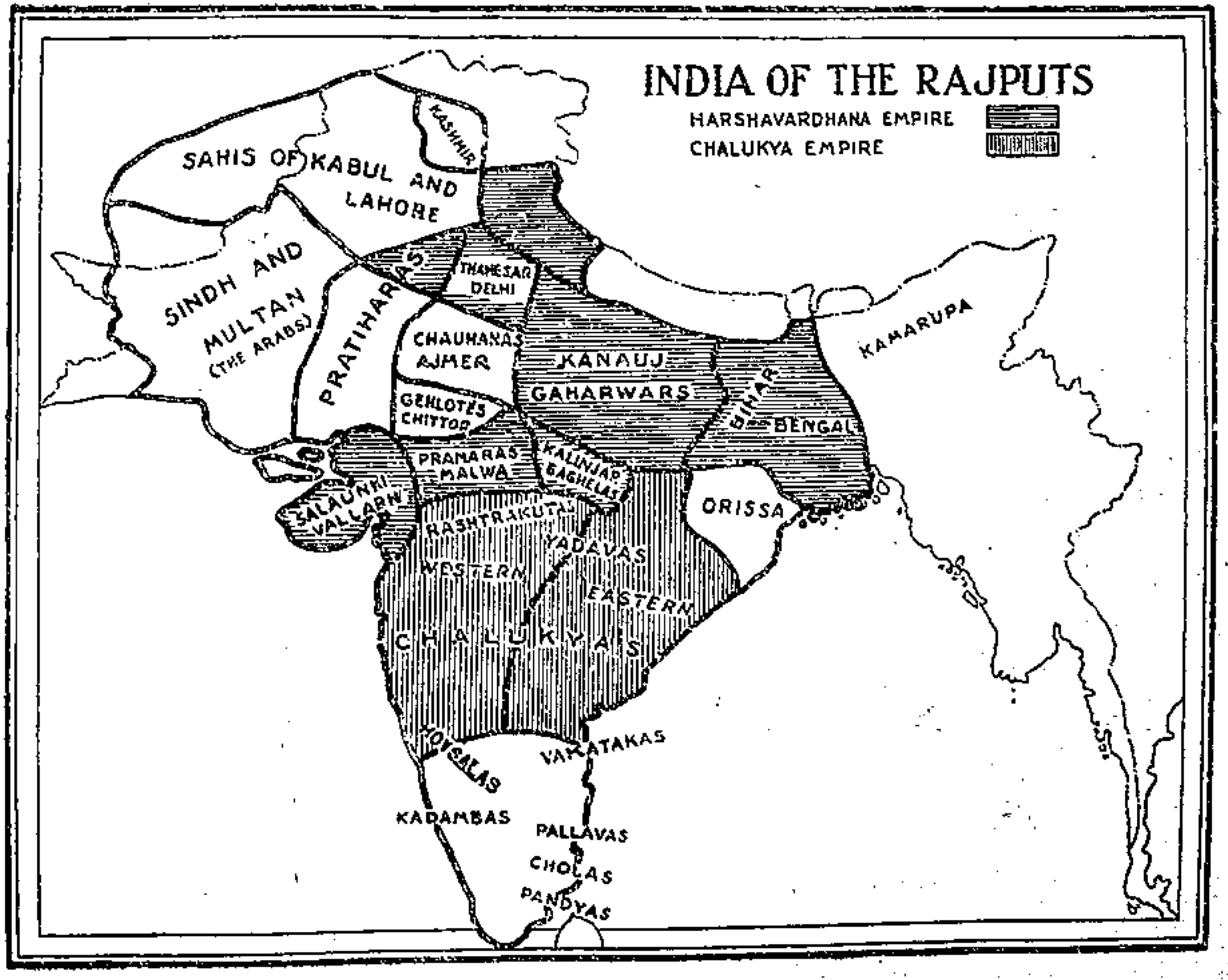
INDIA OF THE RAJPUTS
HARSHAVARDHANA EMPIRE
CHALUKYA EMPIRE
SAHIS OF KABUL AND LAHORE
KASHMIR
SINDH AND MULTAN (THE ARABS)
PRATIHARAS
THANESAR DELHI
CHAUHANAS AJMER
KANAUJ GAHARWARS
GEHLOTES CHITTOR
BIHAR
BENGAL
KAMARUPA
PRAMARAS MALWA
KALINJAR BAGHELAS
SALAUNKI VALLABH
RASHTRAKUTAS
ORISSA
WESTERN YADAVAS
EASTERN CHALUKYAS
HOYSALAS
VAKATAKAS
KADAMBAS
PALLAVAS
CHOLAS
PANDYAS

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details and almost reads like a gazetteer. The Buddhists held him in great respect and he was called the "Master of Law". His Journal throws a flood of light on contemporary India.

Inscriptions

Besides these two important books, the Banskhara plate, the Madhuban plate, the Aihole inscription of Pulakesin II and the Sonepat Copper Seal give valuable information about this king.

Harsha's Plays

Harsha was himself a writer of importance. Three dramas, *Nagananda*, *Ratnavali* and *Pridarsika* are attributed to him. Although some scholars assert that these were written by Bana actually, yet the style and diction is so distinct that this assertion does not appear to be fair. These dramas throw some light on the life of the people. Thus the cumulative evidence of all these sources has enabled us to write a fairly good account of the age of Harsha.

Section II—His Ancestors and Early Life

His Ancestors

According to Bana, Harsha's ancestors ruled in Thanesar. The founder of the dynasty was one Pushpabhuti a worshipper of Shiva. The immediate ancestors of Harsha were Pushyavardhana, Nasavardhana, Rajyavardhana, Adityavardhana and Prabhakarvardhana. The first four of them were petty chieftains. Prabhakarvardhana, Harsha's father, and son of Adityavardhana was the real founder of the greatness of the House of Thanesar. He assumed the titles of *Parambhattaraka* and *Maharajadhiraj*. He ruled from 583-605 A. D. Under him the state gained in importance. The kings of Malwa, Gujrat, Gandhara and Sindh *desha* all had a taste of his powers. The Huns also were chased by him.

Prabhakarvardhana's eldest son was Rajyavardhana, while Harsha and Rajyasri were his other two children. Rajayasri was married to the Maukhari king Grihavarman of Kanauj.

Early Days of Harsha

In 604 A. D. Prabhakarvardhana sent Harsha and Rajyavardhana to chase away the Huns in the north. While they were busy fighting, news reached them that their father was ill. Harsha was sent posthaste by his elder brother. As he entered the town, the ill omens indicated the death of his father. His mother became a *Sati*.

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Soon Rajyavardhana also returned and he was crowned as a king. Hardly had he settled down to business when the news reached that their brother-in-law Grihavarman had been treacherously murdered by King Devagupta of Malwa. Rajyavardhana at once set out with an army of ten thousand soldiers and his general Bhundi. Devagupta was defeated. Rajyasri had not yet been recovered when Rajyavardhana was treacherously killed by King Shashanka of Gauda.

Harsha's Accession

It was under these pathetic circumstances that Harsha was invited to the throne by important ministers. He was hardly sixteen years of age. It is often asserted that he ruled his father's empire in conjunction with his sister Rajyasri.

He soon raised an army of fifty thousand infantry, twenty thousand horses and five thousand elephants. His first objective was to rescue his sister and defeat Shashanka who had occupied Kanauj. Shashanka saw the futility of his fight and therefore released his sister and evacuated Kanauj.

Section III—His Conquests and Extent of Empire

Northern India

The first thing that faced him was the government of Kanauj. Grihavarman had died without a child. Therefore he became the master of these two northern states. Soon after, when he had consolidated his position, he shifted the capital from Thanesar to Kanauj.

Conquest of Five States

Hiewn Tsang tells us that Harsha spent the early years of his reign in conquering Svarasta (Panjab), Kanyakubja (Kanauj), Gauda (Bengal), Mithira (Bihar) and Utkala (Orissa). It is doubtful if Gauda was actually occupied by him or Kanauj was conquered in the technical sense of the term.

Vallabhi

Vallabhi (Gujrat) was in these days ruled by Dhruvasena II, who was the vassal of Pulakesin II. Dhruvasena was defeated. However Harsha returned him his kingdom. This war may have been fought about 630 A. D.

Pulakesin II, the Chalukyan King

Harsha had now become the master of the north. He thought of conquering the south. In these days the Deccan was under the famous Chalukya king Pulakesin II. Harsha led an expedition across

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the Vindhaya in 620 A. D. In the battle that followed Harsha was defeated and the Narbada was fixed as the boundary of the kingdom of Harsha.

Sindh

Bana Bhatta tells us that even Sindh was conquered by Harsha. But Hiewn Tsang denies it and asserts that it was independent.

Nepal

Similarly Nepal is said to have been conquered by him. There appears to be very little truth in this statement as well.

Western India

Harsha added Anandpur, Cutch, Surat and Western Malwas to his empire.

Kamarupa

It is said that when Harsha was planning vengeance on Shashanka of Gauda, he concluded an alliance with king Bhaskarvarman of Kamarupa (Assam). It appears that later on Bhaskarvarman accepted his suzerainity and as a subordinate prince attended the Kamarupa Assembly of Harsha.

Ganjam

Harsha probably rounded off his dominions by conquering Ganjam. It may be recalled that Ganjam was originally Kalinga which was conquered by Asoka. This conquest is said to have been completed about the year 643 A. D.

Foreign Contacts

Tara Nath the famous Tibetain Historian tells us that Harsha maintained ambassadorial relations with the kings of China and Persia and gifts were exchanged between them.

Thus Harsha was the master of a huge empire, the last of the great northern kingdoms. The Narbada was his southern boundary while in the north his name was held in high esteem from the western coast to the Brahmaputra and from the Tarai to Orissa.

Section IV—Administration

General Character

Hiewn Tsang showers the best of praise on the administration of king Harsha. The king was dutiful, widely travelled and hard working. He was

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generous and erected a number of public buildings besides a large number of stupas and monasteries.

Council of Ministers

It appears as if the council of ministers was fairly important body in the state. We may recall that it was this council of ministers which had invited Harsha to become the king. This council of ministers, with the chief minister at its head, consisted of Senapati, Mahasamantas, Maharaja, Bhogapati and Rajasthaniyas (viceroys) besides other important ministers.

Civil Administration

The whole of the territory was known as the Rajya. It was divided into a number of *Bhuktis* or provinces. These were under an *Upanika* or *Gopa*. In a *Bhukti* there were several *Vishyas*. The *Gopas* appointed *Vishyapatis* and *Changikas* who were the permanent officers of a *Vishya*. The Vishyapati consulted the *Nagar Shieshthina* the most important person of the town, the *Sarthavaha* (representing the trade), the Prathma *Kalika* (representin the craft guilds) and the *Prathma Kayastha* (first Secretary). The *Vishyas* were further divided into the *Pathakas* and *Gramas*. The *gramas* were under the village elders known as *Mahattans* and a headman known as a *Gramika*.

These officers were not paid in cash. They received land grants in lieu of salaries. Only the army was paid in cash.

Law and Order

Even though the king was often undertaking tours in order to be able to maintain a direct contact with the people and was making constant efforts to raise the moral tone of the masses, yet the times were not very happy. The law was very severe and yet there was no safety in the country. Life imprisonments were common and so also the mutilation of limbs. We learn from Hiewn Tsang that he was deprived of his personal belongings on several occasions. What a sad commentary is it on the moral tone of the country.

Another important feature of this period was the trial by fire and water ordeal. This was probably the first time that such a silly thing was heard of in our country, as a part of our daily justice. Often many crimes could be adjusted by payment of heavy fines.

The individual liberty of the average man was not interfered with.

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Taxes

The taxes were usually light. Often 1/6th was charged as the land revenue. Besides the land tax, light duties were levied at ferry and barrier stations. Agriculture and trade flourished.

An Enlightened Administration

Another important feature of Harsha's days was the keeping of official records of public events. Thus both good and bad events were recorded and this speaks for the highly enlightened character of the administration. Even a census of the villages was taken.

Army

Harsha maintained a huge standing army comprising of 100,000 cavalry, 50,000 foot and 6,000 elephants. The war chariot was now becoming obsolete and very few contemporary kings had any use for chariots.

King's Religion

The government was marked by a spirit of toleration. His family had Brahmanical leanings. His father worshipped the sun. His elder brother Rajyavardhan and his sister Rajya were Buddhists, while he himself respected them all, *i.e.*, Shiva, Sun and Lord Buddha. Later under the influence of Hiewn Tsang he became a follower of the Mahayana form of Buddhism.

Section V—Hiewn Tsang and His Description of Contemporary India

Meeting with Harsha

Hiewn Tsang had been in India for a fairly long time when he met Harsha. His fame as a scholar had spread far and wide. Harsha met him when he went to Bengal and the king was so struck by his intelligence that he persuaded him to come to his court.

Hiewn Tsang has left us a fairly detailed account of the king and his people. We have already noted that he had the highest praise for Harsha and considered him to be an ideal king, The king was constantly endeavouring to give his best to the people. He divided his time between state duty and religious work.

Hiewn Tsang was sorry that Pataliputra the ancient capital of India was in ruins. Kanauj the new capital was a thriving city with several monasteries and a large number of Bhikshus.

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The Kanauj Assembly

Hiewn Tsang attended two assemblies of Harsha. The first was held at Kanauj 643 A. D. To this were invited all the feudatory princes (eighteen in number), over four thousand Buddhist *Bhikshus* and over 3000 Jain and Brahmana scholars. This assembly was primarily held in order to decide the question of the king's religion. It was convened on the southern banks of the Ganga, where a monastery and a shrine were also built. In the thatched halls discussions were held for eighteen days. Each day the king came out to attend the conference in a procession in which a three feet size golden statue of Gautama was carried.

In the conference Hiewn Tsang advocated the Mahayana school of Buddhism. As the Brahmanas and the Jains were losing ground they hatched a plot against Hiewn Tsang. The king punished the culprits and 500 Brahmanas were exiled. At the end of the conference the king decided in favour of Mahayana Buddhism and after that his efforts were directed towards furtherance of this cause. He used to call an annual convocation of the Buddhists.

The Prayag Assembly

After the Kanauj assembly was over, the king invited the traveller to his Prayag assembly which was a regular five-yearly feature. Here the king used to give away all except his army horses, and elephants etc. for the humble folks who gathered there. Hiewn Tsang saw more than 500,000 of such people collected together. The king would go to the extent of giving away his own clothes and begged second-hand robe from his sister. The ceremonies lasted for several days. The assembly that was attended by Hiewn Tsang was the sixth of its kind and almost the last, as the king died before he could hold the next one.

Social and Economic Life

Hiewn Tsang has given us a peep into the social and economic life of the day. The houses of the rich were beautifully built and had halls and terraces. The humbler folk usually thatched their houses. The people lived a simple life. Their clothes seldom needed tailoring. The Brahmanas and the Kshatriyas were known for their pure life and high morality. Women were educated and often knew dancing, music and painting.

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Early marriages had crept in and so also the practice of *Sati*. The people often undertook long sea journeys.

In the economic sphere trade and industry were organised on guild basis. A system of apprenticeship prevailed and gold, silver and copper coins were used.

Generally speaking the people were fairly honest. They lived clean life. The government did not interfere in their daily life. No registration of the family was necessary. No forced labour was heard of and thus a fairly contented people plodded through their life span.

The Education

The traveller was struck by the high state of learning in India. The king took keen interest in learning. He himself was a scholar. His palace library contained a large collection of books.

Many important seats of learning flourished in the country. Taxila does not appear to be important at the time as it had fallen a victim to Hun depredations. Nalanda had become the greatest seat of learning in these days. It had over 10,000 students on its roll, and over fifteen hundred teachers to guide them. Thus this university under the guidance of Silabhadra attracted countless scholars from all over the East. The students were given free board and lodging. The king had set apart a hundred villages for the maintenance of the university. It offered courses of studies in almost all the branches of contemporary learning such as Vedic literature, logic, grammar, medicine, philosophy and astronomy. Several poets and scholars flourished in the age. Thus Bhartihari, Jayaditya, Vaman, Dharmakirti and others flourished enriching the secular and religious literature of India.

Section VI—Estimate and Character of Harsha

Harsha's Death.

After having ruled the country for over forty years Harsha died in 647 or 648 A. D. He probably left no successors and one of his ministers named Arjuna seized his throne. It is said that he tried to murder the Chinese envoy, who later wreaked vengeance with the help of the king of Nepal and Dihat. In the meantime other kings declared their independence and the fine superstructure built by Harsha fell like a house of cards.

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An Estimate

In the field of conquest Harsha was probably the last of the great Hindu kings of ancient India. All was dark when he came to the throne and soon not only the dark clouds were dispelled but also a huge empire was built up.

In the field of administration his achievements were high. He was an industrious and conscientious king and was constantly on the move in order to find out the needs of his people.

In the field of religion he may not touch the heights attained by Asoka or Kanishka, but certainly in the field of religious toleration he was second to none. Rather in the field of charity he almost stood alone on a high pedestal.

His personal achievements especially in the field of learning were very great. He was a great scholar and writer. Even now when mankind condemns all kings as tyrants and refuses to honour them, Harsha's literary achievements would merit respect.

We also understand that he was an expert caligraphist. Besides the three dramas mentioned in our narrative above, Harsha is said to have written a work on grammar and several others on poetry, etc.

Questions

1. Sketch the carrer of Harsha and consider his claim to greatness. *(P. U. 1937)*
2. Give an account of King Harsha, and estimate the importance of his reign from the history of ancient India. *(P. U. 1939)*
3. Draw a map to show the extent of Harsha's dominions (640 A. D.) *(P. U. 1945)*
4. Who was Hiewn Tsang? What does he tell us about India? How does his account differ from that of Fahien? *(P. U. 1947)*
5. Describe India as depicted by Hiewn Tsang. *(P. U. 1948)*
6. Write an estimate of Harsha as a ruler. *(P. U. 1949)*
7. Give an account of the political, social and cultural conditions of India in the first half of the seventh century A. D. *(P. U. 1951)*

Pp. 1-178 printed at Baluja Press, Delhi.

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tually married him. Muhammad was then twenty-five years old. For the next fifteen years Muhammad remained busy in looking after Khadija's trade caravans which now belonged to him and his household.

The Arabs were a simple and ignorant nomadic people given to idolatry. Their chief shrine was Ka'ba at Mecca. The Qureshis were keepers of one of the idols worshipped in the Ka'ba. From his early childhood Muhammad showed a contemplative bent of mind. He began to look upon idols as useless objects. He was also anxious about the welfare of his countrymen who were steeped in deep superstition and ignorance. He wanted to free them from these useless practices by giving them a simple moral code leading to salvation. He spent a good deal of his time in search after light.

It was in his fortieth year, 611 A.D., that he announced his mission and invited people to follow the path shown by him. Khadija became the first convert to the new creed. His cousin Ali soon joined him. Then came Abu Bakr at the head of ten important personages of Mecca. Soon there was serious opposition to the religion of Muhammad mostly from those whose own trading in religion suffered. Muhammad was bitterly insulted and attacked. He remained steadfast before heavy odds. The number of his followers continued to grow. He was, however, forced to migrate to another city, Yasrile, later called Medina, in 622 A.D. This event is known as Hijrat or migration, and marks the date of the beginning of the Muslim era called Hijri. Here he regularly assumed the role of the Prophet and Ruler. He was then fifty-one years old. In course of time he overcame all opposition. The Prophet died in 632 A.D.

Teachings of Islam.

Islam was a very simple religion. It rejected idol-worship and class-distinction. It declared in definite terms the equality and fraternity of all followers of Islam. Islam did not enunciate any new principles or propound new philosophy. It laid great stress on piety and prayers. Another cardinal point of this religion is the oneness of

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God. The *Kalima* or Muslim profession of faith reads: "There is only one God and Muhammad is his Prophet." Other things on which Islam lays great stress are: charity, prayers (*Namaz*), fast and pilgrimage (*Haj*). From this it is clear that Islam stands for kindliness, generosity, goodness and brotherhood. Like other religions Islam gives an excellent code of morality for the guidance of its followers. Nowhere is hatred against non-Muslims preached and nowhere does it enjoin upon the believers forcibly to convert the *Kafirs* to Islam. Nowhere does the religion of Muhammad say that God belongs only to the Muslims and that other religions are untrue. Unfortunately the followers of this religion read new meanings into the teachings of this great religion. To-day this religion has been so much distorted out of shape that to a non-Muslim it looks as an embodiment of ruthless aggression, tyranny and persecution.

Spread of Islam.

After the death of Muhammad the Caliphs succeeded to power. The Caliphs were not only religious heads but political leaders also. Under them Islam reached great heights of glory. The Muslim missionaries and soldiers carried the message of Islam with pen and sword to the distant lands. Wherever the Muslim invaders went they plundered, burnt and destroyed villages, towns and cities. Such was the fury of the new converts that within ten years of the death of the Prophet Islam entered Persia and Rome. By the beginning of the eighth century A.D., the Muhammadans conquered Syria, Palestine, Egypt, North Africa, Spain and some parts of Portugal and France. Towards the east, Mesopotamia, Iraq, Persia, Afghanistan and Baluchistan, etc., were brought under the influence of Islam. Thus very soon Islam spread over all south-west Asia and eastern Europe. Later on the Caliphs lost power and its leadership passed on to less talented hands. The centre of Islam also shifted from Medina to Damascus and then to Baghbad. As Islam travelled farther from Arabia, the pious, benevolent and democratic spirit of Islam also declined.

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(B)
Arab Conquest of Sind

From time immemorial India has had intimate trade connection with other countries of the world. The Arabs also came to Sind and other parts of India long before they were converted to Islam, in order to carry Indian goods to some European countries. Thus they knew about the fabulous wealth of India. After their conversion of Islam, and conquest of some neighbouring countries, they thought of spreading Islam to India as well.

Early contacts with Arabs.

Having been lured mostly by Indian riches, the Arabs organised a number of plundering expeditions. The Indian coast near Tana (Bombay) was ravaged in 637 A.D. Some more minor forays took place later on. The province of Mekran was conquered by them about the close of the century. This brought the Arabs along the northern border of Sind. It was in 711 A.D. that the Arabs invaded Sind during the Caliphate of the Omayyads. The reason of the invasion was that the King of Ceylon sent eight ships laden with gold and precious gifts to Caliph Walid and Al-Hjaj, the Governor of Basra which was plundered by sea pirates near the port of Debal 24 miles north west of Tatta. The port fell under the jurisdiction of the ruler of Sind, Raja Dahir. Al-Hjaj demanded restoration of property from the Raja. The latter showed his inability to comply with the demand on the ground that the pirates had disappeared beyond his territory. Al-Hjaj seized the opportunity as a good pretext to invade India. Al-Hjaj got the approval of the Caliph to the invasion and made preparations for the expedition. After a few initial forays which failed an incursion was organised. Muhammad-bin-Qasim, a cousin and son-in-law of Al-Hjaj, just a lad of seventeen, was put incharge of the expedition. His army consisted of 6,000 picked horsemen and 3,000 camels. A large number of foot soldiers, many from Mekran and some of the tribes of Sind who were opposed to the rule of Raja Dahir, also joined the invader. His artillery was worked by five hundred men.

Conquest of Sind 711-12 A.D.

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The actual fighting began in the autumn of 711 at Debal. Muhammad dug trenches and arranged his catapults. The strongest of them was called the 'Bride'. It directly hit the red flag flying over the biggest temple of Debal. The Indians in those days believed in superstitions and omens. The fall of the flag greatly disheartened them. They thought that the gods were against them, and that they must be defeated. They organised a sortie, but their hearts were sinking within them. This slight opposition was repulsed. The Muslims scaled the walls and entered the town. The governor fled, and the people tamely yielded themselves to their fate. Many were slaughtered and reduced to slavery. A Muslim quarter was established in the town and a mosque was built from the material of the demolished temple. Qasim marched farther into the interior of the country and soon conquered the towns of *Nirun* near modern Hyderabad which was defended by Jai Singh, a son of Dahir and *Sehwan* where Jats offered some resistance.

Raja Dahir so far appears to have taken the invasion very lightly. When the invader marched still farther into the interior, he took steps to meet him. He gathered an army of 50,000 horses and met the Muslim invader at Rawar near his capital, Brahmanabad. Dahir arranged war elephants in the advance-guard. The naptha arrows of the Arabs aimed at the elephants drove them amuck. Disorder and confusion followed. The Raja suffered defeat. Dahir was killed in the battlefield. The queen and her son continued to oppose the enemy but ultimately they, too, were defeated. The town was put to massacre and about 6,000 people were destroyed. The remaining Hindu army still continued to fight, but the forces of the Muslims proved too strong for them. After the capture of the capital, Muhammad-bin-Qasim took prisoner two daughters of the Raja whose names were Surya Devi and Parmal Devi. These girls were sent to the Caliph as presents.

Muhammad-bin-Qasim continued his march. One after the other he conquered Alor, Sika and Multan. The invaders met with tough opposition everywhere.

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which was overcome by superior generalship, method and weapons of warfare as well as diplomacy. In the course of this invasion the Buddhists and jats did not give full co-operation to the defenders.

Within a year Muhammad overran almost the whole of Sind.

The glorious career of Muhammad-bin-Qasim came to an abrupt close. It is said that in order to avenge the death of their father at the hands of the young General, the two daughters of Raja Dahir, who had been sent to Caliph, told him that the General had already violated them. This infuriated the Caliph who ordered Qasim to be sewn in the raw hide of an ox and despatched to Damascus immediately. Such was the awe and prestige of the Caliph that the General quietly submitted to his fate and breathed his last. There seems to be another reason for such a drastic step. There were two strong parties at the Caliph's court. The one opposed to Al-Hajaj, the father-in-law of Muhammad-bin-Qasim, might have succeeded in poisoning the ears of the Caliph.

After the death of Muhammad-bin-Qasim the Arabs continued to hold the newly conquered territory for some time. Some Arabs settled in the border areas of Sind. As the maintenance of Sind was more of a liability than an asset, the Caliph's interest in its occupation began to wane. By the end of the eighth century it was practically free of control from outside. Some Arab settlements continued to exist particularly at Mansura and Multan.

The easy victory of the Arabs over Sind did not tempt them to launch an all-India conquest. The reasons are that the Arabs were not numerically strong enough to undertake such a great venture. Besides at that time a number of sects were springing up in Islam, and the Muslim solidarity was in danger of disruption. Further a nationalist movement had started in Iran against the Pan-Arabism of the Caliphs.

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Nature of Arab Rule in Sind

Muhammad-bin-Qasim was not only a great general but also a capable administrator. Having conquered the whole of Sind he took steps to establish peace and order. Though he imposed *jizya* on Hindus and took hostages as a guarantee for good conduct, he granted freedom of worship, and extended protection to their temples, lives, honour and property. Brahman collectors were employed in the collection of revenues. His successors continued his policy. They did not interfere with the customs, culture, or religion of the people. There was no forcible conversion. The Hindus continued to lead their independent lives. On the whole the Arab rule was humane, tolerant, liberal, and conciliatory.

The Effects of the Arab Conquest

The Arabs did not rule over Sind with an iron rod. They could have colonised the country, or inflicted a rigorous rule upon the people if the venture had proved somewhat profitable. As Sind was unproductive and too far off from the seat of the Caliphate, neither the Caliph nor the Arabs in general, took interest in keeping or developing this territory. It was mainly for this reason that Sind was not actually incorporated in the Muslim Empire and was left to follow its normal course. The Arab conquest could not, therefore, produce any far-reaching results. Stanley Lanepoole has described the Arab conquest of Sind in these words: "It is an episode in the history of India and Islam, a triumph without results."

Arab Invasion : Failure

The Arabs entered the country from a wrong direction. Sind is a desert surrounded by vast stretches of unproductive lands. Its immediate neighbour Rajputana, too, is dry and barren. Moreover it was inhabited by the brave and chivalrous Rajputs who would not allow any advance of the Arabs into the more fertile regions of India. Another cause of the failure of the Arab invasion was that the Indians did not mix with the invaders. Socially and culturally Indians were much more advanced than the Arab conquerors and so the Indians treated the

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Arabs with contempt. In this way the social and religious life of the Indians remained unaffected. Still another cause of its failure was the great distance which separated Sind from Arabia. In those days of slow and difficult means of communication, no regular contact could be established with this newly conquered province of the Caliphate. Later, the struggle for Caliphate between the Omayyads and Abbasids weakened the authority of the Caliph. He, therefore, had hardly any time or desire to maintain a far-flung territory like Sind which was neither economically nor politically important. Besides the Arabs were not good administrators. They did not know how to control the newly conquered territories. So they could not consolidate Sind and it remained under their rule merely in name. For all intents and purposes Sind remained an independent country. The Arab occupation was not at all felt in the villages. The people hardly knew that they were being ruled by Arabs. This is, however, creditable to the conquerors because it shows their extreme tolerance and liberality. Due to the above causes the Arab conquest of Sind "led to nothing, and left scarcely a vestige save in the names of certain Arab families and in the ruins of the buildings they destroyed." (Lanepoole). Similarly Sir Wolseley Haig has remarked, "The tide of Islam having overflowed Sind and the lower Panjab ebbed leaving some jetsam on sand."

Some indirect Effects.

The conquest, however, produced certain indirect results of importance. In the first place the easy Arab victory exposed the inherent military weakness of the Indians. This gave the intending invaders an impetus to attempt her conquest. The conquest was important in another way too. It showed that Sind was not the right quarter from where to enter India. Consequently, all later Muslim invaders came from the North-West.

The conquest had some important cultural effects also. The Muslims learnt a good deal about Indo-Aryan civilisation and culture. They were specially influenced by the high Hindu philosophical and religious ideas. For example, the Arabs were impressed to know that the

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Hindus were also familiar with the doctrine of oneness of God. The Arabs also learnt from the Hindus lessons in the art of practical administration and government. The Arabs appreciated and later adopted Indian style of architecture, painting and music. They also learnt from the Hindus the advances that they had made in astronomy, medicine, philosophy and mathematics. The science of metallurgy which the Hindus had developed to a high degree of perfection under the Guptas was also adopted by the Muslims. A Muslim historian, Tabari, says that Caliph Harim appointed Hindu physicians as doctors in his hospitals and got many works on Hindu philosophy, religion, chemistry, astrology and medicine, translated into Arabic. In short saracenic civilisation owes a great debt to the Indo-Aryan culture and all this was due to the contact of the Arabs with the Hindus of Sind. This contact had further far-reaching results. The Indian philosophy and culture which the Arabs imbibed was disseminated in some parts of Europe, where the Arabs had entered as victors. In this connection Havell says "Through the occupation of Sind, Islam was enabled to tap the inexhaustible resources of India, spiritual and material, and became the agent for their distribution over the whole of Europe."

The Indians, in their turn, also learnt a few things from their invaders. The new religion of Islam had deep and far-reaching effects on the later philosophical and religious speculation in India.

QUESTIONS

1. Give an estimate of the effects of the Arab conquest of Sind. Why did it prove abortive ?

2. Describe the Conquest of Sind by the Arabs. How did they govern Sind ?

3. Why did Muhammad-bin-Qasim achieve an easy victory in Sind ?

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CHAPTER VII

MAHMUD OF GHAZNI AND HIS INVASIONS

In consequence of the failure of the Muslim invasion of Sind India remained free from foreign aggression for nearly three hundred years. It was towards the close of the tenth century that India was again invaded from the North-West. This serious inroad was made by the Turks.

Rise of the Turks.

The Arab invasion of Sind was planned during the Caliphate of the Umayyads. They were overthrown by a political movement which originated in Iran. It ended the racial supremacy of the Arabs. A new dynasty of the Abbasids came into power and ruled from 750 to 1258 A.D. They founded Baghdad in 762 A.D. and established their capital at this place. The Muslim empire attained great prosperity during this period. In the tenth century the survivors of the Fatimid and the Umayyad dynasties proclaimed rival Caliphates. The constant struggle considerably weakened the Abbasid Caliphs.

Just about this time the Turks, a warrior race of people from Central Asia, began to rise. They had recently been converted to Islam. The Abbasids soon accepted their protection. It was the Turkish princes who later on foiled all the attempts of the Christian Crusaders who tried to seize Palestine. Some of these Turks established themselves independently to the north of Hindukush. The strongest dynasty in this region was called the Samanid.

Alpatgin whose successors carried fire and sword into India was originally a Turkish slave of Abul Malik, the fifth ruler of Samanid dynasty. The Malik promoted him to the position of governor of Khorasan because of his loyalty and administrative ability. On Abul Malik's death Alpatgin had to run away from his office as Mansur, his new master did

Alpatgin.

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not favour him. He entered Afghanistan and established a small kingdom at Ghazni. Alpatgin died in 961 A.D.

Sabuktgin, a slave of Alpatgin, became the next important ruler. He was originally the son of a Turkish Chief. In early life he was taken prisoner and was sold as a slave to Alpatgin at Bokhara. Sabuktgin proved to be a talented ruler. He set himself to the task of annexing new territories to his dominion.

Sabuktgin, 977-97.

At this time the Punjab and the adjoining territory in the north-west including Jalalabad and Kabul was ruled over by Jaipal. He did not like the existence of an independent Muslim kingdom in his immediate neighbourhood and took some aggressive steps against Sabuktgin. He retaliated by leading a campaign against Jaipal, routed him, and seized from him the territory of Kabul, Jalalabad and the Khyber Pass.

Some time afterwards Jaipal felt encouraged to attack Sabuktgin's territories, but he was defeated and had to purchase peace for ten lakhs of dirhams. Jaipal did not fulfil the terms of the treaty. This brought Sabuktgin again on the Indian soil. Jaipal organised a powerful confederacy of Rajput chiefs. In the battle that followed the Indians suffered a heavy defeat because their means of warfare were too old and ineffective before the Muslim tactics. After securing a large booty Sabuktgin retired to his home without annexing the Indian provinces which he had conquered. His raids did not produce any political results but they served to expose the inherent weakness of the Indians which paved the way for more ambitious Muslim invaders.

Sabuktgin died in 997. Due to the absence of any law of succession among the Muslims, there followed a war of succession among the various sons of Sabuktgin. Out of the struggle Mahmud, a younger son of Sabuktgin, came out successful. This man was destined to play a powerful role in the Indian affairs for the next thirty years. On his accession to the throne he was given the proud titles

Rise of Mahmud, 998-1030.

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of Yamin-ud-Daulah and Amin-ul-Millat by the Caliph. It was due to his first title that his dynasty came to be called the Yamini dynasty. Mahmud was a zealous Muslim ; but he did not show any zeal to spread Islam in India. He remained contented only with the enormous booty which fell into his hands every time that he entered the Indian frontiers. He is said to have taken a vow to lead an expedition into India every year and he almost succeeded in keeping it. The vow was taken not because of his religious zeal but because of his insatiable thirst for wealth. Dr. Ishwari Prasad has aptly remarked "To such a greedy iconoclast, India with her myriad faiths and fabulous wealth presented a favourable field for the exercise of his religious and political ambitions."

Mahmud's Expeditions.

From 1000 A.D. to 1027 A.D. Mahmud led as many as seventeen invasions into India. It is remarkable to note that in spite of Indian opposition, he was successful every time he attacked Indian territories.

Attack on frontier towns, 1000 A.D.

In 1000 A.D. he led a few minor attacks against some frontier towns. He carried some booty with him. These raids were in the nature of exploratory incursions.

Raja Jaipal of Bhatinda, 1001.

Raja Jaipal had shifted his capital from Lahore to Bhatinda for reasons of safety and security. He was determined to avenge his two defeats by Sabuktgin. He led an expedition to Peshawar, which had been occupied by the Muslims. Mahmud set out to India at the head of a large army consisting of 10,000 cavalry to repulse Jaipal. Jaipal also formed a huge confederacy of Rajput chiefs and in the battle that took place between the two armies near Peshawar, the forces of the Mahmud carried the day. It should be noted that the Indian defeat was due mainly to the use of cavalry by the Muslims. Mahmud plundered Jaipal's camp and territory, and took the Raja and some of his relatives prisoners. Jaipal was, however, released on the payment of a huge ransom. Jaipal felt ashamed of his repeated defeats and he committed suicide.

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Expeditions against Bhera, Multan and Uchch, 1004-05.

Mahmud's third expedition was led against the ruler of Bhera on the banks of the river Jhelum in 1004. Mahmud was successful against the Raja. His fourth invasion was directed against Abul Fateh Dand, the ruler of Multan. One of the reasons of the raid was that Dand had harassed Mahmud during his earlier campaign against Bhera. Mahmud was successful against Dand and he got a heavy annual tribute from the defeated king. Mahmud then advanced upon Uchch to vanquish Vajra Singh the Bhatia ruler who had failed in giving him the promised support against Jaipal. The Raja was defeated and slain, and much booty was acquired. Mahmud had to hurry back to Ghazni because the ruler of Kashghar had invaded his territories during his absence. He left India after appointing Sukhpal or Nawasa Shah, a grandson of Jaipal, who had been converted to Islam, as the governor of his Indian possessions. Sukhpal abjured Islam and he revolted against Mahmud. He had, therefore, to come back to chastise the rebellious governor in 1005. Sukhpal was defeated and taken prisoner.

Sixth invasion against Anandpal, 1008;

Anandpal, the son of Jaipal, was intriguing against Mahmud. He had helped Sukhpal in his rebellion. Mahmud led his sixth expedition against him. Anandpal, brought together the various Rajas of Rajputana in a confederacy against Mahmud. It is said that so great was the enthusiasm against the invader that even women sold their ornaments in order to help Anandpal. Such enthusiasm was seldom witnessed in India before. It is estimated that Anandpal was able to bring some three lakh soldiers into the field. The two armies met at Peshawar. In the first encounter the Hindus scored a victory over the forces of Mahmud. Thirty thousand Gakhars had also joined the Rajputs and inflicted heavy losses on Mahmud. Unfortunately the elephant, on which Anandpal was sitting got frightened and fled away. This created disorder in the ranks of the Rajputs and the Hindu army retreated in panic. This sad incident turned Hindu

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victory into defeat. The national opposition met with heavy disaster and Mahmud plundered the territories which lay prostrate before him.

Seventh raid against Nagarkot 1009.

Mahmud who was a greedy iconoclast had heard about the untold wealth in the temple of Nagarkot (Kangra). The famous temple of Jwala Mukhi also lay in its vicinity. The temples were richly endowed by the Hindu Rajas and immense riches had collected there through ages of offerings. Mahmud was successful in capturing the temples. He seized gold, silver and precious jewels worth lakhs of rupees. This was the richest booty Mahmund had acquired so far.

In 1010 Mahmud invaded the Punjab in order to exact tribute from Anandpal who had not paid his dues till then. In 1011 he invaded Multan. By this time, Anandpal was dead. He was succeeded by his son Jaipal II. In 1013 Mahmud advanced against him. The Raja fled to the hills leaving his son Bhimpal to defend his kingdom. Mahmud defeated him, and carried a large number of boys and girls as slaves. They were sold very cheaply in the bazaars of Ghazni. "Slaves were so plentiful that they became very cheap and men of respectability in that native land were degraded to the position of slaves of common shopkeepers." [Cambridge History of India, Vol. III, p. 17.]

Thanesar, 1014.

Mahmud's next important raid was directed against Thanesar, which was a centre of Hinduism. After hard fight he defeated the Hindus. Here too Mahmud came across vast booty. He carried it with him to Ghazni.

Mathura and Kanauj, 1018-19.

Mahmud's hunger for wealth was whetted by his repeated successes against Hindu temples. He, therefore, now began to attack all Hindu temples one by one because they were virtually the store-houses of Indian wealth. In 1018 he set out for the bunch of temples lying in the Gangetic valley. He plundered Sirsawan, Bulandshahr and Mathura, the sacred city of Lord Krishna. Mathura

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was plundered for twenty days and at the end he carried hundreds of camel-loads of gold and silver.

His next objective was Kanauj which he attacked in 1019. Like Mathura, Kanauj was also a famous place of Hindu pilgrimage. The city was captured without fighting. Mahmud took away to Ghazni immense booty besides a large number of slaves.

Kalinjar, 1019-22.

The main cause of the invasion of Kalinjar was that Ganda, the ruler of Kalinjar, had attacked and killed Rajyapal, the ruler of Kanauj, who had submitted to Mahmud without fighting in 1019. Mahmud looked upon Rajyapal as his vassal and so he attacked Ganda in order to punish him. Ganda collected a large army and Mahmud was very much puzzled at meeting such a formidable foe. As ill luck would have it the Indian army somehow got nervous and dispersed in confusion. This was a great opportunity for Mahmud to attack the Indians whom he routed completely. He could not, however, get much booty. On his way back he defeated Bhimpal, the ruler of Lahore. In 1022 Mahmud started to attack Ganda once again, because his earlier success had brought him no gains. He conquered Gwalior and proceeded towards the fort of Kalinjar. Ganda had to sue for peace and Mahmud returned after getting a heavy tribute from the Raja.

Attack on Somnath, 1025-26.

It was, however, Mahmud's attack on the famous temple of Somnath in Kathiawar which deserves special notice. This victory brought him great renown and plunder. Mahmud was tempted to attack this temple because of its vast riches. It involved crossing the risky Rajputana desert and the danger of possible attacks by the Rajput forces in the heart of the country. The temple had 10,000 villages attached to it which brought it large income. It is said that 10,000 Brahmans and 500 dancing girls, besides thousands of servants, were in the employment of the temple.

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Mahmud made elaborate arrangements for the attack on this temple. He collected 50,000 cavalry besides 30,000 camels. He instructed his soldiers to carry sufficient water and food-supply for themselves which would suffice for the days they were crossing the 350 miles long stretch of the desert. He proceeded through Multan, Ajmer and Anhilwara. He appeared before the gates of Somnath in January 1026. The temple was heroically defended by a large number of Rajputs who had come from far and near to oppose the invader. After a long-drawn battle which lasted four days, the Muslims came out victorious. On entering the temple, he ordered the idol of the *lingum* or phallus to be broken. It was found to contain precious jewels worth millions of rupees. The pieces of the idol were sent to Mecca and Medina to be fixed on the steps of these places as a sign of the victory of Islam over idol-worship. The temple was mercilessly looted and thousands of Hindus were put to the sword. The Hindus fought bravely and with spirit and we cannot accuse them of lack of patriotism or enthusiasm for their religion. It was a fight between two social systems and naturally the one which was stronger and better came out successful.

On his way back Mahmud lost his way and was greatly harassed by the chivalrous Rajputs, the Jats and other war-like races of northern India.

Against the Jats, 1027.

As Mahmud had been harassed by the Jats on his way back from Somnath, he undertook an expedition to punish them in 1027. This happened to be his last expedition. The Jats were settled along the river Indus. Mahmud prepared a large flotilla of 4,000 boats in order to fight them successfully. In a naval engagement on the river Indus the Jats suffered heavy reverses and were thoroughly subdued.

Mahmud's death, 1030.

Mahmud led a very hard and strenuous life. During his long career he took no rest. He had to fight constantly in India as well as in the neighbourhood of Ghazni. Towards the end of his life he was engaged subduing the Saljuk Turks who were menacing his territories. He was still

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busy against them when he died in April, 1030. With his death a great chapter in the history of Ghazni, and the career of a great and marvellous general, came to a close.

Motives in attacking India.

Various motives have been ascribed to Mahmud's seventeen invasions of India. Some time back it was thought that he was motivated by religious considerations. Recent researches have shown that Mahmud was a very matter-of-fact man and his various campaigns in India were not born of religious considerations alone. He was a very greedy king anxious to carry as much riches from India to Ghazni as he possibly could. Ghazni is a barren and unproductive land. It could not be maintained without outside wealth. India offered a very easy and good field for exploitation. So he undertook regular excursions into India with one aim only—to carry gold out of India.

His actions in India also point to such a conclusion. He never bothered to consolidate the territory which he conquered. He was contented if the land he once sacked continued to pay him tribute. If it did not he would visit it again and get the desired end, but would not establish administrative machinery in it. Besides this, he did not spare the Muslim rulers of India and outside either. He attacked everybody who could pay him gold indiscriminately. Moreover, there are no records of forcible conversions of Hindus to Islam by Mahmud. He attacked the various temples not because they were the centres of idol-worship but because they were the store-houses of unimaginable Indian wealth. Moreover the defeat of so many Hindu Rajas and the desecration of so many Hindu temples in India, was also calculated to bring him renown and prestige outside India.

In India he generally followed a policy of religious toleration. There is evidence to believe that Hindus in Ghazni received equitable treatment from him. They were freely employed in his army where they held honoured positions. Two Hindus, Tilak and Tash held very high positions in his army. Havell is even of the opinion that "Mahmud would have sacked Baghdad with as little compunction as he had plundered Somnath, if the

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undertaking had seemed as profitable and as easy, for he did not hesitate to threaten the Khalifa with death when the latter refused to give him Samarkand." It follows from the above account that Mahmud's motive in attacking India was neither religious nor political. He was actuated by only one motive—the acquisition of gold.

Effects of Mahmud's invasions.

Mahmud's invasions of India had many important repercussions. It is clear to us that he himself had no political or religious motives in invading the country. Still his campaigns could not have gone without leaving certain important indirect effects in the political, economic and religious spheres.

(A) *Political effects:* Mahmud's campaigns in India were mere raids. They disturbed the political equilibrium deeply. He would attack a Raja, plunder his capital, put him to death, destroy his army and would take away his riches. This was the story of plunder and pillage which he repeated with little modifications every time he attacked a state. These attacks created political vacuum, as he did not take the administration in his own hands nor would he entrust it to some capable person. It led to widespread anarchy and disorder in the country. His campaigns had the effect of creating small independent but incompetent Rajas all over northern India. This changed the entire political complexion of the places which he attacked.

It is clear that he had no idea of laying the foundation of any Muslim State in India. Had he entertained any such thoughts he could have very easily accomplished this task. The whole of India lay prostrate before him. He was interested only in loot, plunder and spoil. He was interested in strengthening his original Turko-Persian Empire without any thought of extending it to the Indian sub-continent. He attacked India only because its gold helped in the realization of that aim. His raids did not affect the political fabric of India beyond the Punjab.

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Indirectly Mahmud can be called the founder of the Muslim Empire in India in more than one sense. He not only exposed the inherent political and military weakness of India but he also showed to the later Muslim invaders the direction and method of attack. The Indian Empire of Ghori was to a very large extent based upon the invisible foundations laid by Mahmud. Although Mahmud came to India like the proverbial wind and went back like a whirlwind, but unconsciously and indirectly his spirit stayed on in India, which guided the later invaders in their task of conquering India. In the words of R.C. Majumdar "Mahmud exhausted the military and economic resources of the country and the temporary occupation of the Punjab served as a key to unlock the gates of the Indian empire. Big cracks were made in the fabric of Indian polity and it was no longer a question of whether but when that age-long structure would fall."

[An Advanced History of India : p. 276.]

(*B*) *Religious* : Mahmud's invasions had few important religious effects. He did not act as a religious missionary in India. He did not forcibly convert the Hindus to Islam, nor did he treat the Hindus with any revengeful spirit. He meted out a tolerant treatment to his Hindu subjects. He gave them equal positions with the Muslims in his army. He did destroy their temples but he did so not because they were Hindu temples but because they contained untold wealth. He was a greedy man, any place which could give him gold must be held by him. His campaigns had far-reaching indirect religious results. The later Muslim invaders realized the futility of conquering India without converting the Indians to Islam because so long as they were not demoralised that way, they could have no loyalty to the Muslim State. They thought Mahmud's Indian empire had fallen because of this fault. So the later religious fanaticism of the Muslim conqueror was in a way a lesson from Mahmud's omissions.

(*C*) *Economic* : The invasions of Mahmud had also important economic repercussions. He took away large quantities of gold, silver and precious jewels from the

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country. He dislocated the entire economic and social life of the northern Indians. The wanton attacks and destruction of great temples, houses and forts entailed heavy losses to the people and the governments. He caused untold economic misery to the peasant, the trader and in fact to everybody. It took ages to rehabilitate the people who were uprooted by Mahmud.

Estimate of Mahmud's achievements and Personality.

Mahmud is one of the most fascinating personalities in the history of the world. He occupies a unique position among the great conquerors of the East. He can be compared with Alexander the Great, Timur, Muhammad Ghori, Nadir Shah and Ahmed Shah Abdali in his widely successful campaigns. To-day Mahmud's very name suggests to us the idea of a remarkably brave and successful general. Besides being a great conqueror he also proved his worth as a statesman and organiser. His personality and character should not be judged from his policy and action in India alone. Here he acted only as a conqueror. He reserved his other qualities for display only in his own home. While judging his personality and achievements we should not lose sight of the fact that his motive in coming to India was not to establish a Muslim empire in India, but to get the means for a mighty Muslim structure in Ghazni.

Mahmud was a very energetic and active man. Throughout his life he continued to fight against his enemies. Ever since he launched upon the career of conquests he knew no rest. He would spend his time regularly in fighting against one enemy or the other. His warlike pursuit did not make him blind to the cultural activities. He himself should not be regarded as illiterate or barbarian. He was himself quite cultured and appreciated the virtues of liberalism and toleration. He was never known to be a religious fanatic. In India he stands out in pleasant contrast to the later bigoted Muslim rulers of India who brought a slur upon themselves and on the fair name of Islam by indulging in religious fanaticism and persecution. We must give Mahmud due credit for his greatness in this respect.

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As an empire-builder too he was second to none. Our notions about his achievements as an empire-builder should not be formed by his work and policy in India alone, because here he never intended to establish a Muslim empire. On the other hand, he was successful in laying the foundation of a mighty Turko-Persian empire which continued to exist for a long time.

Mahmud was a great patron of art and letters. By his lavish generosity he attracted to his court a large number of poets, writers and artists. In fact every uprooted litterateur was sure to get shelter at Mahmud's court. Great writers like Firdausi, the renowned author of "Shahnama", Al-Beruni, the Chronicler, Farabi, Utbi Baihiki, Unsari and Farukkhi adorned his court. Moreover he patronised many educational institutions. He established a University at Ghazni which was richly endowed by him.

Through his untiring interest in the development of art and architecture he built a number of beautiful structures in the barren and rocky place like Ghazni. Gradually it became one of the finest cities of Central Asia. His most remarkable building is the famous mosque of Celestial Bride.

As a king and general Mahmud should occupy a very prominent position. He built a strong empire starting from a scratch. The mighty structure of the Turko-Persian empire which he laid, withstood many trying times. Among the Muslim kings he certainly occupies a high position. He was a great general, statesman and empire-builder. He possessed many qualities of head and heart. He was no blood-thirsty barbarian. On the other hand, he was a humane and kind ruler. Even in India he showed no barbarity. In those times to be a literal and tolerant ruler should account for much. We, therefore, assign a high position to Mahmud among the great rulers of the world.

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QUESTIONS

1. Who were the Turks ? Describe the achievements of Alpatgin and Sabuktgin.

2. Give a short account of Mahmud's exploits in India.

3. Was Mahmud a mere raider ? Examine his personality and achievements.

4. What were the effects of Mahmud's invasions on India ?

5. Describe four important invasions of India by Mahmud of Ghazni.

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CHAPTER VIII

MUHAMMAD GHORI AND THE FOUNDATION OF MUSLIM RULE IN INDIA

A period of about one hundred and fifty years intervened between Mahmud of Ghazni and Muhammad Ghori. Mahmud was succeeded by his son Muhammad in 1030. He was soon replaced on the throne by his younger brother Masud. Masud was a spirited young man and had some of the flair of his illustrious father. The affairs of the state were controlled by his minister Khwaja Ahmad Maimandi. He continued to rule over the Empire left by his father till his death in 1040. The Punjab was held by him. He personally came to India to conquer the fort of Hansi. During his absence in India the Saljuk Turks of Khorasan increased their power and they defeated Masud in 1040. He was forced to retreat towards India and was murdered by his rebellious chiefs. Madud and a host of worthless successors came to the throne after Masud, and the matters of the Empire went on deteriorating. The Saljuks continued to rise in power at Ghazni. Meanwhile an Afghan chief, Ghias-ud-din Ghori came into prominence by capturing the whole of Ghazni in 1173. Some time afterwards another Ghori chief, who was destined to play a great role in Indian political scene, Muiz-ud-din-bin-Sam popularly known as Muhammad Ghori, took prisoner the last of the line of the rulers of Ghazni, at Lahore. In this way the Ghaznavides yielded place to the Ghoris.

Successors of Mahmud.

Ghor lies to the east of Herat. The ancestors of Muhammad Ghori had been employed in the forces of Mahmud and some of them had taken part in his Indian campaigns. Shahab-ud-din Muhammad Ghori, whose full name was Muiz-ud-din Muhammad-bin Sam, was the nephew of Ala-ud-din, the ruler of Ghor. His elder brother was

Rise of Ghoris.

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Ghias-ud-din, who succeeded Ala-ud-din. He allowed Muhammad Ghori to look after Ghazni, he himself being busy towards Ghor. Muhammad Ghori engaged himself in Indian operations and in this way became famous in Indian history. His exploits in India were so successful and effective that he became the real founder of the Muslim empire in India. Muhammad Ghori remained on the best of terms with his elder brother throughout.

Political condition of Northern Inida at the time of Ghori's invasions.

Ever since the days of Mahmud and even earlier, the Rajputs had held sway in the Punjab and surrounding territories. There was however, no paramount power among them. There were four important Rajput kingdoms in the North—the Tomars of Delhi. the Chauhans of Ajmer, the Rathors of Kanauj and the Chandelas of Bundelkhand. All the four States had constantly remained at variance. The Tomars of Delhi had defeated the Chauhans. The Rathor Raja Jai Chand of Kanauj claimed to be the *Chakravarti* Raja of India and had performed the famous *Asvamedh Yagya* in 117 A.D. His suzerainty was challenged by Prithvi Raj Chauhan, who carried away his daughter, Sanjukta, in disguise. Besides these great Rajas there were many petty Rajput chiefs ruling over small principalities. All of them were at daggers drawn. They never thought in terms of their nation or country. They were so selfish and short-sighted, that even in the face of the danger of their extinction, they could not come together. Moreover, distinctions of caste further made the Indian society weak and divided. It was, therefore, no wonder that these mutually-fighting and selfish Rajas were defeated by the fanatical and well-organised Mus.im hordes. [See chapter V also.]

Early Invasions, 1174-86 A.D.

Ghias-ud-din, the ruler of Ghazni, asked his younger brother Shahab-ud-din Ghori to obtain possession of the Indian provinces which had once belonged to the Ghaznavides.

Uch. 1174 A.D.

Ghori undertook his first expedition against Uch, a place on the confluence of the Indus and the Jhelum in 1174 A.D.

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The Bhatias offered some resistance but were defeated by the superior tactics of the Muslims. There is a story that the fort of Uch fell through the treachery of the Raja's wife, who killed her husband on the understanding that Ghori would make her daughter his first queen.

Multan, 1175 A.D.

Next year (1175) Muhammad Ghori invaded the principality of Multan which was held by the Karmatians (Ismailian heretics). They were easily defeated. Muhammad Ghori placed Multan under the charge of a governor.

Anhilwara, 1178 A.D.

After that Muhammad Ghori proceeded towards Anhilwara in Gujrat where Raja Bhimdeva ruled. The Raja offered a spirited resistance, and he was successful in repulsing the invasion. It is a glorious interlude in the otherwise miserable defeats of the Indians at the hands of the foreigners. Muhammad's forces suffered heavily and on their way back they were harassed by the Indians and he could reach his capital with only a skeleton of his once glorious army in 1178 A.D.

Lahore, 1189 A.D.

In order to retrieve his lost prestige, Ghori mustered a large force to invade India. He now confined his attention to the conquest of the Punjab alone. He came to Peshawar which easily fell in 1179 A.D. The Punjab was ruled over by Khusro Malik, a descendant of Mahmud.

Khusro was defeated and his son was taken prisoner. Afterwards he advanced towards Sialkot which also submitted. It is said that Chakra Deva, the ruler of Jammu and Sialkot, had invited Ghori to come to his territory in order to suppress the Khokhars. After the departure of Ghori, Khusro invaded Chakra Deva. This once again brought Ghori to the Punjab in 1186, A.D., because he looked upon Chakra Deva as his vassal. Khusro Malik got frightened and he made abject submission. While he was going to receive the invader Khusro was arrested. He was sent to Ghor and kept there as a prisoner. In this way the last of the Ghaznavide rulers was removed from India.

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Ghori continued his advance. He took Bhatinda and Sarhind by storm. Thus the whole of the Punjab up to Sarhind and Sind came under the control of the Ghoris. After consolidating his position in these areas Ghori made preparations to meet the Rajputs in the heart of the country.

First Battle of Tarain, 1191 A D.

The rising onslaught of the Muslim hordes made the various Rajputs anxious about their own safety. It was the famous Chauhan Rajput, Prince Prithvi Raj, the hero of Chand Bardai's famous, '*Raso*', who collected a large Indian army to meet the enemy. About one hundred Rajput Rajas, with the exception of the ruler of Kanauj, joined him in a common cause. The strength of the Indian army is estimated at 200,000 horses and 3,000 elephants. The two armies came face to face in the famous field of Tarain (near Thanesar) in 1191, where once the War of Mahabharata had taken place. The Rajputs fought with such determination and spirit, that notwithstanding their tactical and inherent weakness, the Muslims could make no headway. The powerful Muslim cavalry became powerless before the bravery of the Rajputs. So thick was the fighting and such great were the Rajput successes over the enemy that even Muhammad Ghori sustained serious wounds at the hands of a Rajput prince, Govind Rai, in an encounter. It was lucky for Ghori that he was saved in time by one of his retainers, otherwise this great invader would have met his death. All the same this encounter bewildered the so-called invincible Muslim army, and they ran in all directions in confusion. The Sultan hastened to a place of safety, leaving behind thousands killed and wounded. This was a great victory of India over her oppressors. Had the Rajputs followed the retreating enemy and annihilated them, the Muslim conquest of India might have been considerably delayed.

Second Battle of Tarain, 1192

Muhammad Ghori could not rest till he had avenged his defeat. He made up his mind to attack India and to wreak vengeance upon the Rajputs. He severely punished his

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officers, and soldiers for fleeing. He took oaths that they would never turn their back on the battle-field. He collected a very large army, the largest he ever collected, numbering 120,000 soldiers. He met the Rajputs again in the battle of Tarain in 1192. Unfortunately, Prithvi Raj, could not collect all the Rajas again. The previous victory probably turned their heads and aroused fresh jealousies. Jai Chand openly favoured the invader. Ghori had learnt lessons from his previous engagement. He followed new tactics. He feigned retreat in the thick of the battle. When the Rajputs were off their guard, the Muslims suddenly turned back and took the Rajputs by surprise. This created confusion in the Rajput camp and they were completely routed Many noble warrior-chiefs fell in the battlefield. Prithvi Raj himself was taken prisoner and put to death.

The second battle of Tarain was a very important event in the history of our country. This defeat broke the backbone of Indian resistance. India now lay prostrate before the aggressor to be trampled down as he wished. It also meant the end of the Rajput power. The ascendancy in Indian politics which the Rajputs had enjoyed for the last five hundred years now came to an end. After this battle the Muslim rule in India can be said to have begun. It laid the foundation of the Sultanate in India.

Later conquests

After this great victory Muhammad Ghori, went back having Qutb-ud-din Aibek, who was destined to become the first Muslim ruler of India, as his lieutenant. Qutb ud-din was a talented and capable man and was highly devoted to his master. He added Meerut, Koil (Aligarh) and Delhi to the empire. He made Delhi his headquarters from where various military operations were organized.

Defeat of Jai Chandra of Kanauj 1194 A.D.

Shrewd and ambitious as Muhammad Ghori was, he soon realized that so long as the last Rajput Raja was not annihilated, the Muslims could not hope to be secure in India. He, therefore, launched his next invasion against Jai Chandra of Kanauj in 1194, A.D.

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It will be remembered that Jai Chandra had remained aloof from the struggle between Ghori and Prithvi Raj, owing to his rivalry with the Chauhan Raja. Jai Chandra was a powerful king. His dominions extended from Kanauj to Banaras. He had also claimed to be the *chakravarti* ruler of India in 1174. It was now the time for Jai Chandra to reap the consequences of his past mistakes. As he had passively witnessed the destruction of other Rajputs, it was now his turn to fall before the same enemy. No Rajput came to his rescue when Ghori attacked him. The two opposing armies met at Chandwar near Etawah in 1194. Jai Chandra offered heroic resistance but could not stand before the enemy. Jai Chandra was killed. After capturing Kanauj, Ghori marched on Banaras, which he laid waste. Hundreds of camel-loads of riches fell into his hand.

Ghori went back to Afghanistan. The process of conquests was carried on by his able viceroy, Aibek. Aibek scored a series of triumphs over Raja Hemraj of Ajmer, the ruler of Abu and Bhindera, the ruler of Gujerat, Gwalior and Bujana, by 1200 A.D. In 1202 Aibek also reduced the famous fortresses of Kapli and Kalinjar in Bundelkhand.

Conquests of Ajmer, Gujerat and Gwalior, etc., by Aibek

The Muslims turned their attention towards the east as well. While Aibek was fighting against the Rajputs, another great general, Ikhtiar-ud-din Muhammad Bakhtiar Khalji was busy fighting against Bihar and Bengal. The reduction of these two provinces proved an easy task. Bihar as its name (Vihar—a Buddhist monastery) shows was inhabited mostly by the Buddhists. Through centuries of peaceful and non-violent life, they had lost all martial instincts. There was no resistance and no opposition. Thousands of poor Buddhist monks together with their sacred books and stupas, were cut off like blades of grass. Similarly Bengal fell an easy prey before the Muslim hordes in 1203. Raja Lakshman Sen submitted without resistance. Bakhtiar made Lakhnauti his capital and established purely Muslim system of administration.

Bihar and Bengal, 1197 to 1203

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Death of Ghori, 1206

Thus practically the whole of northern and eastern India came under the sway of Muhammad Ghori, after his victory over Jai Chandra in 1194 A.D. Muhammad did not came to India for a long time till 1205 A.D. During this long interval he remained busy in fighting against the enemies in Central Asia. His elder brother, Ghias-ud-din died in 1203 and he declared himself the ruler of all his territories. He suffered a heavy defeat in 1205 at Andkhin. This defeat encouraged some tribes in India and elsewhere to raise the standard of rebellion.

Taj-ud-din Yaldoz, the governor of Ghazni, became refractory. There were rebellions in Multan. Khokhars revolted. Only Qutb-ud-din remained loyal. The Sultan marched to India in 1205 to suppress these rebellions. He was successful everywhere due mainly to the loyal help of Aibek. When he was returning to Ghazni, he was done to death by a Khokhar on the bank of river Jhelum in March, 1206. A great career in this way came to an end.

Character and Estimate of Muhammad Ghori.

Muhammad Ghori was a great figure not only in Indian history but in the history of Central Asia of the medieval times. He left his mark in the Punjab, Ghazni, Khorosan, Iraq, Khwarizan and other neighbouring countries. He spent his life in warring against his enemies right from his childhood. He was successful in almost all his battles. He stands unequalled as a general and conqueror. He was also a good administrator and empire-builder. Unlike Mahmud he had definite schemes of laying the foundation of an Indian empire. After conquering a territory he would entrust it to the care of a capable viceroy who took steps to consolidate it and evolve a sound system of administration. His conquests stand in favourable comparison with those of Mahmud. As a matter of fact his conquests stand on a higher plane because he did a lot to unite and consolidate the territories under his effective control. It was Muhammad Ghori who put an end to the power of the Rajputs and thereby made the rise of Muslim power in India possible. He brought under his sway the whole

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of northern India from the Indus to the Brahmputra. Like Akbar he did not seek to annihilate the Hindu chiefs but tried his best to win their co-operation by offering them positions in the empire. In thus he proved himself a great statesman and politician. He was humane and kind and gifted with rare qualities of head and heart. In the long history of the Muslim rulers it was most probably only Muhammad who showed remarkable affection towards his elder brother. Otherwise the Muslim history is full of rebillions, civil wars and murders for the sake of throne.

In many respects Muhammad Ghori stands in direct contrast with Mahmud. Although on the surface one might find many things in common between the two personalities, but essentially the two were poles apart. If Mahmud was a great general, Muhammad was a great politician. Mahmud was a mere raider but Muhammad was an empire-builder. Mahmud was somewhat fanatical in so far as he ordered massacre of Hindus on one or two occasions, but Muhammad had greater control over his passions and he avoided unnecessary bloodshed of the Hindus because he wanted their co-operation in establishing the Muslim Empire in India.

In their motives too, both were radically different. Mahmud was actuated only by the ideas of loot and personal renown whereas Muhammad had loftier aims. He wanted to establish an Empire in India and spread Islam in the country, besides of course, to acquire wealth. Mahmud is more famous in history than Muhammad because of his spectacular achievements. It remains an undisputed point that Muhammad's achievements were much greater. The later Muslim empire in India was built by Muhammad Ghori and not by Mahmud. In the words of Elphinstone, "Muhammad Ghori's conquests were far superior to those of Sultan Mahmud." We might end the contrast in the words of Dr. Ishwari Prasad, "Mahmud never aimed at permanent conquest, he had come sweeping like a whirlwind and had returned to his native land after the acquisition of vast booty. Wealth and the extirpation of idolatory were the objects

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of his raids; but Muhammad was a real conqueror. He conquered the country and aimed at permanent settlement. His work in India was more solid. The Muslim power which he founded in India increased as time passed and from humble beginnings the kingdom of Delhi gradually developed into one of the greatest empires of the East."

Causes of the Muslim victory.

Historians have given various causes of the victory of the Muslims against the Indians. It is a very interesting study because it is very strange as to how the Muslims could defeat the Indians almost every time they invaded India.

Social causes.

Perhaps the greatest cause of the Indian defeat was due to their defective social structure. The Indian society had been divided into various castes. Only the upper two castes, the Brahmans and the Rajputs who constructed a very small minority of the total population, enjoyed privileged position. The vast majority of the people consisted of Sudras who were not well treated by these high caste people. They were ignorant and poor. They had no consciousness of the nation or the country. They were badly exploited by the upper classes. So they had no love lost for them. Such people could not be expected to fight for their country because it made little difference to them whether they served the Indian Brahman or a Turkish Muslim. Moreover the Indian society was so organised that the duty of fighting fell on the shoulders of the Kshatriyas now on Rajputs only, and their number was very small. The rest of the people did not know how to handle arms. They looked on the struggle without considering it their duty to fight the foreigner. Centuries of non-violence, had also killed whatever little martial spirit they had possessed. On the other hand, the Muslims were better organised. They came from a society in which there was no distinction between high and low, in which every one held arms and where there was little social oppression. They came to India with religious fervour to spread Islam, to bring glory to their race, country and people and besides, to obtain riches and slaves. How

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could these people be defeated by the down-trodden, oppressed and ignorant Indians ?

Political.

Politically, India was a house divided against itself. The Rajas were a miserable lot. They were sorely selfish. They had no thought for the defence of the country apart from their own personal elation and advancement. If he lived, the country lived, but if he lost the country or community had no place in his estimation. He was guided by the famous Indian proverb—*Ap mare jag parlo*. The Indian Rajas woefully lacked patriotism. In their outlook they were selfish, clannish and parochial. If they could come together to fight the enemy on one or two occasions, it was more to defend their religion rather than their country. The people accounted for little. It was the Rajas who decided to fight or not to fight the enemy. The Rajas and not their people should personally be held responsible for the defeats of the Indians.

As a result of their mutual jealousies and animosities the country had been divided into numerous small states. This had sapped the vigour and vitality of the country.

Military.

The military system of the Indians was also very old and out-of-date. Centuries of insulation due to caste restrictions and pride of intellectual and spiritual superiority had thrown Indians into backwaters. They hardly knew what was happening outside world. They still depended upon their infantry with horses and arrows and elephants. Outside India cavalry, artillery and other improved methods of warfare had come into existence. The Indians continued to follow their Mahabharatian tactics of morality in warfare which the foreigners could not appreciate. These false ideas of morality in warfare marred many a victory and turned many victories into defeats.

The Indian division of society did not allow the entire populace to be mobilised against the common enemy. Moreover, the Indian armies were not trained or controlled by one system. The heterogeneous mass of Indian fighters were brought together only in times of

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emergency under various leaders. Such a disorganised rabble lacked unity of command, co-ordination of movement and tactics and cohesion. The result was that in the thick of fight various sections got mixed up and the slightest distress would unnerve them. It was due mainly to these defects that the Indians were defeated. Otherwise as man to man the Indians were in no way inferior to their enemies. Moreover, an average soldier was as courageous, brave and bold as the best soldier of the world. If he was defeated, it does not reflect on his personal chivalry but he was handicapped by so many social, political or military factors that notwithstanding his valour, bravery and contempt for death, he could not defeat the enemy. It was not the average Indian soldier who lacked patriotism or national fervour but often his master was devoid of these virtues.

General causes.

Some historians are of the view that as the Muslims came from the cooler regions of Central Asia, they were more vigorous, hardy and stout. This factor could not have counted for much. The Indian soldiers were very energetic, skilful and brave. At no time did they show any lack of enthusiasm, pluck or initiative before the enemy. They were as intrepid, as vigorous and as enduring as the Muslims.

Another factor, however, which helped the ascendancy of the Muslims was the slave system among them. The slaves were not like the Indian Shudras. They were, on the other hand, a band of very capable and promising people, who had tradition of devoted and faithful service to their masters. More often than not, they belonged to good families and possessed considerable personal skill and charm. Often a Muslim ruler could trust his slave better than his own son or general.

In Muslim history we have come across scores of examples where the slave did splendid work for his master and won laurels in the field for him. Qutb-ud-din Aibek is one of such examples. Stanley Lanepoole remarks that the slave system was a great asset to the Muslims because it afforded the Muslims a ready-made line of able succes-

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sors. He says : "While a brilliant ruler's son is apt to be a failure, the slaves of a real leader of men have often proved the equal of their masters....While the son is a speculation the Muslim slave system meant the survival of the fittest." It produced extremely capable men like Iltutmish and Balbin who became the pillars of the Muslim power. In the case of the Hindus it was very seldom that the son of a great Raja proved as capable as his father. The disintegration and decline of most Hindu states was due to weak successors.

Thus the war between the Hindus and Muslims was a war between two social systems "the one conservative, old and decadent and the other full of youthful vigour and enterprise." The Muslims were better led and organised. Had the Hindus been led by equally great leaders, the Muslims could not have made such a short work of the conquest of India.

QUESTIONS

1 Briefly describe the political condition of India on the eve of the Muslim conquest.

2. Trace the course of the Muslim conquest of Northern India.

3. Write what you know about the achievements of Muhammad Ghori.

4. What were the causes of Muslim victory ? Were Indians poor soldiers ?

5. Compare and contrast Mahmud of Ghazni with Muhammad Ghori.

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CHAPTER IX

THE "SLAVE SULTANS" OF DELHI, 1206-90 A.D.

The so-called slave kings.

The line of kings which ruled over India from 1206 to 1290 A.D. has been described as the slave Dynasty. This description is not correct. It rather appears a contradiction in terms because a king cannot be a slave simultaneously. These rulers are given this common name because most of them were either slaves originally or they were the sons of slaves. They were all freemen at their accession. Hence they were not really slaves though at one time of their life they had been slaves. Only three of them were slaves originally. Qutub-ud-din was the purchased slave of Muhammad Ghori. Iltutmish was bought by Qutb-ud-din and Balban by Iltutmish.

It must be borne in mind that among the Muslims the slaves were not serfs, villeins or churls as under the European feudal system. Among them the slave occupied an honoured and comparatively much better position. He could purchase his freedom and was generally treated with kindness and affection. He was just like member of the family. Much of it depended upon the temperament of the master. Sometimes the masters were so affectionate towards their slaves that they regarded them better than their own sons. There are instances when a slave succeeded his master. The slave dynasty amply proves this. Often the master married his daughter to his promising slave. The advent of Islam in this way changed the whole conception of slavery. It converted the slave system prevailing in those days everywhere into a progressive and useful institution. Instead of being burden on society it served the society by producing some of the greatest men of the age. Thus among the Muslims the words "slavery" is misleading. It was quite different from the European slave system. As a matter of fact,

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in the oriental court terminology every subject of a king styles himself as a "slave" of the king out of modesty and humility.

Further, most of these slave kings belonged to aristocratic families and were highly accomplished. They became slaves when they were taken prisoners. Balban, who was the son of the chief of Ilbari tribe of Turkistan, was kidnapped by the Mongols and sold as slave. The slave system was useful to the Muslims. It tended to produce great men. The slave dynasty grew because after the death of a great ruler his trusted slave, who had made his mark in the lifetime of the master, came to the throne. Thus there was no danger of its collapse due to weak and inefficient successor which the son of a great king was likely to be. Hence it is improper to call this dynasty by this name. As this term is so expressive and as during the course of time it has become very popular, it is generally applied by historians.

Qutb-ud-din Aibek, 1206—1210 A.D.

Early difficulties.

It has already been stated that Qutb-ud-din Aibek was a devoted slave of Muhammad Ghori and that he had been appointed Viceroy of his Indian dominions. As Muhammad Ghori died, without leaving a male heir, Qutb-ud-din had no difficulty in assuming kingship in place of viceroyalty. As a matter of fact, Muhammad Ghori is said to have appointed Aibek in his lifetime as his successor in India. Qutb-ud-din Aibek was in this way the first Sultan of Hindustan. His coronation took place at Lahore in 1206 A.D.

The throne that he got so easily was not so easy to control. There were various other fellow slaves like him who aspired after such a high office. The two most important of his opponents were Taj-ud-din Yaldoz of Ghazni and Nasir-ud-din Qubaicha of Sind. Muhammad Bakhtiar Khalji, Governor of Bihar and Bengal was another strong rival. Through consistent industry and tact, Aibek was able to overcome all opposition. He ruled till 1210, when he died in Lahore while playing 'chaugan' or polo.

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Work and achievements of Qutb-ud-din Aibek.

Some historians do not include Qutb-ud-din in the list of Sultans of India because it is not clear whether he was ever recognised as such by his contemporaries. He is taken more as a viceroy than as an independent king. Leaving aside that controversy, we find that during his long career in India he accomplished great things. It was he who consolidated the Punjab, Sind, Malwa and Gujrat which had been assigned to him by Muhammad Ghori immediately after conquest. The Sultan generally returned home after a victory. The credit for organising administration in the newly conquered territories must go to Qutb-ud din. He possessed remarkable administrative capacity. Without his efforts Sultan Muhammad Ghori could not have achieved much. He not only maintained what Muhammad Ghori entrusted to his care, but he was also responsible for many new additions to his empire. He defeated Raja Bhimdeva of Anhilwara and reduced the fortress of Kalinjar.

Administrator.

As an administrator, Aibek proved himself to be just and efficient. He followed a policy of tolerance towards the Hindus. There are no instances of their persecution by him. The Hindu temples were destroyed by him at Anhilwara and other places but it was due to political reasons and not religious fanaticism. He dispensed even-handed justice to all. He was also very liberal and gave lakhs in charity. He was popularly known as *Lakhbakhoa* or giver of lakhs. Aibek was also highly cultured and took delight in the company of the learned and pious people, many historians and writers, the most important of whom were Fakhr-ud-din, the author of *Tarikh-i-Mubarak Shahi*, and Hassan Nizami, the author of *Taj-ul-maasir*. Besides this he is also known to be a great builder. He was responsible for the introduction of the Muslim style of architecture which was very different from the existing Hindu style. He built famous buildings like Arhai-din-ka Jhompra and Masjid Quevatt-ul-Islam at Delhi. He is also credited with the construction of the famous Qutb-minar

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which he named not after himself but dedicated it to Khwaja Qutb-ud-din Bakhtiyar Kaki, a holyman, whose tomb is just near the tower.

In short, Qutb-ud-din possessed all virtues essential for a great king. Had he lived longer he would have left an indelible mark on the history of medieval India.

Weak successor of Qutb-ud-din.

Qutb-ud-din was succeeded by weak and inefficient rulers. His son Aram Shah was a nincompoop. He became a puppet in the hands of his nobles and *viziers*. Once again there was confusion and chaos. The various rivals to the throne who had been subdued by Aibek but whose power could not be crushed by him because of his early death, once again raised banners of rebellion. Yaldoz and Qubaicha were the most powerful chiefs to be contended with. The situation was saved by the appearance on the scene of a great and capable slave of Qutb-ud-din, namely Iltutmish, who was also a son-in-law of late king. Iltutmish collected a large army and after defeating the inefficient Aram Shah he proclaimed himself the Sultan of Delhi in January, 1211. A slave of a great king in this way supplanted the inefficient son and thus saved the empire from falling a prey to internal confusion and disorder.

Shams-ud-din Iltutmish 1211-35 A.D.

Iltutmish's rise to Power.

Shams-ud-din Iltutmish (pronounced Iltutmish) was the real founder of the slave dynasty. It was he who finished the work started by Aibek. Originally he was the son of a chief of Ilbari tribe in Turkistan but had been taken prisoner by the Mongols in early life and was sold as a slave. As a slave he gave a good account of himself to the various masters under whom he served. After passing through many hands he was sold to Qutb-ud-din for one lakh *jitals*. Qutb-ud-din found in him a very loyal, intelligent and reliable servant. He rose from position to position till he became the most important grandee of the empire. Qutb-ud-din even married his daughter to

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him. It is said that Aibek wanted him to succeed to the throne after his death.

Suppression of Rivals.

As Iltutmish had no lawful right to the throne his succession was disputed by many rivals. Taj-ud-din Yaldoz, the ruler of Ghazni claimed suzerainty over India. Nasir-ud-din Qubaicha, another powerful potentate, declared his independence in Sind and Multan. Ali Mardan, a Khalji chief, assumed sovereignty in Bihar and Bengal. The Qutbi Amirs were also hostile to him. Even the army resented his usurpation of the throne. Thus the whole of India was seething with revolt and the entire country was a hot bed of intrigue. No ordinary man could hold his own against such heavy odds. Iltutmish rose equal to the task and one by one through strategem, device and diplomacy he suppressed the various rivals. Nasir-ud-din Qubaicha still remained unsubdued. It was lucky for Iltutmish that he was drowned in 1228 while crossing river Indus in a boat. By this time almost all rivals were suppressed and Iltutmish could turn his attention to other immediate problems.

Investiture by the Caliph.

The various successors of Iltutmish against his rivals made him the undisputed master of India as no other Muslim ruler before him had been. His fame spread far and near. Even the Caliph of Baghdad felt so much impressed by his victories that he sent him a robe of honour and an order of investiture in 1228 A.D. This ended all opposition to his claim to the throne.

Wars against Rajputs.

Ever since he came to the throne he had been so much occupied with suppressing his rivals that he had had no time to subdue the Rajputs who formed a great menace to the safety of the Empire. Especially after his investiture by the Caliph, he regarded it his special duty to act as the 'Commander of the Faithful' and suppress the heretics. Due to these causes he took up arms against the Rajputs in 1232 A.D. One by one he reduced the Rajputs of Gujrat, Malwa, Bhilsa and Ujjain. At all these places, he met with resistance, but the poorly-led Rajputs could

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not withstand his onslaught for long. Unlike Ghori and Aibek he showed greater zeal in destroying Hindu temples and idols. The spirit of fanaticism among the Muslim rulers of India can be said to have begun from this time.

Extent of his Empire.

After these successes Iltutmish's empire became very large. It now included almost the whole of northern India. His empire extended right from the river Indus in the north-west to river Narbada in the south and from Gujrat in west to river Brahmputra in the east.

Mongol menace.

Another noted achievement of Iltutmish was his success against the barbaric and ferocious Mongols. They were blood-thirsty barbarians. Wherever they went they carried fire and sword with them. Had they entered India they would certainly have destroyed all vestiges of Muslim rule in India. They had no religion. They had already overrun China and Central Asia, and plundered and destroyed many Muslim cities like Balkh, Bokhara and Samarkand. Had they come to India they would certainly have destroyed the infant Muslim empire in India. Their leader was the celebrated Chingez Khan. He defeated Jalal-ud-din, the ruler of Khwarizm who ran towards India for shelter. It was in his pursuit that Chingez Khan set off towards India. Iltutmish very cleverly prevailed upon Jalal-ud-din to leave India and to save him from the scourge of God. Thereupon Jalal-ud-din ran towards Iraq and behind him went the Mongols. It was lucky for Iltutmish that his infant empire was saved from utter destruction.

Character and achievements of Iltutmish.

Iltutmish died of fever in 1235 A. D. without any doubt. Iltutmish was the first great Muslim ruler of India. He can also be safely called the founder of the Slave Dynasty because it was he who nurtured and brought up the infant and tottering Muslim empire in India. Muhammad Ghori was just like a raider in India and Qutab-ud-din did not live long to consolidate and strengthen the newly conquered territories. He rose from position of a slave to the mighty ruler of India by sheer dint of merit and hard work. He had to contend

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with serious opposition. His presence of mind, boldness and courage enabled him to tide over all difficulties successfully. He waged constant wars against his Muslim rivals and Rajput chiefs. Throughout his reign of 25 years he took no rest. At the end of this period he had conquered almost the whole of northern India. Credit should certainly be given to him for these brilliant achievements.

Besides being a redoubtable general, he had many other qualities. Hs was a good administrator and creative genius. He created order out of general chaos. He was also a patron of learned men and cultural activities. He is credited with the completion of the famous Qutab Minar which is said to have been started by Qutab-ud-din Aibek. In short, Iltutmish was a great figure in medieval Indian History. He was the real founder of the Slave Dynasty and should be ranked with other great Indian rulers like Samudra Gupta, Balban, Babar and Sher Shah for his conquests and versatility.

From the death of Iltutmish to the rise of Balban 1235-66 A.D.

After the death of Iltutmish history repeated itself.

Successors of Iltutmish: Rukn-ud-din Feroze 1235-36.

Just as Aibek was succeeded by a weak son, Iltutmish's immediate successor, Rukn-ud-din Feroze was incompetent and cowardly. Iltutmish had foreseen the incompetence of Feroze. He was anxious to avoid the disruption of the structure built up by him. He was far ahead of his times in treating sons and daughters alike. At his death he had nominated his daughter Raziya to succeed him, because she was a highly talented and capable girl. His nobles, the famous "Forty slaves", did not like to be ruled over by a woman. Moreover, it was in their interests that an inefficient and weak ruler should come to the throne because under such a ruler they could hope to advance their personal interests. Rukn-ud-din Feroze proved utterly worthless and a total failure as a ruler. He was a highly sensuous debauch given to excessive drinking and merry-making.

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He did not possess any of the qualities of his great and talented father. Under him the nobles greatly increased their own powers at the expense of the king's. Rukn-ud-din himself took no interest in the administration. It was his ambitious and foolish mother, Shah Turkan, who did what she liked. This woman was highly impetuous, revengeful and short-sighted. She began to wreak vengeance on all those who had at any time offended her. Many prominent nobles were punished by her. This added fuel to fire, and the rule of Rukn-ud-din and his mother became all the more unacceptable to the nobles. There were revolts in all parts of the country. Rukn-ud-din had neither capacity nor resources to resist them. Governors of Hansi, Multan, Lahore, Oudh and Badaon broke out in open rebellion. It also came to light that Shah Turkan had been responsible for the murder of Qutab-ud-din, a prince, and was also planning the murder of Raziya. The 'Forty', therefore, took Rukn-ud-din and his mother prisoner and proclaimed Raziya as their sovereign. Rukn-ud-din died in prison in 1236.

Sultana Raziya, 1236-40.

Raziya was a very able and brave woman. She had all the virtues essential for a ruler, and it appeared that she would prove a great success. She did not observe *purdah* and herself took part in the business of the State. As a matter of fact, she carried a man's head and heart in her womanly frame. Later on, however, she did show some of her weaknesses which brought about her disaster.

Although she had been placed on the throne by the 'Forty', still some of the governors were not willing to be ruled by a woman. Some nobles met at Lahore and raised the banner of revolt under the leadership of a former Minister Junaidi. Raziya was able to suppress their rising with the timely help of the Governor of Oudh Malik Nasir. She had to face some more serious rebellions also. The orthodox *mullahs*, too, were inciting the people against her because they thought that her ways were un-Islamic. The nobles resented the growth of her power. Moreover, she had begun to show weakness towards an Abyssinian slave, Jamal-ud-din Yakut. This

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was an-eye sore to all the nobles. There was widespread discontent among the nobles and trouble broke out at many places. In 1239 there was rebellion at Lahore. Soon after Ikhtiar-ud-din Altuhia led a rebellion at Sarhind. She suppressed the first rebellion.

While she was proceeding to suppress the other, she was taken prisoner at Bhatinda by Altunia. Yakut was killed. Through her womanly charms she won over her captor and after marrying him both of them proceeded to Delhi to recover the throne. In her absence one of her surviving brothers, Muiz-ud-din Bahram Shah, had been placed on the throne by the "Forty". Bahram Shah met the unlucky queen and her consort at Kaithal and in an action that followed she was defeated on Octoer 13, 1240. She and Altunia were treacherously killed by some mercenaries of Bahram Shah the next day. In this way the brief career of a great woman ended in dramatically tragic circumstances.

Bahram Shah was a man of no mean qualities. He was quite energetic, strong and alert. But he was helpless before the all-powerful clique of the "Forty". They wanted the king to be a willing tool in their hands. When they found him too impetuous and strong, they decided to remove him from the throne. He was consequently taken prisoner and murdered in 1242 A.D.

Bahram Shah, 1240-42 A.D.

After Bahram Shah, the "Forty" chose an infant. Ala-ud-din Masud, a grandson of Iltutmish to sit on the throne. Under his rule the "Forty" greatly increased their own influence. The new boy-sultan was a thorougbly stupid and weak ruler. He gave himself up to wine and women. At times he was reckless, cruel and vehement. So he too was thought "Undesirable" and taken prisoner in 1246 A.D.

Masud Shah, 1242-46.

The "Forty" now placed on the throne the youngest son of Iltutmish, Nasir-ud-din, who was a pious recluse. He was chosen because he was so much pious and impassive that he

Nasir-ud-din, 1215-1255

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took no interest in the worldly affairs. He busied himself in prayers rather than in political intrigue. The sultan entrusted the affairs of the State to one of the "Forty" Ghias-ud-din Balban. Nasir-ud-din's personal life was very pure and simple. He refused to have any servant and his queen cooked food with her hands. He declined to take any money from the state treasury and earned his livelihood by copying *The Holy Quran*. Such an unambitious and docile ruler suited the "Forty" and was allowed to rule till the end of his life. Nasir-ud-din died a natural death in 1266.

The period from 1235-1266 in Retrospect.

The period from 1235 to 1266 was a time of confusion and disorder. The "Forty slaves" of Iltutmish were all in all. They acted as kingmakers. They allowed no king, even if he was their own creature, to rule unless he gave them unchecked powers. Half-a-dozen rulers, one after the other, were removed by this clique because none could suit their requirements. Sultana Raziya was perhaps the only ruler of substance during this period. All others were mere puppets. Their reigns were "full of murder, treachery and intrigue". The well-knit fabric of empire which was left by Iltutmish now became loose and torn. Had another great man not appeared on the scene in 1266, the Muslim empire would have died a natural death very soon.

Ghias-ud-din Balban, 1266-86

Accession of Ghias-ud-din Balban and his early life.

The great man who saved the Muslim empire in India at this critical juncture was Ghias-ud din Balban. He was himself a member of the mighty clique of the "Forty" and he very well knew their weak and strong points. For twenty years he had served as the Minister of Nasir-ud-din and was personally responsible for the success of the saint sultan. As a matter of fact, he was himself the *de facto* ruler of Delhi during the reign of Nasir-ud-din. Before he became the king he had long experience of kingship and had acquired full control over all nobles and grandees of the Empire. He had, therefore, no difficulty in assuming kingship after the death of Nasir-ud-din.

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Like most of his predecessors Balban, too, started his career as a slave. Like Iltutmish he too belonged to a noble family but through ill-luck he was made a slave in his early youth. Being ugly, he could not catch the imagination of his master soon. But Iltutmish to whom he was sold by Khwaja Jamal-ud-din of Basra, found in him a capable man. From that time Balban came into prominence. After the death of Iltutmish he became the most powerful member of the "Forty". Eventually he became the minister and virtual ruler of Delhi.

Balban as Minister of Nasir-ud-din, 1246-66.

During the period of his ministership Balban enjoyed very wide powers. He made appointments and all affairs of state were handled by him. His achievements as minister were great and creditable. It was his master hand which kept the Empire intact. He suppressed dozens of serious rebellions with an iron hand. As minister he safeguarded the frontiers of the empire against Mongol inroads. Balban's growing power was deeply resented by many a noble. They began to poison the ears of the gullible sultan through a eunuch, Imad-ud-din Rihan. As a result, Balban fell from power temporarily in 1253 A.D. and was asked to retire to his fief in Hansi. On his fall Rihan came to power, but he was so inefficient, weak and insolent that he became unpopular very soon. The administration became loose and everyone realized the need of the strong hand of Balban. The Sultan recalled him from his forced retirement in 1255. Once again Balban set himself to the task of purifying and strengthening the administration. He defeated many rivals and suppressed the rebellions of Rajputs and other Hindu chiefs. It was due mainly to his courage, bravery, far-sightedness, and perseverance that the Muslim empire remained intact in the face of these heavy odds. As Minister Balban showed his remarkable qualities beyond doubt and when he assumed kingship after the death of Nasir-ud-din, it was no surprise to anybody.

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Even Balban's accession did not go unchallenged. The task before him was very difficult. The "Forty" could not tolerate the idea of being ruled by a person who had been one of them. There was no respect for law and order. The various nobles and chiefs were entertaining designs of carving out independent principalities for themselves. According to Zia-ud-din Barni, "fear of the governing power which is the basis of all good government and the source of glory and splendour of states, had departed from the hearts of all men, and the country had fallen into wretched condition". Moreover, there was imminent danger of Mongol attacks. As minister he had adopted some measures to check their incursions, but the menace was so great and their attacks were so frequent that regular steps to check them had to be taken. Thus very heavy difficulties lay ahead of Balban on his accession to the throne.

Balban's accession to throne, Early difficulties.

The first task that awaited Balban after his accession was the suppression of internal disorder. In 1266 he took up cudgels against the Mewatis who infested the areas in the neighbourhood of Delhi. They had become so bold as to plunder even the suburbs of Delhi in broad daylight. The western gates of the city had to be closed after 4 p.m. in order to keep them out of the city. Balban ransacked their haunts and put to death about a lakh of them. He got constructed forts in the disturbed areas, many Mewati prisoners were trampled under feet of elephants, skinned alive or hacked to pieces. This harshness had the desired effect and their lawless activities came to an end.

Suppression of Internal Disorder:
1. The Mewatis 1266.

Balban next turned his attention to the robbers of the Doab. They were also Hindus and their activities had made travelling on the highways impossible. He kept garrisons in the Doab, where these robbers were in largest numbers. He even proceeded personally to the affected areas. After some time these highway robbers were also exterminated.

2. The Doab: 1267.

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Another plague spot was Katihar, modern Rohilkhand where the Hindus were very strong. They had organised themselves into powerful groups and had put an end to all government and administration. The local officers found it impossible to curb their power. Balban proceeded to this area also with remarkable alacrity and before long he was in a position to put an end to their unlawful activities. He put to the sword thousands of the rebels, so much so that heaps of the slain were to be seen in all villages.

5 Rohilkhand : 1267.

Balban's prompt action against these disturbers of peace and government created respect for law, made the roads safe and gave an impetus to trade and commerce.

After putting an end to general lawlessness in the country, Balban turned his attention to political rivals. He first dealt with the "Forty". It has been seen that the "Forty" were a very powerful factor to be reckoned with. The task of breaking their clique was facilitated by the fact that Balban knew their internal working very well because he had been for long one of them. He proceeded to remove them one by one. The first to be put to death was Sher Khan, a powerful member. He conducted an inquiry into the jagirs of the others and deprived many of them of their riches and influence. Like Ala-ud-din Khalji he also prohibited matrimonial alliances among various families of nobles. In this systematic way Balban was successful in undermining the power of this formidable clique.

Suppression of Rivals :
1. The 'Forty'.

Tughril Beg was a trusted slave of Balban. Excessive power and ambition turned his head and he revolted against his master in Bengal where he had been appointed governor, in 1279. Tughril knew that the Sultan was old and infirm and his sons were busy on the north-western frontier against the Mongols. He thought that he would be allowed to assume sovereignty unhampered. Balban undertook a vigorous action against him. When the imperial troops failed to bring him to submission the Sultan took the field in person

2. Tughril Beg.

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with his younger son Bughra Khan. After a hot pursuit Tughril was defeated and slain. He took terrible revenge on the relatives and counsellors of Tughril. They were hanged in long rows in the bazars of Lakhnauti the capital. He came back after entrusting the charge of Bengal to Bughra Khan with the significant words "Dids't Thou see?" meaning thereby the terrible wrath of the Sultan which had visited all rebels. He thus gave a warning to Bughra against ever rising in rebellion.

Mongol Policy.

A still greater achievement of Balban was effectively to guard the north-western frontier of his empire against the incursions of the Mongols. Mongols were a ferocious and barbaric people. They had come dangerously near India having established supremacy in Transoxiana and Ghazni. As Nasir-ud-din's minister Balban had studied this question. As the Mongol peril was increasing in magnitude and as they were coming close to the Indian frontiers, the problem had assumed dangerous proportions. Balban devised new ways of meeting the Mongol danger. The first step that he took in this direction was the consttuction of strong fortresses at strategic points all along the frontier. He constructed forts at Bhatinda, Sirsa, Abohar, Bhatner and Multan, which constituted the first line of defence. He also repaired old forts all along the line and garrisoned them all with strong and efficient troops. He put the royal princes Muhammad and Bughra Khan, incharge of the frontier provinces of Multan and Samana. Muhammad lost his life while fighting against the Mongols at Multan. Muhammad's friend, the celebrated poet Amir Khusro, was taken prisoner. A second line of defence consisting of the forts of Sunam, Samana and Sarhind was formed. Moreover, the Sultan remained very vigilant and he never moved away from Delhi in order to be able effectively to check any Mongol invasion. The result of this systematic and effective frontier policy was that the Mongols could not make any headway in the country, which enjoyed unbroken spell of peace and stable government. Balban deserves great credit for his successful checking of Mongol advance into India.

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Balban's Administration.

Balban's system of administration deserves special mention. His government was despotic, but efficient. All power centred in him, because in those days no ruler could afford to delegate his authority to anybody, including his sons, friends and trusted officers. His administration was virtual military dictatorship. We moderns should not, however, read our ideas into old institutions. The test of a good government of those ages should be only this : how far did it work for the good of the people. The "good of the people" in those times should not be taken to mean any political, intellectual or material advancement, but it consisted simply in giving them freedom from external invasion and security of life and property. This was precisely what most medieval rulers, barring a few, had failed to give to the people. Balban set himself to achieving this end and he was remarkably successful in this.

Ideal of Kingship.

Balban had a high ideal of kingship. He believed that the first concern of the king should be to give to his people security and justice. He believed that if a few were given exemplary punishments for their offences, it would go a long way in reforming others. On the surface he was hard and stern but he had the good of the people uppermost in his heart. He was very energetic and alert. He occupied himself in the work of the State almost throughout the day. He did not take wine or indulge in merry-making. For him the office of Kingship had no holiday from responsibilities. He was a strict disciplinarian and wanted his officers to be efficient, just and obedient. He believed in the theory of Divine Right of Kingship.

Court.

In order to make the officers disciplined and efficient he issued strict instructions to them. They had scrupulously to observe certain manners and etiquette at the court. They were not to indulge in jokes or non-seriousness before him. The Sultan himself never behaved in an irresponsible way. It is said that he never laughed in the court. He did not

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allow the low-born people to become his officers because he believed that such men could not come up to the standard expected of a responsible officer. Many well-known literary figures like Amir Khusro and others adorned his court. About fifteen exiled rulers of Central India also lived at his court.

Justice.

Balban dispensed even-handed justice to all irrespective of the consideration of birth, position or religion. At times he did not spare even his closest associates. Malik Baqoeq, a prominent jagirdar of Badaon, had beaten his slave to death. The Malik was given public beating for his cruelty and the government informer who had suppressed this report was put to death. Similarly, another fief holder who had committed a similar offence was publicly flogged and he had to pay heavy indemnity to the injured party. This unpartiality made Balban popular with the public and created respect for law and order.

Army.

No ruler in those primitive times could hope to be powerful or independent until he had a strong and reliable army. Balban reorganised the system of recruitment of soldiers. He employed only such persons in the army whose antecedents were known to him and who belonged to good families. He got them trained under his own management. Although Jagirdari system and knight-service continued, but only such chiefs were entrusted with the upkeep and maintenance of the army as were very sincere and devoted to him. Elephants, cavalry and artillery were thoroughly overhauled. New forts were built and were garrisoned with reliable soldiers. All these reforms made his army strong and efficient.

Spy system.

In those days of difficult means of communication and doubtful loyalty of officers, no king could hope to be secure without keeping a strict and regular watch upon the activities of his officers. Even the royal princes had to be carefully watched. Balban organised an elaborate secret service of newswriters who were spread throughout the length and breadth of the country. Their duty was to inform the king without loss

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of time through special messengers anything of note that might happen at any place. The minutest details about the movements of governors, military officers, amirs and nobles had to be sent to the king regularly. The spy system was so efficient that the king kept himself abreast of all important happenings in the State. If any newswriter failed to report any event of note, he was put to death. Only men of tried honesty, integrity and loyalty to the king were appointed newswriters. It is possible that such a rigorous system might have overawed the people and should have interfered with the private life of the individual and hampered some of their legitimate activities but such things were unavoidable in an autocracy.

Estimate of Balban's work.

In his achievements Balban surpassed even Iltutmish. Although the latter has been called the founder of the Slave Dynasty in India, it was left to Balban to bring the dynasty to its highest pitch of glory. Balban set up the Muslim state on such sound footing that it now definitely came to stay. He also evolved such a system of administration that the later Muslim organisation was largely based upon the model left by him. His political career extended over a period of about forty years, both as a minister and as a king. Perhaps no other Muslim potentate had such a long span of political life. Rising from the lowest ring, he reached the highest position by ability, persistence, intelligence and tact. His all-round achievements were so great that the very name Balban brings to our mind the idea of efficiency and discipline.

In organising his administration and suppressing the various centrifugal tendencies in the state, he adopted the policy of 'blood and iron'. He ruthlessly exterminated all opposition. He was an enemy of inefficiency, lithargy, infidelity and vulgarity. He created such an awe of his authority even in the minds of the highest grandees that they dared not come before him. Perhaps no other Muslim ruler was so much feared as Balban. By giving even-handed justice to the people he not only won the affection and loyalty of all and sundry but he also created respect for law and order.

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His successfully combating the Mongol peril is also worthy of note. His constant vigilance, hard work and intelligence enabled him to adopt such measures that the ferocious Mongols could not cross the Indian frontiers.

In private life Balban was a strict Sunni. He led a pious and simple life. He gave up drinking and avoided all luxuries of life. He was also highly tender-hearted and affectionate. He loved his sons dearly and when his elder son, Muhammad, died fighting against the Mongols, he took the loss so much to heart that he died of the shock some times afterwards. He gave shelter to the poor and the needy. It is said that he was so highly emotional that the sight of a weeping woman or a dead body brought tears in his eyes. It is surprising how this "Iron Man" who was known for his outward sternness, could be so tender-hearted! His tender-heartedness never allowed him to falter from the path of duty. He inflicted severest punishment on those who deserved such treatment. Thus Balban the man was different from Balban the King.

Balban was also a patron of art and letters. He attracted luminaries and eminent scholars and poets from far and near. It is said that he even invited the famous Sheikh Sadi to his court but he did not choose to come.

We do not know much about his religious policy. In the absence of any information about the persecution of Hindus, it can be presumed that he was tolerant towards them.

Balban's achievements in various fields entitled him to a high rank. Dr. Ishwari Prasad says, "All things considered, Balban was a most remarkable ruler, who saved the infant Muslim state in India from the Mongol peril, and by establishing order paved the way for the military and administrative reforms of Ala-ud-din Khalji." At another place he says, "A great warrior, ruler and statesman.... Balban will ever remain a great figure in Medieval Indian History." Similarly Stanley Lanepoole observes: "Balban the slave water-carrier, huntsman, general, statesman and Sultan is one of the most striking figures among the many notable men in the long line of

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the kings of Delhi." We conclude the account of his achievements by saying that Ghias-ud-din Balban was the greatest of the Slave Kings and in achievements ranked equal with the other great rulers of India like Chandra Gupta Maurya, Ala-ud-din Khalji and Sher Shah Suri.

The end of the Slave Dynasty and its Achievements.

Balban died in 1286 A.D. His eldest son Muhammad, had been killed while fighting against the Mongols during his lifetime. Balban's second son Bughra Khan was the Governor of Bengal and surprisingly enough he refused to become the King of Delhi. Balban had, therefore, nominated Kai-Khusrau, son of Muhammad, to succeed him. After his death the nobles put on the throne Kai-Kubad, son of Bughra Khan, instead of Kai-Khusrau. Kai-Kubad was a thoroughly spoilt child. As soon as he was freed from the tutelage of his father and the apron-strings of his mother, he lost all sense of proportions. As a child he had been brought up very decently and was never allowed to commit any sin. But now the young boy king gave himself up to worst forms of debauchery and vices. He became a heavy drunkard and had no will to attend to affairs of state. His nobles assumed all power. It was likely that very soon he would be overthrown by his powerful minister Malik Nizam-ud-din who had already done away with Kai-Khusrau. As the rival party of the Khaljis proved too powerful for him, he could not succeed in his designs. On seing this unsatisfactory state of affairs Bughra Khan came to advise his son in 1288. He met Kai-Kubad on the bank of river Gogra. The boy appears to have come to his senses on listening to his father and on his return he tried to free himself from his minister. After sometime he got Nizam-ud-din poisoned. He called Malik Jalal-ud-din Feroz Khalji from Samana and made him the Commander-in-chief of his forces. This led to a revolt by the Turkish chiefs but Jalal-ud-din soon crushed it. Eventuallv Kai-Kubad was murdered by the Khalji chiefs and Jalal-ud-din Feroz Khalji ascended the throne in June 1290 A.D. In this

Kai-Kubad, 1286—1290.

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way the slave dynasty came to an end and the Khaljis assumed power.

A resume' of the achievements of the Slave Kings.

The Slave Kings of Delhi ruled over the country from 1206 to 1290 A.D. Out of a list of about ten rulers, only two were first-rate and two mediocre rulers. Iltutmish and Balban belong to the first category while Qutb-ud-din Aibek and Raziya belong to the other. Aibek, Iltutmish and Balban started as slaves and came to occupy the throne because of their exceptional abilities. The reigns of Aibek, Iltutmish and Balban were complementary to each other—Aibek, sowed the seed, Iltutmish nurtured the plant and Balban reared it into a tree. Before the coming of these kings the Muslims were looked upon only as successful barbarians. It was the rule of Iltutmish and Balban which changed the conception of Muslim rule. They gave such reforms, peace and prosperity to the people the like of which India had not witnessed for centuries. Their rule was harsh and rough, but it was popular because people wanted security of life and property. Bandits and highwaymen were eliminated. Equal justice was given to all. The country was protected against frequent Mongol invasions. The Slave Kings were also patrons of art and literature. In religious matters the Slave Kings were no fanatics. They gave freedom of worship to the Hindus. There were no forcible conversions. Sir Wolseley Haig remarks in this connection, "The rule of the slave Kings over their subjects though disfigured by some intolerance and by gross cruelty towards the disaffected, was as just and humane as that of the Norman Kings in England and far more tolerant than that of Philip II in Spain and the Netherlands."

Among the Slave Kings there was no fixed law of succession. After the death of a King the son did not always succeed him. It was either the strongest man, usually a slave of the King or the one chosen by the mighty nobles who succeeded to the throne. This was an element both of strength and weakness. It gave strength because only the ablest man, who could fight his way

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to the throne, would succeed and thus under him the empire was bound to grow. On the other hand, it was a source of weakness because much energy and money was wasted in wars of succession, and in the confusion the elements of disruption got the opportunity to raise their evil head. On the whole the absence of a definite law of succession proved more beneficial than harmful for the growth of the Muslim State in India under the Slave Kings.

Administration under the Slave Kings.

The King: The King was the fountain head of justice. He possessed unlimited powers. He was also the Commander-in-chief of the forces and the highest court of appeal The King was very vigilant. He kept himself informed of everything of note taking place in any nook or corner of the empire. A King who was indolent, weak or inefficient could not rule in peace.

Divisions of the Kingdom: The Kingdom was divided into provinces, each under a governor, who generally belonged to the royal family. Trusted slaves and generals were also appointed as governors. The demarcation of provincial boundaries was, however subject to fluctuations. The provinces were generally of two types—those near Delhi and those far-removed from it. Those near Delhi had the impress of the King's personality and supervision, while the others were comparatively freer and the governor enjoyed greater freedom of action and discretion. Delhi was a province in itself, but it had no governor. The King acted as such. There were altogether twenty provinces, but this number varied from time to time.

Provincial Government: The provincial governor was all in all in the province. For all intents and purposes he was a miniature King. He was responsible for the safety, good government, justice, police and collection of land revenue. He was also the commander of the provincial army. The Governor kept the king regularly informed of the affairs in his charge. There was a strong spy system to keep the governor well-informed. The

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provincial news-writers however, also reported the activities of the governor to the king.

The Village and Land Revenue : The village was the lowest unit and the backbone of the Slave administration. Many villages were grouped together into a pargana, but this appears to have been done only for revenue purposes. For general administration the village remained the basic unit. The Chief of the village was the headman who was called *Muqaddam*. Another official was the familiar *Patwari*. The *Muquddams* and *Patwari* were generally Hindus. The corresponding officers of the Pargana were called the *Chaudhri* and *Qanungo* respectively. The land revenue was collected by the village headman or anybody else who held a special commission from the King.

The assignment or *Iqtas* were given to troopers and commanders for military service. Charitable grants of land without any liability to render military service were also given to holy men. The government dealt with the collectors of land revenue known as *Rajas* or *Rais*, directly, and not with the cultivators. This left the cultivators at the mercy of the *Rajas* who generally squeezed the last drop out of them. There was no fixed rate of land revenue to be paid by them. It generally depended upon the condition of soil and the whim of the collector. The government received income from the *Khalsa* or crown land also.

General : The slave Sultans were on the whole good and simple people. They were not adept in the art of government and were contented only if the people paid their dues to them and there was internal peace and external security. In matters of religion they were not fanatical. The people in general had the usual local autonomy as they had had through the ages. Their rule was not much different from that of the earlier governments. The later Kings borrowed many a feature from their system.

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QUESTIONS

1. Why are the slave kings so called ?
2. Describe the general character of the so-called 'slave dynasty'.
3. Review the achievements of the slave kings of Delhi.
4. How can Iltutmish be called the founder of the 'slave dynasty' ?
5. Trace the career of Balban and mention some of his important achievements.
6. Why is the policy of Balban known as the "Policy of Blood and Iron".
7. Attempt an estimate of the achievements of Balban as a Minister and as a King.
8. Sketch the career of Balban and estimate his achievements as a general and statesman.
9. Draw a map of India to show the extent of the empire of Balban.
10. Describe the Mongol or Frontier Policy of Balban.

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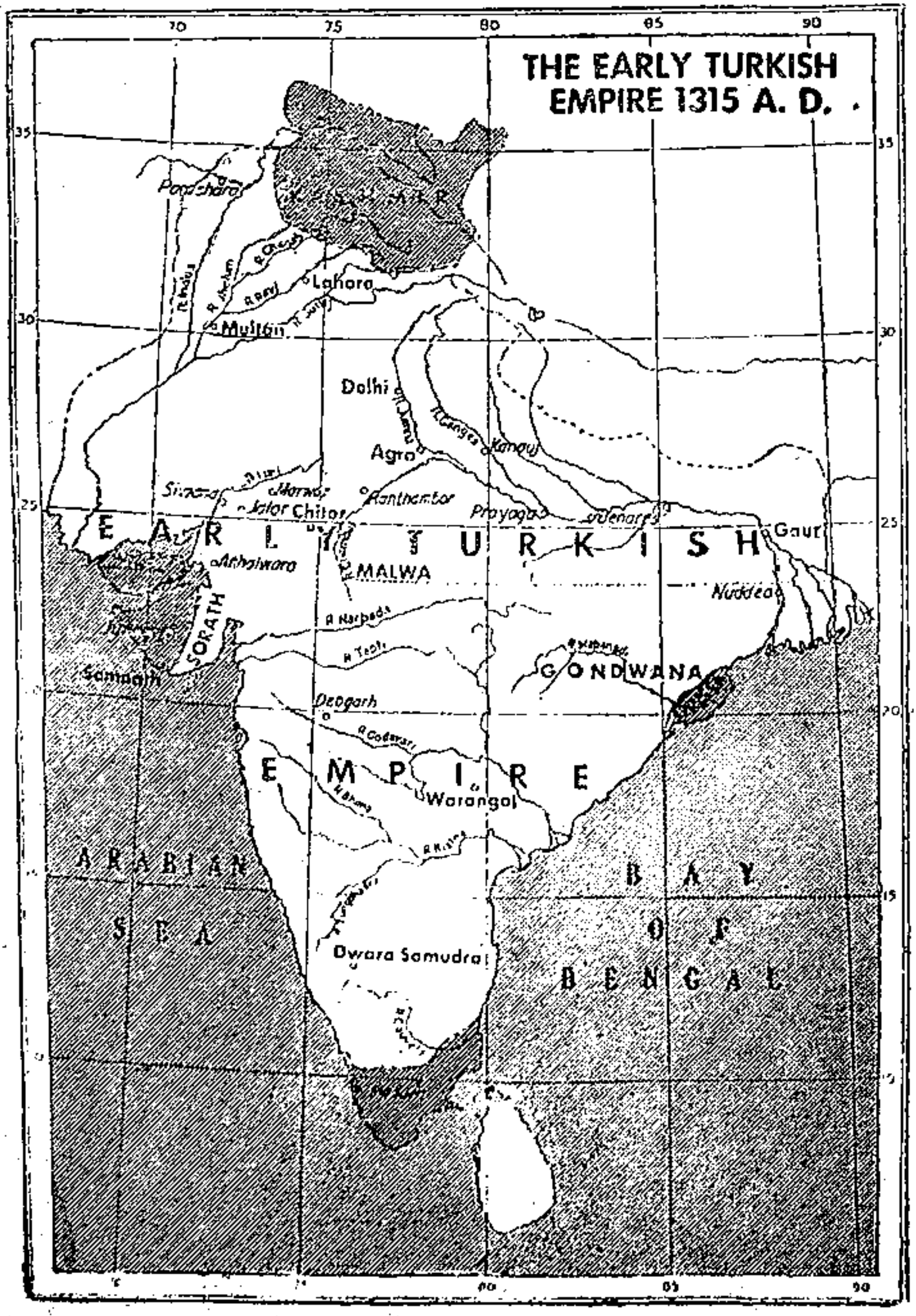
THE EARLY TURKISH EMPIRE 1315 A. D.
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Lahore
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Dolhi
Agra
Chitor
Ranthambor
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Nuddea
Jalor
Anhalwara
MALWA
Somnath
Deogarh
Warangol
Dwara Samudra
GONDWANA
EARLY TURKISH EMPIRE
ARABIAN SEA
BAY OF BENGAL

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CHAPTER X

THE KHALJI DYNASTY, 1290 TO 1320 A.D.

Jalal-ud-din Khalji

Origin of the Khaljis.

The Khaljis took their dynastic name from the village Khalji in Afghanistan. They were originally Turks, but through migration had become Afghans. The Khaljis gained importance at the court of Delhi during the early days of the slave rule. From beginning they formed a strong party at the court and received important consideration from various slave kings. Their earliest known leader was Bakhtiyar Khalji who had organized his strength in Bengal under Aibek.

The Khaljis continued to be very strong in Bengal besides being a strong party at the Delhi court. They made bid for power on several occasions, but did not succeed. They rose only after the death of Balban in the general confusion that prevailed in the kingdom. Jalal-ud-din was appointed commander-in-chief by Kai-Kubad.

JALAL-UD-DIN KHALJI, 1290—96

Jalal-ud-din's accession to the throne is known as "Khalji Revolution." This revolution was resented by the other Amirs and nobles who could not tolerate the idea that one of them should become their ruler. Consequently, the Turkirh Amirs, who regarded themselves as superior to the Khaljis, both in origin and culture, revolted. Besides, Balban's kith and kin like Malik Chhajju, laid claims to the throne. The people in general also did not like this usurpation. Moreover, the sultan himself was a man of seventy when he usurped the throne and he was, therefore, not in a position to move against the rebels in person. He was a man of lenient and

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generous disposition. This inherent weakness in the character of the sultan, encouraged the nobles and mischievous persons to foment trouble in the country. For sometime the new sultan did not shift to Delhi for fear of enemies. He made Kilokheri or Kilugheri, near Delhi as his temporary headquarters. It was only after a time that in the words of Barni, "The excellence of his character, his justice, generosity and devotion, gradually removed the aversion of the people, and hopes of grants of land assisted in conciliating, though grudgingly and unwillingly, the affections of his nobles and he entered Delhi.

In spite of this discontent continued to brew underground. His impolitic tenderness, mildness, and aversion to bloodshed encouraged the more ambitious among the nobles to make a bid for power.

Malik Chhajju's Rebellion, 1291 A.D.

The first person to raise the standard of rebellion against him was Malik Chhajju, a nephew of Balban and a fief-holder of Kara in Oudh. He was secretly helped by many nobles. He marched on Delhi at the head of a large army but was defeated by prince Arkali near Badaun. Malik Chhajju and his followers were imprisoned and brought before Jalal-ud-din. The sultan instead of ordering any punishment, treated them with kindness and gave them a general pardon. This clemency although good and noble, was misconstrued by the ambitious nobles who thought the sultan was too weak and timid to take any action against them. Chhajju was simply banished to Multan.

Execution of Siddi Maula.

As a result of this misguided forbearance of enemies there was renewal of baronial intrigues and the king and his government came in for general contempt. The Khalji nobles felt very much annoyed with the doting sultan for undermining his own dynasty's prestige and power. One of them, Malik Ahmad Chap, told the sultan plainly that he should either rule according to conventions or else he should abdicate. Perhaps the sultan was cut to the quick and he practised harshness not on the rebels

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but on a poor *darvesh*, Siddi Maula. This man was very popular with the people of Delhi, including the nobles, who used to visit him for blessings and benedictions. The eldest son of the sultan was also his devotee. The sultan suspected him of organising some conspiracy against him. He was called to the court and trampled to death under the feet of elephants. It is said that before dying the *darvesh* pronounced a curse on the sultan and his family. It was a strange coincidence that a strong wind and storm overtook the city at the time of his execution, showing thereby the wrath of the elements. The king's family also met with grief before long. The sultan's eldest son died and the king himself was executed by his nephew and son-in-law, Ala-ud-din.

Invasion of Mongols 1296.

During the period of Jalal-ud-din, the country was invaded by 15,000 Mongols under the leadership of Abdulla, the grandson of Halaku Khan. Jalal-ud-din was able to check their advance, but foolishly enough allowed them to settle in the outskirts of Delhi, and Lahore after they had accepted Islam. Their settlement at both places came to be known as Mughalpura. Their nearness to Delhi proved very dangerous to the growth of the sultanate. Not long after they became an important factor in the already confused Delhi politics and they began to take part in court intrigues.

Conquests

After putting down rebellions, Jalal-ud-din who was a seasoned general, turned his attention to fresh conquests. He marched against the Rajputs and overran Ujjain and Mandu. Bhilsa was also conquered by Ala-ud-din. The sultan failed in capturing the famous port of Ranthambore.

Invasion of Deogiri by Ala-ud-din, 1294 A.D.

Ala-ud-din was a very ambitious young man. He was the Governor of Oudh. He had heard of the immense wealth of the Yadava rulers of Deogiri in the Deccan. Moreover, he was also anxious to prepare for a revolt against the Sultan. In order to get the necessary equipment and gold, he planned to attack

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Deogiri in secret. He did not consult the Sultan regarding this expedition. He gave out that he was proceeding on a hunting expedition towards the south. Some say that he pretended to march against the rebellious Rajput ruler of Chanderi. He crossed the difficult Vindhyas and on entering the southern peninsula he gave out that he had quarrelled with his uncle and had come thither in search of some employment with his soldiers. In this way he marched unnoticed till suddenly he appeared before the gates of Deogiri. The ruler Raja Ram Chandra Rao was taken completely by surprise and he submitted after feeble resistance. Ram Chandra was compelled to sign a humiliating treaty paying large quantity of gold and silver, precious jewels and horses. Meanwhile Ram Chandra's son Shankar Deo, who had gone on a provincial tour with a large contingent, came back and refused to submit. He too was routed. By the new peace treaty Ala-ud-din got 600 maunds of gold, 7 maunds of pearls, 1000 maunds of silver and other precious articles besides the territory of Ellichpur. Thus Ala-ud-din received rich booty—perhaps the richest that the Muslim invader ever got from the south. This was the first incursion of a Muslim invader into the south which had hitherto remained immune from Muslim influences.

With this vast booty Ala-ud-din returned to Oudh.

Murder of Jalal-ud-din, 1296.

When Jalal-ud-din heard of the great expedition, the brilliant success and enormous booty obtained by Ala-ud-din, he became anxious to receive a share of it. He set out to meet Ala-ud-din at Kara. The unsuspecting old man went to meet his nephew and son-in-law with only a few retainers. The meeting took place in a boat on the river Ganga. While the affectionate uncle was embracing his nephew, the latter cut off his head with one stroke of his sword. Ala-ud-din stuck the head of the Sultan on a spear and paraded it in the streets. Ala-ud-din then declared himself king.

Ala-ud-din Khalji, 1296—1316 A.D.

Ala-ud-din Khalji, who ascended the throne in 1296,

Early career

had lost his father at an early age and he was brought up by his affectionate uncle

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with great care and fondness. He also gave one of his daughters in marriage to him. On Jalal's accession to the throne Ala-ud-din was made the Governor of Oudh. It was here that Ala-ud-din began to entertain dreams of sovereignty. His expedition to the south was a step towards that end. After treacherously killing Jalal-ud-din, he proceeded towards Delhi. The task before him was by no means easy. The army was opposed and the people were hostile. At this juncture the wealth of Deogiri stood him in good stead. He distributed gold and silver freely on his way to Delhi and the sight of the glittering gold, and the prospect of future patronage made the people forget the usurpation. Yet another difficulty cropped up in his way. The dowager Queen, Malika Jahan, placed on the throne her younger son with the title of Rukn-ud-din Ibrahim. Her eldest son, Arkali Khan, naturally did not like this and he made preparations for Rukn-ud-din's removal. Ala-ud-din took advantage of the situation and he marched upon Delhi, which he captured after overcoming some resistance. The nominal Sultan and his mother ran away to Multan, and Ala-ud-din became the undisputed master of Delhi.

Difficulties.

His position was, still precarious. The conquest of Delhi did not mean the conquest of the whole empire The nobles and *viziers* had witnessed coups after coups and they had always tried to assert themselves, when possible. It needed strong and prolonged action against almost all the Hindu chiefs and many Muslim nobles. Another difficulty that he had to face was the absence of any organised system of administration since the days of Balban, because of the weakness of various Sultans, their mutual feuds and coups and especially because of the mildness of Jalal-ud-din, organised administration had vanished and there was scant respect for law and order. This led to internal disorders and foreign invasions of Mongols. Ala-ud-din met all these difficulties boldly and adopted strong measures to overcome them.

Mongol raids.

Like Iltutmish and Balban, the first task to which Ala-ud-din turned his attention was the strengthening of his frontiers against

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recurring Mongol invasions. From 1296 to 1302 he was mainly occupied in devising ways and means of repelling the Mongol invasion.

In 1297 the Mongols invaded the Punjab in large numbers, but they were defeated by Ala-ud-din's brother, Ulugh Khan and by Nusrat Khan. In the following year they appeared again and laid siege to Sehwan, but were again repulsed by Zafar Khan and their leader was taken prisoner. Shortly afterwards they came again under Kutlugh Khwaja and advanced as far as Delhi. The Sultan took field against them personally and inflicted severe defeat on them. Zafar Khan, "the greatest warrior of the age" was killed by the Mongols in 1298. It is said that the Mongols were nevertheless, so much impressed by the bravery of Zafar Khan that later on when their cattle refused to drink, they used to ask if they had seen Zafar Khan, "the Rustum of the age". The Mongol raids did not cease even after this decisive defeat. In 1301 they invaded Lahore and in 1303 they came to Delhi once again but retired after encamping there for two months. They continued to invade for long. It was only in 1305 that Ghazi Beg Tughlaq Khan, the Governor of Dipalpur was able to inflict a crushing defeat on them in the Shiwalik Hills. After this they did not appear in India for a long time.

In his policy of combating the Mongol invasions, the Sultan adopted the same measures as Balban *viz*., the strengthening of frontier forts, repairing old ones and keeping strong and reliable troops in readiness to meet the invasions.

Conquests.

After the withdrawal of the Mongols, 'Ala-ud-din set himself to the task of expansion and consolidation of his empire.

1. Gujrat.

In 1297 Ala-ud-din planned the conquest of Gujrat. In 1298 Ulugh Khan, the Sultan's brother and Nusrat Khan invaded Gujrat. Somnath was plundered and sacked. Anhilwara and Combay were also taken. Raja Karn fled away and took shelter with the ruler of Deogiri. The famous Malik Kafur was cap-

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tured from Gujrat. Kamla Devi, the Raja's beautiful wife also fell in the hands of the victors. She was admitted to the imperial *harem*. The Sultan got immense booty from Gujrat.

Zia-ud-din Barni, the famous historian writes that this victory turned the Sultan's head. He became so presumptuous that he began to look upon hinself as the greatest ruler on earth and entertained fantastic schemes of world conquest and promulgation of a new religion with himself as the prophet. He claimed that just as Prophet Muhammad had four faithful followers, Bakr, Omar, Osman and Ali likewise he had also got four supporters Ulugh Khan, Zafar Khan, Nusrat Khan and Alaf Khan. Qazi Ala-ul-Mulk, (an uncle of Barni), the Kotwal of Delhi, brought the Sultan to the right path by telling him that world-conquest was a still far off cry when he had not conquered even the whole of India. The Rajput rajas were still independent. Regarding the starting of new religion also he advised him to leave it to the spiritual guides. "Religion and law spring from heavenly revelation. The prophetic office was never appertained to kings". He quoted the instance of the futility of Chingez Khan's attempt in this direction. The Sultan was impressed by the sound advice of the Qazi and he turned his attention towards the conquest of Rajputana.

2 Rajputana, 1299—1306.

Rajputana had remained practically out of the orbit of Muslim influence. But no Muslim king could hope to become absolute ruler of India or even safe in India, till the backbone of Rajput resistance was broken. Ala-ud-din, therefore, set himself to the task of systematically reducing Rajpuana.

(a) Ranthambore.

Ranthambore was a famous fortress. Rana Hamir, who claimed descent from the famous Prithvi Raj Chauhan, was the ruler. He repulsed the first attack in 1299, in which Nusrat Khan was wounded and killed. Ala-ud-din appeared in person. As Haji Maula revolted in Delhi, the operations in Ranthambore had to be suspended. It was in 1303 that the siege of Ranthambore was renewed. Rana Hamir along

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with his Mongol officers put up a heroic resistance. Ala-ud-din proved too strong for them and the Rana along with many of his faithful men died fighting. A Muhammad Shah, one of the Mongol officers of the Rana, was taken prisoner. Ala-ud-din questioned him what he would do if he spared his life. The officer most scornfully replied that the first thing he would do would be to kill the Sultan and place the son of the Rana on the throne.

(b) Mewar, 1303.

After this the Sultan proceeded towards Mewar which was ruled by Rana Rattan Singh Sisodia. One of the causes of the attack is said to be the fame of the beauty of the Queen, Padmini. The state was well-organised by the Rajputs. Its famous capital, Chittor, was well-nigh impregnable. The Rajputs put up valiant resistance but the Muslim hordes once again proved too formidable for the Hindus. The brave Rajputs did not submit before the enemy and about thirty thousand of them died fighting along with their women-folk. Chittor rechristened "Khizrabad" was occupied and placed under his eldest son, Khizer Khan. The brave and invincible Rajputs continued to harass the Muslims and they ultimately recovered it in 1318 under Rana Hamir Deo.

(c) Malwa, 1305—1306.

After conquering Chittor Ala-ud-din marched into Malwa and Central India. Malwa was ruled by Rai Mehlok Deo. He was defeated and Malwa was occupied. Later on some other important cities like Ujjain, Mandu, Chanderi and Jalore were annexed. In this way practically the whole of Northern India was conquered by the imperialist Sultan.

3. The Deccan, 1306—12.

Although the Muslims had come in contact with the southern peninsula, in early times, chiefly through commerce, but the first Muslim conquest of the south was affected by Ala-ud-din. Ala-ud-din's chief motive in conquering the south was so much political as economic. An ambitious ruler like Ala-ud-din could not be contented without reducing the whole of the sub-contiennt. The contemporary political scene in the south was also quite favourable for

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an onslaught. The south was divided into four well-marked regions, each under an independent ruler. They were constantly at war with one another—the mutual enmity of the Pandyas, the Yadavas, the Hoysalas and other minor chiefs has been described in a preceding chapter. The difficult task of subduing the south was entrusted to Malik Kafur, now created Malik Naib or "Lieutenant" of kingdom.

(a) Deogri 1306—1307.

Deogiri was a very important city of the South, known for its riches. Moreover, Rai Karan the expelled ruler of Gujrat had taken shelter at Deogiri. As has been pointed out before, Rai Karan's queen, Kamala Devi, had been admitted into Ala-ud-din's *harem*. She was yearning for her beautiful daughter Deval Devi,who was with her father. Ala-ud-din undertook this expedition for getting Deval Devi for her mother. Malik Kafur led the expedition in 1306. Raja Karan was imprisoned. His daughter Deval Devi fell into Kafur's hands while visiting the cave temple at Ellora. She was sent off to Delhi, and was married to Khizr Khan the heir-apparent. Ram-Chandra Rao, the ruler of Deogiri was forced into submission. The treatment meted out to Ramchandra was generous, he was sent to Delhi to make personal submission to the Sultan. His territoy was restored to him and he was given the title of Rai-Rayan. Ramchandra's help was sought in conquering the other parts of the Deccan.

(b)Telingana, 1309-10.

After making piece with Ramchandra, Malik Kafur advanced to Telingana. Its ruler Pratap Rudra Deva offered resistance, but he was defeated. He agreed to pay annual tribute besides large quantities of gold and precious jewels. So vast was the booty that even one thousand camels could not carry it. Kafur returned to Delhi with these riches. This success further whetted the greed of Ala-ud-din for more conquests

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(c) Dwarasamudra, 1310—11.

Consequently Malik Kafur left for the South once again to reduce Dwarasamudra and Malabar. Dwarasamudra was the capital of the Hoysala Kingdom. Malabar was under the Pandyas, who were unfortunately engaged in bitter internecine warfare. The Hoysala king, Vir Ballala III (1292—1342) was a wise and powerful ruler. His enemy Rama Deva, the Yadava ruler greatly helped Kafur. Vir Ballala was defeated and forced to pay heavy indemnity and offer allegiance to the Sultan. Malik Kafur built a mosque at Dwarasamudra. Malabar was also brought to submission after sometime.

(d) Madura, 1311.

Madura was the capital of the Pandyas. Mutual fight between the two brothers, the rivals to the throne, Vira and Sundra, gave Kafur a chance to march to Madura. Vira, who was the rular fled away in panic. Malik Kafur seized a large quantity of precious stones, horses and elephants and other articles from Madura. Kafur marched ahead as far as Rameshwaram, the famous Hindu shrine, which was destroyed.

A note on Ala-ud-din's Deccan Policy.

As has been mentioned before Ala-ud-din's motive in conquering the South was mainly economic—to seize the fabulous wealth of the south which it had amassed through centuries of unbroken peace. He had neither any serious designs of annexing the Southern States nor of propagating Islam. The rulers of Deogiri, Telingana, Dwarasamudra and Madura were made vassals only in name. They were left to themselves so long as they owed allegiance to him. On the whole, Ala-ud-din's Deccan Policy was Statesmanlike because keeping in view, the vast distance, difficult means of transport and religion of the South it was not an easy task to keep it under direct rule. It would have made the empire too unwieldy and its occupation too expensive. Moreover, the occupation of the South would have led to the looseing of control over the half-consolidated North as it happened in the case of Muhammad Tughlak and Aurangzeb. Before Ala-ud-din

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Samudra Gupta, the Indian Nepoleon, had also followed a similar policy on precisely the same considerations.

Extent of the Empire.

Ala-ud-din's empire embraced the whole of Northern India from the Indus in the North to Dwarasamudra and Rameswaram in the far south and from Thatta in the West upto Sonargaon in the East. As far as the real grasp of the sultanate is concerned it extended only to the Punjab, Rajputana, Gujerat, Malwa, Central India, U. P., and Bengal. The rest was simply "a huge agglomeration of peoples, not knit together by any principle of cohesion or unity and would be dissolved as soon as its master-hand was removed or its grip was relaxed."

Malik Kafur.

Before we close the account of Ala-ud-din's remarkable successes, it would be proper if we study the career of Malik Kafur, who played the most important part in conquering some of these territories. Malik Kafur was originally a Hindu eunuch. He was captured when Ala-ud-din conquered Gujrat. Kafur was a highly intelligent and handsome boy. The Sultan was simply infatuated by the beauty of his person and intelligence. Very soon he became the right-hand man of Ala-ud-din. He was created a general and some time afterwards Malik Naib or Lieutenant of the kingdom. He was entrusted with the conquest of the south and was responsible for the submission of Deogiri, Warrangal, Dwarasamudra, Madura and Malabar. These conquests brought enormous gold and silver which raised him still higher in the estimation of the Sultan. Because of these dazzling successes and scrupulous loyalty towards his master he became the most trusted noble of the Sultan. In fact, he soon became indispensable to him and even began to browbeat the Sultan. As the Sultan advanced in years, the Malik Naib became a virtual dictator. He began even to aspire for sovereignty. He poisoned the ears of the Sultan against his own wife and sons. Ala-ud-din became such a tool in the hands of this crafty eunuch that he disinherited his sons Khizr Khan and Shadi Khan and put them all, including the Queen, in prison.

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After the death of Ala-ud-din, in 1316, Kafur produced a will of the late Sultan, probably obtained under some duress, appointing a minor son of the Sultan Shihab-ud-din Omar to the throne and himself as his regent. He practised unspeakable torrures on the princes. Their eyes were taken out "like slices of melon." The dowager Queen was thrown into prison. All rivals and opponents were ruthlessly exterminatedly the ambitious regent. His evil soon recoiled on his head. The nobles, headed by Malik Mushir, got sick of his barbarities and naked ambition. On February 6, 1316, by a grand coup, Kafur and his associates were put to death after he had ruled only for 36 days. With all his defects, Malik Kafur was a gen us, although historians have preferred to call him an "evil genius". His brilliant conquests of the South reveal his superb skill as a great general.

Administration of Ala-ud-din Khalji.

Ala-ud-din Khalji occupies an abiding place in the history of India, not because of his vast conquests, but on account of his highly successful administration. He was the first Muslim ruler of India to defy the law of the *Shariat* and lay the foundation of a secular state by freeing himself from the shackles of the *Mullahs*. Had the later Muslim conquerors but followed the principles of his administration the history of our country would have been radically different. His economic reforms deserve special credit. Again, he was the first ruler of India to introduce the principles of control of prices. His greatness in this respect lies not so much in evolving the system as in enforcing it successfully.

Ideal of kingship.

Ala-ud-din's ideal of kingship deserves special mention. He departed from his predecessors regarding the conception of the powers of the king. He wanted to be an independent king in the true sense. He did not believe that a Muslim king derived his authority from the *Shariat* or that he must bow before the dictates of the *Ulema*. He considered himself supreme in all matters. Like Sher Shah and Akbar in the Indian History, and Henry II and Henry VIII in the history of England, Ala-ud-din did his best to

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free the state from the influence of the Church. He upheld royal prerogatives. In his dialogues with Qazi Muzhis-ud-din the Sultan gave expression to these views. The Sultan asked the Qazi several questions, such as whether he could punish his corrupt officers, keep the spoils of war or draw money from the treasury. On being told that the powers of the Sultan in all these spheres were very much limited by the Islamic Law, the Sultan refused to follow it. The Sultan put his ideas in the following words: "I do not know whether it is lawful or not. *Whatever I think to be for the good of the State, or suitable for the emergency, that I decree.*" This put in a nutshell his ideal of kingship. These views did not necessarily imply the violation or repudiation of Islam. He was a good Muslim as much as Henry VIII was a Christian after the breach with the Pope of Rome, but only he did not allow Islamic principles or the *Ulema* to interfere in the administration of the empire.

Planning of Administrative Reforms.

The administration of the Slave Kings and Jalal-ud-din and even of Ala-ud-din in the early years, was not based on any principles. Its foundation was laid on remedial measures employed now and then as an emergency arose. The whole system called for a thorough overhauling as there was no regularity, cohesion or system in the administration. He wanted to proceed systematically, studying causes and finding out their solution. There had been numerous rebellions in the country during the early part of his reign. There was constant danger from overmighty subjects and the Hindus. The army was not satisfied or disciplined. The people were also discontented. He thought of all these problems as a whole, and after co-ordinating the various causes and effects, he came to the conclusion that the basic cause of all these ills, was the weakness of the king's position. If the king was strong there would be no overmighty subjects and consequently no rebellions and no disorders.

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Weakening of the nobility.

After careful thought Ala-ud-din found that there were four main causes of the dangerous growth of the nobility: (*i*) excessive wealth, (*ii*) neglect of the administration by the king, (*iii*) matrimonial alliances among the various noble families, and (*iv*) the excessive use of wine.

Ala-ud-din set himself to this task in right earnest. The lands of the nobles were confiscated, *jagirs* and pensions were resumed, use of wine was prohibited and an elaborate spy-system was organised. These measures went a long way in reducing the power of the nobility and consequently increasing the influence of the Sultan.

Revenue Reforms.

After dealing with the nobles effectively Ala-ud-din set to improving the administration in other fields. He first took up the question of land revenue reform because with it was closely wedded the influence and power of the nobles, *Muqaddams*, *Khots*, *Chaudhris* and other classes who too enjoyed excessive power and could prove dangerous to the king.

Ala-ud-din was the first Muslim king who organised revenue system on regular lines. He got the land measured and fixed the land revenue accordingly. He charged one-half of the produce as the land revenue. Many other taxes, like the house and grazing taxes etc., were also charged. The taxes could be paid in cash or kind, the latter course being preferred by the government in order to store grain. The assessment was so rigorous that not even a small plot of land was left unmeasured. The object of this strictness was not only to provide necessary funds for the growing needs of the state but also to curb the power of the *Chaudhris and Muqaddams*, *Khots*, *Balahirs* and other village chiefs, and thereby crippling them against ever challenging the authority of the Sultan. They were so rigorously repressed that they could not afford a horse, arms, good clothes or any other luxury of life. None of them "could hold up his head, and in their houses no sign of gold or silver, tankas or jitals, or any superfluity was to be seen.....Driven by destitution, the wives of the *Khots* and *Muqaddams* went

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and served for hire in the houses of the Mussalmans." The revenue collection staff was particularly instructed not to exact illegal gratifications from the peasantry. Anybody violating this order was given severe punishment. The *amils*, *musharafs* and *patwaris* were given generous salaries in order to prevent them from vexing the peasantry. But the various mal-practices continued and "men looked upon revenue officers as something worse than fever. Clerkship was a great crime, and no man would give his daughter to a clerk."

Position of Hindus.

In his revenue reforms Ala-ud-din badly hit the position of the hereditary revenue collectors, who were mostly Hindus. It is suggested that Ala-ud-din passed these measures because he was specially prejudiced against the Hindus. There is no evidence to prove this charge. Ala-ud-din looked upon his enemies, whether Muslims or Hindus, with the same consideration. He wanted to kill the class of hereditary revenue collectors. It is wrong to believe that Ala-ud-din wanted to reduce the Hindus, as a class, to the position of "hewers of wood and drawers of water." As a matter of fact, he would have liked to reduce all to this position in order to stamp out sedition.

Military Reforms.

Ala-ud-din's government was virtually a military dictatorship. The maintenance of a large and efficient army was the primary need of the Sultan. His military reforms were far-reaching. Like Balban he kept a highly disciplined and reliable army on the north western frontiers. He got new forts built and old ones repaired. Strategic roads leading to the frontier were constructed. Ferishta estimated his Cavalry at 475,000. There were three types of horsemen : (*i*) *Murratab* (*ii*) *Aswar* and (*iii*) *Do-aspah*. The system of "*dagh*" or branding and preparing the descriptive rolls ("*huluja*") of the horses was introduced in order to minimise chances of fraud by officers and soldiers. The head of the army, *Divan-i-Araz* was specially instructed to enforce these regulations. The movements of the officers and men were closely

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watched by the ring of spies specially appointed for this purpose, so that the Sultan might be well-informed about the activities of his men.

Ala-ud-din kept a large army. It was no easy task to pay its bill. A soldier on the average was paid 234 *tankas* (about Rs. 250) yearly. He did not want to pay more but at the same time he wanted to keep the soldier contented. He, therefore, adopted the system of price-control.

Economic Reforms.

The main purpose of the economic reforms of Ala-ud-din was to enable him to keep a large army without paying heavily for it or taxing the people beyond their means. By controlling the prices and supplies of almost all articles he enabled an average soldier and other government officer to live comfortably within the means of his pay. Tariff lists were prepared by which prices of various articles ranging from necessities of life to goods of luxury like wheat, barley, clothes, horses and silks were rigidly enforced. Although the prices were ridiculously low, yet it goes to the credit of Ala-ud-din that things were available in plenty and the modern accursed "black market" was non-existent. The prices of articles were fixed thus :

(In *Jitals*=a copper coin about one pice in value).

Per maund : Wheat (7½), Barley (4), Rice (5), *Mash* (5), Gram (5), *Moth* (3).

Per seer : Sugar (1½), Brown sugar (¼), Butter (2½) seers for (1) and Salt 2½ maunds for (5).

It follows from the above that the things were very cheap—cheaper beyond imagination. The most surprising feature of Ala-ud-din's system was that things were available in plenty on demand. This he made possibly by keeping effective watch on the movement of sale of foodgrains. Moreover, large quantities of foodgrains and other edible articles were kept ready in government granaries for issue when there was need. For this purpose the land revenue, as has been pointed out, was preferred in kind rather than in cash.

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Control over markets.

No private hoarding of grain was permitted. No producer within 100 miles of Delhi could keep with him more than 10 maunds of grains. The rest were to be sold to licensed grain dealers at controlled prices. Sometimes advances were made to the merchants to procure grain from distant lands. No transaction could take place outside the grain market. The markets were controlled by two officers, the *Diwan-i-Riyasat* and the *Shahna-i-Mandi*. Here again, he kept careful watch over the officers and the working of the market. The merchants had to deposit securities for abiding by the laws when receiving licenses. Very severe punishments—sometimes capital punishments—were inflicted on those who violated the principles of the controls even in the slightest degree. Those traders who used short weights had to make good the deficiency by equal weight of their own flesh. Flogging was often resorted to. The regulations worked wonderfully well and enabled the Sultan to keep a large army without much cost. The modern governments whose controls have often failed, can learn a useful lesson from the example of Ala-ud-din. Moreland is of the opinion that Ala-ud-din also issued the system of rationing food in times of drought successfully. This system worked only in Delhi because it was here only that controls and rationing were necessary. All these regulations came to an end with the death of the Sultan.

The Vigour of Ala-ud-din's Administration.

The administration of Ala-ud-din had a great effect on Muslim rule in India. Sir Wolseley Haig remarks that with Ala-ud-din began "the imperial period of Sultanate," which lasted for about a century. Ala-ud-din was the first king "to enunciate an imperial policy and blend it with a centralised administration and secular spirit of rule dissociated from religious bias." The administration of the Sultan was very vigorous and strong. It was perhaps the strongest that was ever evolved by any Muslim ruler in India before or after him till Akbar. Some of his administrative measures like abolition of *Jagirdari* system, army reforms and revenue

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administration were followed by later rulers with slight modifications. The strong edifice of the administration laid by Ala-ud-din would have pulled the empire through many difficult times but for the weakness and inefficiency of his successors.

Ala-ud-din's Character and estimate.

Ala-ud-din was the most remarkable ruler. He combined in himself the qualities of a bold conqueror, an adventurous soldier, a stern and resolute administrator and an unscrupulous but clear-headed statesman. He believed in doing every thing systematically. His various administrative measures show that he was a very good organiser and planner. He was unsparing of any opposition. He did not allow the *mullahs* to override his wishes. He ruthlessly suppressed the overmighty subjects. Like an ideal statesman he was not reckless. He knew where to stop. After conquering the Southern States of the Hindu Rajas he did not indulge in needless bloodshed. He showed farsightedness and sagacity by reinstating the Rajas in their states. In this respect he proved himself wiser than the Mughal fanatic, Aurangzeb. He showed no weakness in dealing with his enemies. They were ruthlessly and ferociously exterminated. The Raiput rulers were attacked not merely because they were Hindus but because they were politically dangerous. All these measures clearly prove that the ideal of Ala-ud-din was to build a secular state.

The success of his economic measures is specially noteworthy. In those primitive times Ala-ud-din cleverly enough, realised not only the importance of adopting economic measures by the state, but he also controlled the prices and supplies of commodities very successfully. It was because he believed in a policy of "thorough". It is important to note that at a time when Ala-ud-din Khalji realised the importance of controlling prices in order to make things cheap for his poor subjects the contemporary English government of Edward III (1327—77) failed to adopt such measures after the catastrophe of the Black Death (1348—50) and consequent demand of the labourers for higher wages in order to eke out living.

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There were, however, certain flaws in the sultan's character. He was excessively greedy and unscrupulous. The treacherous murder of Jalal-ud-din by him shows how deeply perfidious his nature was. On ascending the throne, he put to death those very nobles who had helped in his elevation because he was afraid of their power. He was machiavellian in his ways. The bravery and successes of his own son, Zafar Khan, frightened Ala-ud-din. When Zafar was killed by the Mongols he heaved a sigh of relief saying he "had been got rid of without disgrace !" Another weak point of his character was that he was extremely suspicious and jealous. Excepting Malik Kafur he trusted nobody. This made his administration a military dictatorship. No royal prince or officer was given a chance to get administrative training under him.

Consequently the empire that he built had the "feet of clay". It could not last for long. The goodwill of the ruled was not won. Its continuance depended upon the mighty personality that had brought it into existence. When that mighty hand was removed, the huge edifice broke down like a house of cards notwithstanding the great administrative reforms of the sultan. As a matter of fact, cracks had begun to appear even during the life-time of Ala-ud-din. The sultan played too much in the hands of his favourite eunuch Kafur. Kafur was responsible for much discontentment in the country. All things considered Ala-ud-din was by far the greatest ruler of the sultanate. The weaknesses and flaws of his character were not peculiar to him alone, they were the common traits of all kings all over the world. Perhaps no king could rule in peace without some of them.

Ala-ud-din's death, 1316.

The last days of Ala-ud-din were unhappy. There were rebellions in Deogiri, Gujrat and Chittor. Ala-ud-din was now too weak and old to put down the risings. He had the agony of seeing his work being undone before his very eyes. His family life was unhappy. He was also suffering from dropsy. He died a broken-hearted man in January, 1316, "biting his own flesh in fury".

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QUESTIONS

1. Describe the Deccan Campaigns of Ala-ud-din Khalji. Why did he not annex these territories ?

2. Give an account of the administration of Ala-ud-din Khalji with reference to his (*a*) Theory of kingship, (*b*) Treatment of Ulema and (*c*) relations with the Hindu subjects.

3. Examine carefully the economic reforms of Ala-ud-din Khalji.

4. Study the relations of Ala-ud-din with the Mongols.

5. Give an estimate of the achievements of Ala-ud-din Khalji.

6. Write a note on the career and achievements of Malik Kafur.

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CHAPTER XI

THE TUGHLAKS OR KARAUNA TURKS,

1320—1413 A.D.

After the death of Ala-ud-din, Malik Kafur did not allow the eldest son of the Sultan, Khizr Khan to sit on the throne. His eyes were taken out and a minor prince, Shahab-ud-din Omar was raised to the throne and Kafur himself became his regent. This enraged the nobles who organised a confederacy against the ambitious regent. Kafur was put to death after he had acted as regent for five weeks only.

Mubarak Khan, 1316–1320 A.D.

On Kafur's death, prince Mubarak Khan, the second son of Ala-ud-din, who had escaped came out from his hiding and assumed power under the title of Qutb-ud din Mubarak Shah. Mubarak started very well. He gave relief to the people and released about 17,000 prisoners who had been thrown into prison by Ala-ud-din and Malik Kafur. He suppressed some rebellions in Gujrat, Telingana and Deogiri. Before long he became a tool in the hands of a Gujrati, a low-caste Hindu, Malik Khusro. Entrusting the affairs of government to his hands Mubarak gave himself up to a life of ease, pleasure and profligacy. Khusro led an expedition to Telingana where he was very successful. Seizing a suitable opportunity, Khusro got the Sultan murdered in April, 1320. He even married the beautiful princess of Gujrat, Dewal Devi, the daughter of Raja Karan, who had been married to Khizr Khan and then to Mubarak. In this way, the last of the Khaljis passed away ignominously.

Nasir-ud-din, 1320.

Khusro usurped the throne under the title of Nasir-ud-din. He started a reign of terror. During his short reign of about five months, he treated the nobles and *viziers*

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with great harshness and contempt. He was at heart a Hindu and started removing all Muslim officers from position. He replaced them by his own low-caste Hindu favourites. The Muslim nobles got sick of him very soon and began to devise ways and means of getting rid of him. They invited Ghazi Beg Tughlak, the Governor of Dipalpur or Multan who was a staunch supporter of the Khaljis and was very popular to remove the usurper. Ghazi Beg marched on Delhi at the head of a large army. In an engagement at Lehrawat near Delhi, the usurper was defeated and slain. As no scion of the Khalji family was alive, the nobles placed Malik Ghazi on the throne with the title of Ghias-ud-din Tughlak. The coronation took place at Siri in 1320 A.D.

Ghias-ud-din-Tughlaq, 1320—1325 A.D.

Early life.

Ghazi Beg Tughlaq, known as Ghias-ud-din Tughlaq, was originally a Karauna Turk. Originally the Karaunas were perhaps the Mongol tribes of Central Asia who had settled in the regions between Sind and Turkistan. Tughlaq was the tribal name. Ghias-ud-din's mother was a Panjabi Jat woman. Originally Ghias-ud-din was a slave of Balban, but made great progress under the patronage of Ala-ud-din. He eventually became the Governor of Dipalpur for his steadfast loyalty and valour. Like Jalal-ud-din Khalji he had no ambitions to become a king, but force of circumstances raised him to the throne. Ghias-ud-din was an old man, like Jalal, when he ascended the throne.

Ghias-ud-din proved himself to be a strong and capable ruler. Within a short time he restored peace and order in the kingdom. He was kind to the relatives of Ala-ud-din Khalji. His treatment towards the nobles also was generous. He restored their confiscated lands and property. He established many works of public good. Highway robbery and crime were suppressed. The departments of justice and police were reorganised. Important army and revenue reforms were also carried through. The conditions of the peasantry were improved. The people in general were happy. Ibn Batuta says that

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the administration of the Sultan was efficient, humane and popular. Thus the Sultan "successfully reorganised the administration which had been thrown out of gear during the reigns of the imbecile Mubarak and the unclean Khusro."

Conquests : (a) Telingana, 1321—1323.

After reorganising administration in the country, Ghias turned his attention towards the rebellious chiefs in various parts of the country. Pratap Rudra Deva II, the ruler of Telingana raised the standard of rebellion. Prince Fakhr-ud-din Juna, the heir-apparent, was sent to Telingana. In the first attempt the prince was not successful. His success was spoiled by the outbreak of an epidemic in the imperial camp. Some historians are of the view that Juna gave up the siege abruptly because he heard rumours about the death of the Sultan and ran to the capital in order to seize the throne. The seige was resumed in 1323 when he was more successful. On his way Bidar and Deogiri were also reduced. Warrangal was renamed Sultanpur.

(b) Bengal, 1324 A.D.

In 1324 the sultan marched on Bengal in person, entrusting the government to Juna in his absence. The cause of the expedition was the rebellion of Bahadur Shah who had defied the authority of the governor. Bahadur was defeated. The rulers of Trihut (Mithila) and the neighbouring territories were subdued.

Death of Ghias-ud-din, 1325 A.D.

Ghias-ud-din's brief career was cut short by an accident in 1325. Prince Juna constructed a special pavilion at Afghanpur, near Delhi, to receive his victorious father on his return from Bengal. The pavilion suddenly crashed on the sultan while the ceremony was going on, killing Ghias-ud-din and his son Mahmud. The escape of Juna is significant. Most probably the tragedy was not a result of an accident but the design of Juna, who was restive to become king. Ibn Batuta and Nizam-ud-din hold this view while Ferishta makes us believe that it was a mere accident. Prince

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Juna ascended the throne under the title of Sultan Muhammad Shah Tughlak in February 1325.

Muhammad Tughlak, 1325—1351 A.D.

Character

Muhammad Tughlak had no difficulty in acquiring the throne. The new sultan was a remarkable man. He was a man of scholarly tastes and was well-versed in various sciences and arts. He was deeply learned in philosophy and his administration shows that he was a very well-informed man. He was "a man of mark apart from his kingship—generous to profusion, an accomplished scholar, abstinent, a stern defender of his faith and the most experienced general of his age".* The sultan like Samudra Gupta was a versatile genius. He was rather unlucky in his various schemes because of adverse conditions and general hostility of the people. Ibn Batuta, Barni and Ferishta have painted different pictures of the sultan. Ibn Batuta says "Muhammad Tughlak is fond of making presents and shedding blood. At his gate the poor persons become rich and rich poor." This view has led historians to remark that the sultan was a "mixture of opposites." Similarly Ferishta remarks :

"The sultan was devoid of divine quality of mercy or of consideration for his subjects". But Zia Barani has showered praise on the sultan in the following words "An eloquent and profoundly learned scholar, a veritable wonder of creation, whose abilities would have taken by surprise such men as Aristotle and Asaf." These views fail to represent the true character of the man He was no fool or madman as has been suggested by some historians. On the other hand, he was a highly learned man and perhaps like James I of Britain. The sultan was too pedantic to listen to others' advice. He also lacked commonsense which is so essential for an administrator. As the following account of his administrative reforms shows Muhammad Tughlak had lofty ideas of government but as he could not put his ideas into practice rightly, he failed miserably.

*E. Thomas, Chronicles of the Pathan Kings of Delhi (1871) p. 202.

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Administrative Measures: 1. Change of Capital 1327 A.D.

As has been pointed out above, the sultan was a wide-awake man and he wanted to systematise every thing. He was convinced by the frequent rebellions in the South that in order to keep under control the newly conquered South he must shift his capital from the North to the South. Consequently in 1327 he orderded the transfer of the capital from Delhi to Deogiri, (renamed Daulatabad) because the latter was a more central place. Another consideration which must have weighed with him was the need of taking the capital away from the frequent threat of invasions by the Mongols. The transfer of the capital from the North to the South was also calculated to introduce Muslim religion and culture in the predominately Hindu South. Ibn Batuta, however, contends that the change of the capital was ordered because he wanted to punish the people of Delhi who were writing him insulting letters. This is not correct.

The scheme in itself was very sound and there was nothing inherently wrong with it. Certainly Daulatabad was a safer and more central place and under normal conditions would have led to fruitful results. Unfortunately the execution of the plan was seriously defective. In this connection the Sultan took two distinct measures. The first was the transfer of the capital to Daulatabad and all officials with their families were compelled to migrate. Two years later the Sultan passed a second order, ordering all inhabitants of Delhi to migrate *enmasse* as a punitive measure. Ibn Batuta and Barni have left exaggerated accounts of the hardships caused to the people by the compulsory migration to the new capital. They say that the Sultan conducted a search of the old capital to see that not a single soul was left. This shifting caused innumerable sufferings to the people.

After sometime the Sultan realised that the climate of the Deccan was not suitable and due to his absence, the chiefs of the north, particularly Rajputs had become refractory. Moreover, the Mongols were encouraged to lead more frequent invasions. The Sultan, therefore,

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ordered the march back to Delhi, which once again caused greater hardship to the people besides unnecessary huge expenditure to the State. Thus the scheme of the transfer of Capital proved an utter failure. Lanepoole calls this measure a "movement of misdirected energy." There was nothing wrong with the scheme, only it was not carried out well. Had he ordered the migration of only the officials it would not have proved unsuccessful.

2. Token currency, 1330 A.D.

The transfer of the capital, the construction of Daulatabad and the suppression of the rebellions of Baha-ud-din and Kishlu Khan and several other natural calamities cost the government heavy sums. The Sultan had also schemes of conquering neighbouring territories for which a large army was required. Wide-awake as the Sultan was, he had also heard of the introduction of token currency in Persia and in China. Muhammad himself had been seriously thinking of improving his own coinage. He, therefore, introduced token currency in his dominions. There were other sound reasons for the measure. It is wrong to say that the Sultan introduced this measure because his government was becoming bankrupt. On the other hand, the prompt payment of gold for the copper coins even for the spurious ones, on demand, disproves this view. The Sultan introduced this measure because the conquest of the Deccan had disturbed the ratio of gold, silver and copper coins by heavy influx of gold from the South. So long as the ratio between the values of these remained constant, there was security in trade and commerce. But changes produced confusion. In order to restore the balance and to increase the amount of currency, the Sultan ordered that copper coins should stand for the value of silver coins of the same weight. Judged by modern theories the scheme was quite sound. It was also calculated to save the waste of bullion by circulation and frequent handling. Moreover, he reformed the currency to facilitate exchange and because it was also a convenient circulation medium. Perhaps he was also fired by the desire of being original. It satisfied his

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habit of experimenting too. The execution of the scheme was seriously defective. The government did not improve the design of the new coins--so that they could be easily manufactured by mischievous persons. It is said that practically every house became a mint and a very large number of counterfeit coins came in circulation. The people paid their taxes in the new coins. They began to hoard and suppress genuine gold and silver coins. The value of the token coins fell so heavily that nobody accepted these coins. The foreign merchants paid in the tokens but did not accept them in payment of the goods sold by them. The Sultan had to recall the token coins and paid silver and gold coins for all token coins whether genuine or spurious. Thus this scheme also failed due to defective execution and the conservatism of the people. There was, however, nothing inherently wrong with it also.

3. Schemes of Conquests, 1337—1338

Muhammad Tughlak entertained serious designs of conquering Iran and Khorasan. Many exiled Khorasani nobles lived at his court who advised the Sultan to conquer Khorasan. As Iran and Khorasan were constantly at war with each other, Muhammad thought that the task would not be very difficult. He collected a huge army of about 370,000 and kept it for a year for this purpose. As the Sultan did not get a suitable opportunity to march and the relations between the two contending countries steadily improved the scheme fell through. The Sultan had to incur heavy expenditure on keeping such a large army in vain. This scheme was not fantastic and might have been executed. After this Muhammad Tughlak sent his forces for the suppression of Qarachal possibly Himachal Pradesh. It is wrong to say that the aim of this expedition was to conquer China. Prejudiced historians like Frishta wanted to prove that the Sultan had gone mad. They gave out that the Sultan had ordered his armies to snbjugate China after conquering the difficult heights of the Himalayas. This army consisting of about one lakh of soldiers marched under his general Khusro Malik via Kangra to suppress the various

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Terai chiefs so as to secure his frontiers on that side Unluckily pestilence broke out among his soldiers due to heavy rains and the expedition could not make much headway. Their supply line was cut off and most of the troops died of hunger, exposure and disease. It is said that only ten horsemen survived these hardships. Thus in this scheme also there was nothing wrong. Only unfavourable circumstances led to its failure.

Enhancement of Taxation in the Doab, 1341.

The Sultan suffered defeat and disasters in his schemes of transfer of capital, token currency and foreign expeditions. All this meant huge drain on the treasury. In order to raise money for meeting expenditure on some of these schemes, the Sultan in 1341 thought of enhancing the rate of land revenue in the Doab, which is perhaps the richest tract in the whole of Asia. He increased the rate because the soil of the Doab was very fertile and the people well-off. Moreover, the rate of land revenue was rather low. Earlier, Ala-ud-din had increased the taxation successfully. Unfortunately the measure was succeeded by unprecedented drought and consequent famine. The peasants could not pay the taxes but the officials demanded payment with unusual harshness. The result was that the poor cultivators had to run away from their homes to the jungles in order to escape the oppression of the tax collectors. Even there they were not spared. Thousands of them were arrested and executed as rebels. It dawned upon the Sultan after a time that the trouble was not due to the rebellious spirit of the cultivators but was the result of natural calamities. Zia-ud-din Barni, whose kith and kin suffered hardships in this affair, has given a highly exaggerated account of the oppression of the people. The Sultan did his best to mitigate the hardships. He opened free kitchens and advanced *taccavi* loans to the cultivators. In order to superwise the relief work the Sultan himself proceeded to the afflicted area. The taxes were remitted. But all these measures came too late. Once again a sound scheme was frustrated by unfavourable circumstances and unforeseen calamities.

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Suppression of Rebellions.

Sultan Muhammad Tughlak had to contend with many serious rebels. In the beginning of his reign there were no serious disturbances but the various unsuccessful measures of the Sultan, particularly the failure of the scheme, of enhancement of taxation in the Doab, made the Sultan unpopular. Some nobles began to think that the Sultan was lunatic, while others thought that it would be easy to remove him from the throne. Most of the governors ruling in distant areas were foreigners and were not loyal to the Sultan. Defection and disorder were prevailing everywhere, specially after the year 1335. From this year the prestige and power of the Sultan began steadily to decline. The last 16 years of his reign witnessed continuous turmoil and disorder.

Trouble in Northern India.

From 1336 to 1342 the Sultan was engaged in suppressing trouble in Northern India. In 1336 revolt broke out in Bengal where one of the army officers, Fakhr-ud-din assumed power after killing the Governor Qadr Khan. As the Sultan at that time was busy in his Himalayan expedition and relief measures in the Doab, he could not send any expedition to Bengal. Due to the inaction of the Sultan, Bengal was lost to the empire in 1339. Fakhr-ud-din became an independent Sultan of Bengal. Rebellions started in Malwa and Gujrat as well. The Sultan took vigorous action in Gujrat. He put down the rebellion and personally stayed for sometime in the province in order to make arrangements for the collection of land revenue and to chastise the rebels. In 1340-41 the Governor of Oudh, Amir-ul-Mulk also revolted, but he too was defeated. Soon after, rebellion broke out in Sind where brigandage was on the increase. The Sultan's prompt action restored order. By 1342 order was restored in the North.

Deccan, 1335—1351.

The frequent revolts in the North encouraged the rulers of the far-flung South to raise banners of rebellion. In 1335 revolt occurred in Malabar under the leadership of Jalal-ud-din Ahsan Shah, the Governor. The Sultan

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proceeded against the rebel but due to the outbreak of cholera in his ranks he could not advance to Malabar. Malabar remained independent for the next 50 years when it was conquered by the Rayas of Vijayanagar. In 1336 the famous Yadava brothers Hari Har and Buka laid the foundations of the Hindu Vijayanagar Empire. In 1344 Krishna Nayak, son of Pratap Rudra Deva of Telingana took up arms against the Muslims and was successful in driving them out of Telingana, Dwarasamudra and the whole of Coromandal coast. It was also at about this time that the foundations of the famous Muslim Bahmani Kingdom were laid by Hasan Gangu in 1347. The foreign Amirs who were dissatisfied with the Sultan, rose in rebellion at Deogiri under the leadership of Ismail Khan Makh. Muhammad Tughlak himself came to Deogiri and defeated the rebels who fled to Gulbarga. As the Sultan had to rush to Gujrat to deal with a serious rebellion there, the Deccan rebels were given time to reorganise their forces. It was in these circumstances that Hasan Gangu assumed sovereignty over all the territories to the South of Tungabhadra under the title of Ala-ud-din Bahman Shah in August, 1347. Thus the Sultan was constantly fighting against the rebels to the end of his life.

Death, 1351.

In 1347 the Sultan marched to Gujrat to suppress the rebellion of a cobbler, named Taghi. It was here that while he was engaged in pursuing the rebels that Muhammad Tughlak ate too much fish, got fever and died in March, 1351 A. D. In the words of Barni "The King was freed from his people and they from their King". At the time of his death, Bengal and Malabar had become completely independent. Gujrat was surging with trouble and in the Deccan the authority of the Sultan was very slender.

Administration.

Like Ala-ud-din Khalji, Muhammad Tughlak was a very energetic and vigorous ruler. He studied the administrative problems very thoroughly and passed a number of much needed reforms. It is different that his administrative measures did not yield the desired results, but all his reforms were based on good and sound principles.

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In his religious policy Muhammad Tughlak was not a bigot. He did not resort to forcible conversions or desecration of Hindu temples. He did lead expeditions against some Hindu states but that was on political grounds rather than purely religious. Like Ala-ud-din Khalji Muhammad Tughlak also refused to be led by the Muslim law of *shariat*. Frequent revolts and disorders compelled him to seek confirmation from the Caliph of Egypt, but that was a measure of expediency. He passed measures against the evils of Sati.

The Sultan was a lion of justice. He took pleasure in dispensing even-handed justice to all. He did not hesitate to inflict severe punishment even on the highest grandees. This became a grievance to the privileged classes against the Sultan. The revenue policy of the Sultan was just.

Estimate of Muhammad Tughlak's character and achievements.

The Sultan was very unlucky in his administrative measures. Most of these failed not because they were wrong in principle but because they were put into practice under unfavourable conditions. The failure of these measures caused heavy loss to the empire besides causing untold misery to the people. This led some historians to give a very unfavourable picture of the achievements of Muhammad Tughlak. He has been described as a blood-thirsty tyrant, a mad man and an admixture of opposites. But recent researches have shown that this is not a correct description of the achievements of the Sultan.

One thing that should be borne in mind while judging the character of the sultan is the fact, that he was very fond of innovations and experiments. Most of his measures were in the nature of experiments. Sometimes he was so much carried away by his zeal for innovations that he divorced them from practicability, utility and general desirability from the point of view of the State. Moreover, being mainly a thinker, he lacked the practical skill of executing his ideas into practice. He never took into account the social and economic factors and the prejudices and conservatism of the people. This was the

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keynote of his failure, but as Lanepoole has rightly remarked he was "a transcendent failure."

The Sultan was vain and pedantic like James I. He did not want to consult anybody. He considered himself to be an Alexander and a Solomon. Barni has compared him to a Pharaoh and a Nemrod in his vanity.. He could not discriminate between desirable and impracticable steps. The sultan was highly impetuous. His heart was full of milk of human kindness as well as ferocity of a barbarian. He has rightly been called "an admixture of opposites." Both Barni and Ibn Batuta are lost in astonishment at his arrogance, his piety, his humility, his pride, his lavish generosity, his care for his people, his hostility to them...his love of justice and his ferocious cruelty and can find no better description of his patron than that he was a freak of creation.

The Sultan had some serious defects in his character. From that we should not jump to the conclusion that he was an utter fool. The picture of his character that has been given to us by Barni and Iban Batuta is highly coloured and prejudiced. They were prejudiced because both of them had suffered personal losses at the hands of the Sultan. Barni had been ignored and superseded by foreigners. Ibn Batuta's failure in his mission to China also led to the abandonment of the patronage which he used to receive. Moreover, he wrote from hearsay rather than from first hand knowledge. The Sultan's liberalism was also not liked by them.

We should tear off the haze of prejudices that has been created round Muhammad Tughlak by prejudiced chroniclers. The charges of blood thirstiness and madness against him are utterly false. They were all the figments of the imagination of the clerical party, the neglected nobles and the ignorant people. The tragdey of Muhammad Tughlak is that he was not understood by his people. His liberalism and progressive ideas could not be understood by the contemporaries because they were too conservative. Muhammad Tughlak was acting ahead of his times.

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One important factor in judging the success of the Sultan's administration should not be lost sight of. The fourteenth century was a period of continuous series of natural calamities all over the world. It was a period of "climatic stress." There were unusual cold, rains and drought throughout the world—causing misery, famine and pestilence everywhere. In Europe and some parts of Asia the Black Death swept away millions of people. India suffered from scracity of rains. The failure of many of the schemes of Muhammad Tughlak .was caused by these natural conditions.

Summing up the character of Muhammad Tughlak Dr. Ishwari Prasad says, "The verdict that declares him a cruel and blood-thirsty tyrant like a Nero or Caligula, does little justice to his great genius, and ignores his conspicuous plans to cope with famine and his efforts to introduce ameliorative measures. He possessed an intellect, and a passion for practical improvement which we rarely find in medieval kings. But his task was an extremely onerous one. He had to deal with the problems of an ever-growing empire with a staff of officers who never loyally co-operated with him. In view of these extenuating circumstances the common opinion about the Sultan's character, and policy needs to be revised."*

We may conclude by saying that Muhammad Tughlak was a great ruler, perhaps the greatest thinker of his age, and was possessed of high ideals. His progressive ideas, liberal policies and love of justice entitle him to be ranked with the greatest rulers of his times.

Ibn Batuta.

Before we close the account of Muhammed Tughlak's reign it would be proper to give a brief account of the life of Ibn Batuta, who played an important part in the Sultan's reign. Ibn Batuta was a Moorish traveller and was a native of Tangier in Northern Africa. He was fond of travelling and in his sojourns he visited India. He remained in India from 1333 to 1342. He was treated very kindly by the Sultan, as he was very fond of foreigners. He appointed him the

*Ishwari Prasad : Medieval India, p. 259.

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Chief Qazi of Delhi. He was sent to China as the head of an embassy in 1342, which failed and he never returned to India. Ibn Batuta has left a detailed account of the life, manners, political, economic and religious conditions prevailing in India during the regin of his patron. After the failure of his mission, he became very much prejudiced against the Sultan and the account that he has left about the Sultan, was written in his native place. It is highly vitiated and unreliable as far as the narration of the character of the Sultan is concerned. As regards the description of social and economic life of the people his writings are very useful.

Feroze Shah Tughlak, 1351—1388 A.D.

Accession, 1351 A.D.

We have seen that the last years of Muhammad Tughlak's reign witnessed disorders and confusion. The Sultan had gone out to crush some of the rebellions when he suddenly died at Thatta in 1351. Muhammad left no male heir. The throne passed on to his cousin, Feroze-bin-Raja. Feroze was known for his piety and was a popular figure. He had to face no difficulty in acquiring the throne of Delhi. Some historians, particularly Mr. W. H. Haig, are of the view that Sultan Muhammad Tughlak left an infant son who was put on the throne by Khwaja Jahan but the latter was defeated and killed. He holds that Feroze was a usurper. This view does not find favour with most historians.

Feroze's character.

Before coming to the throne though Feroze had had the benefit of administrative training under Muhammad Tughlak, yet he lacked the qualities of a great ruler. By nature he was irresolute and vacillating. He allowed the Muslim theologians to override him. Once again the sultanate became tied to the apron-string of *Shariat*. The new Sultan would not do anything without consulting the *Mullahs* and *Qazis*. He was a bigoted Muslim and he encouraged conversions to Islam. Feroze was fanatical like Aurangzeb but he was not militant. The redeeming feature of the Sultan's religious policy was

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that he was averse to shedding blood of the *Zimmis*. Besides he was a cultured man and loved to promote art and learning. He had a soft corner for the peasantry and he passed many measures by which the condition of the peasantry was improved. He dug many canals for irrigation purposes. He was also responsible for many other public works of utility. Feroze is highly praised by historians for his goodness, gentleness and his deep solicitude for the people. He has been called a great ruler and has been compared with kings like Akbar. This comparison is mere superficial. Besides being peaceful, he did not have many other virtues.

Rebellions and conquests.

There were many rebellions in various parts of the empire. Feroze was at heart a weak and timid man. His timidity bordered on cowardice. He shrank from war and some of the rebels were allowed to usurp power. He lacked the intrepidity of a general and would not move against his enemies unless it became inevitable. He recognised the independence of the Deccan. In the north the situation became so very critical that he was obliged to wage a few wars.

1. Bengal, 1352—1360.

The Governor of Bengal, Haji Ilyas raised the banner of rebellion and also became king under the title of Shams-ud-din. He even began to strike coins in his own name. Feroze marched against him with his general Tatar Khan. Shams-ud-din put up a stout resistance. The Sultan did score a victory by employing the trick of feigned retreat but he could not exploit this victory to the full and the rebel soon regained his position. It is said that the shrieks and wails of women and children besieged in the fort of Iqdal touched the heart of the weak-minded Feroze, who atonce ordered that the seige be raised. "To storm the fort, put more Muhammadans to the sword, and expose honourable women to ignominy, would be a crime for which he could not answer on the day of judgement." Thus Feroze abandoned the friuts of victory and withdrew from Bengal without fully suppressing the rebel against the wishes of his generals.

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After the withdrawal of the King, Shams-ud-din again came into power. He began to perpetrate cruelties on the people. Once more Feroze made preparations to conquer Bengali. In 1360 he marched against the rebel at the head of a huge army of 70,000 horses and 1500 elephants. The Sultan laid siege to the fort of Iqdala, but failed to reduce it. Meanwhile Shams-ud-din died and was succeeded by his son Sikandar. The Sultan began to feel sick of the long struggle and he started negotiations for peace. The rebel was recognised as the sovereign of Bengal on the condition that he paid nominal tribute to the Sultan. In the words of Thomas, "The invasion only resulted in the confession of weakness." This shows that the Sultan had nothing of the ability, intrepidity or vigour of a soldier. To borrow a phrase from Mr. Winston Churchill he was "presiding over the liquidation" of the empire built by his predecessors.

2. Jajnagar (Orissa), 1360.

On his way back from Bengal the Sultan attacked Jajnagar or modern Orissa. It was ruled over by a Brahman who fled away. The Sultan looted the city and destroyed the famous temple of Jagannath at Puri. Later, peace was signed by which the Hindu ruler agreed to pay tribute to the Sultan in the forms of some elephants, for which Orissa was famous. Feroze returned to Delhi in 1361 after remaining absent from the capital for two years and a half. On his way he reduced the kingdom of Chota Nagpur.

3. Nazarkot, 1362.

Fanatical as the Sultan was, he planned to attack the famous temple of Nagarkot (Kangra) which had once been plundered by Mahmud of Ghazni. Besides religious zeal, the prospects of plunder also attracted the Sultan. The Raja of Nagarkot had become independent in 1337. Feroze attacked the temple in 1361 to put an end to idolatory, to plunder the temple and to suppress the Raja. Nagarkot fell after a long siege which lasted for about six months. The Sultan was impressed by the bravery of the Raja and made peace with him. The Raja was allowed to rule as a vassal of the Sultan. The

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siege is important for the fact that Feroze seized about 300 Sanskrit volumes, from the temple and got them translated into Persian under the title of Dalalayal-i-Feroze Shahi by a Court-poet, Aziz-ud-din Khalid Khani.

4, Sind, 1371—1372.

Under Muhammad Tughlak the people of Sind had given much trouble. It was here that the late Sultan died while engaged in suppressing Sind. Feroze regarded it as his sacred duty to wreak vengeance upon the Sindis. In 1371 he proceeded to Thatta at the head of a large army consisting of 90,000 horsemen, 500 elephants and 5,000 boats. The ruler of Sind, Jam Babaniya made preparations to meet the invasion. The imperialists advanced on Thatta but the outbreak of an epizootic disease and famine hindered their advance. It is said that about three-fourths of the army was destroyed by the disease. The Sultan wanted to retreat to Gujrat in order to get reinforcements. He was misguided into the distant Rann of Cutch and for six months the Sultan was in great trouble. Fortunately the able minister, Khan-i-Jahan Maqbul sent him reinforcements from Delhi. With this help he was able to reduce the Sindis in 1372. Jam Babaniya agreed to pay a tribute of seven lacs of *tankas* annually and became his vassal. This expedition exposed the military weakness of the Sultanate and the Sultan's lack of tactical skill.

Administration.

The above-mentioned account of the various campaigns of the Sultan shows that he had no liking for conquests. He was essentially a man of peace. He directed most of his energy to improving the system of administration and to introducing some badly needed reforms. He resolved to redress the wrongs done to the people by the administrative schemes of the late Sultan. His civil administration deserves great credit. He kept the good of the people always at heart and he spent lavishly in giving comfort, happiness and prosperity to his people. The Sultan's chief adviser in setting up good administration was his able minister, Khan-i-Jahan Maqbul.

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Revival of Jagirdari.

One of the earliest administrative measures of Feroze was the revival of the *jagirdari* system. This had been wisely ended by Ala-ud-din Khalji because it led to the rebellions and disorders by placing too much power in the hands of the nobles. Feroze entrusted the nobles with the task of maintaining soldiers for the state, for which they were given fiefs. The nobles resorted to their old practices of false musters, etc. Feroze did appoint government inspectors to check these evils but they could not succeed. Under Feroze things did not become so bad, but under his weak successors the revival of *jagirdari* system led to the weakening and dwindling of the empire.

Judiciary and Penal Code.

Feroze, like his predecessor, wanted to be a lion of justice. He took special pains to see that even-handed justice was given to all and sundry. There was one weak point in his system. He followed the tenets of Islam and enforced the Quranic law, which worked to the detriment of the non-Muslims. The *Mufti* expounded the law and the *Qazi* passed judgment. Feroze also reformed the penal code. He removed from the list barbarous punishments and tortures. Amputation was given up. Similarly, such forms of punishment as trampling of the criminals under the feet of elephants, and tearing out eyes, etc., were not allowed. Capital punishment is also said to have been discontinued. These reforms were applicable only to the Muslims. The Hindus were subjected to the old code.

Taxation.

Feroze's administration, on the whole, was very mild. The Sultan did not exact undue taxes from the people. He was very solicitous of the welfare of his people, particularly, the peasants. The practice of charging forced loans and benevolences from the rich subjects and governors was given up. No new taxes were imposed, and many of the old, vexatious taxes charged during the previous reigns were abolished. As he governed according to Islamic ideals, he charged only four taxes allowed by the Islamic law, namely, *Zakat*, *Khanis*, *Kharaj* and *Jiziya*. The condition of the people improved considerably. According to the

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chronicler Shams-i-Siraj Afif "the homes of the ryots were replete with grain, property, horses and furniture; every one had plenty of gold and silver, no woman was without her ornaments and no house was wanting in excellent beds and couches. Wealth abounded and comforts were general."* Mild taxation led to growth of agriculture and every small patch of land came under cultivation. Prices of various commodities came down, lower than those of Ala-ud-din Khalji's times. Shams-i-Siraj Afif mentions the following rates: (In *jitals* per maund) wheat—(8); Barley—(4); Grain—(4); *Dal* 10 seers for one *jital*: Ghee one seer for 2½ *jitals* and sugar 1 seer for 3½ *jitals*. Thus mild taxation led to the prosperity of the people.

Currency.

The Sultan also improved the system of coinage. He is said to have introduced gold and silver coins in greater numbers. Half and quarter *jitals* of mixed copper and silver were struck for use by the poorer classes. The design and finish of the coins was considerably improved.

Agriculture.

The Sultan did a lot to improve agriculture and ameliorate the general condition of the peasants. He levied light taxes which encouraged peasantry. Canals were dug and wells sunk which considerably extended the area under cultivation. These measures increased appreciably the production of food. During the time of Feroze there were no famines.

Canals.

Feroze deserves great credit for his irrigation works. He is credited with digging a number of canals and hundreds of wells. One of his canals was cut off from the river Sutlej. This irrigated some districts of Southern Punjab. Another was taken off from the river Jumna and irrigated districts of Karnal and Rohtak. A third canal was constructed from the river Ghaggar to irrigate the districts of Hissar, Hansi and parts of Bikaner. A large staff was employed for the supervision and maintenance of these canals. His officers possessed considerable engineering skill. These canals were

*Elliot and Dawson, Vol. III, p. 290.

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beneficial to the cultivators as well as the state because it brought larger revenues by irrigation cess and increased production.

Works of Public Utility.

Feroze Tughlak was a great builder. He opened a public works department known as *Diwan-i-Vazarat* to plan and superintend cultivation works. The Sultan founded many new cities among whom the most important were Ferozabad, near Delhi, Kotla Feroze Shah, Hissar Feroza, Fatehabad and Jaunpore. The Sultan was also found of laying out large and beautiful gardens. It is said that he laid out about 1200 new gardens round about Delhi. These gardens were irrigated by his canals. Besides adding to the beauty of the capital the gardens brought in large income about Rs. 100,000 yearly. The Sultan also removed to Delhi and preserved the two pillars of Asoka from Meerut and Topra in Ambala District. The Sultan was responsible for the construction of many beautiful mosques, monasteries, colleges, schools, libraries, caravan serais and bridges. Some free hospitals and dispensaries for the good of the people were also opened. About his building activities the Sultan once remarked: "Among the many gifts which God bestowed upon me, his humble servant, was a desire to erect public buildings. So I built many mosques and colleges and monasteries, so that the learned and the elders, the devout and the holy, might worship God in these edifices, and aid the kind builder with their prayers."

Marriage and Unemployment.

Feroze was a benevolent ruler. He wanted to relieve as much human misery as he possibly could. He, therefore, took interest in the private difficulties of the individuals. He started a regular department, known as '*Diwan-i-Khairat*' to distribute charity according to the needs of the individuals. He assisted the poor at the time of marriages of their daughters. His employment offices served as Employment Exchange Offices of the present day.

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Slave Department.

Compassionate and kind-hearted as the Sultan was, he went out of his way in patronising the slaves. He opened a special department where about 180,000 slaves were fed and clothed free, some of those slaves were employed in palaces while others were trained in various vocations. The motive of the Sultan was to be kind to human beings. The idea of converting them to Islam was another consideration. The maintenance of the slave department meant a heavy drain on the central exchequer.

Religious Policy.

The Sultan was a devout Muslim. He wanted to rule over the state in accordance with the tenets of Islam and dictates of the Maulvis. In this respect he differed from Ala-ud-din Khalji and Muhammad Tughlak who had made great efforts to free the state from theocracy. He played into the hands of the crafty and ambitious *Ulema* who made the Sultan bigoted in his religious outlook. The Hindus were given a position of inferiority and *jizia* was reimposed. Forcible conversions to Islam were encouraged. The Hindus were excluded from public appointments. Even the Shias were not spared and they were treated as heretics. Hindu temples were destroyed. According to Dr. V. A. Smith, "it was not possible for Feroze Shah to rise like Akbar to the conception that the ruler of Hindustan should cherish all his subjects alike."

Army.

As already pointed out, the Sultan had revived *jagirdari* system. Thus the military organisation of the Sultan was based on feudalism. Large grants of lands were made to the feudal lords for the maintenance of troops. The irregulars known as *ghairwajah* were paid directly by the state. Those soldiers who were neither paid by the feudal lords nor by the state were paid by transferable assignments on the revenue. These assignments were purchased by middlemen at one-third of their value and these were sold to the soldiers at one-half. Thus these middlemen made gains at the cost of these soldiers. The state army consisted of 80,000 cavalry, but this number continued to fluctuate. The Sultan impaired the efficiency of the army by allowing

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old and infirm persons to continue in service. Inefficiency was further increased by his issuing a new directive that a retiring soldier could give his place to a son, son-in-law, cousin, nephew or a slave. This system of allowing a substitute without consideration of fitness was harmful. The feudal basis of army proved very injurious to the growth of the state in later years.

Estimate of Firoze Tughlak.

Feroze Tughlak was essentially a man of peace. His reign stands in contrast to the reigns of previous monarchs. Whereas rulers like Ala-ud-din Khalji and Muhammad Tughlak stood for conquests and aggression Firoze Tughlak diverted his attention to giving the people maximum happiness and prosperity. Firoze hated war. He had no zeal to fight against even the rebels. He appears to have made no serious efforts to keep strong control over Bengal or Sind. His reign did not witness any great military expeditions. Feroze took delight in relieving human misery. The failure of the various schemes of Muhammad Tughlak had caused a lot of suffering to the people. He adopted such measures as made the life of the people happier. The oppening of marriage bureaus and employment exchange, the construction of canals and wells, the establishment of free hospitals, dispensaries and caravan serais, reform of penal code and abolition of vexatious taxes, all contributed materially to the welfare of the people. He also promoted education and learning by starting schools, colleges and libraries and liberally patronising men of letters.

Some of the reforms of Feroze were of doubtful expediency. The revival of *jagirdari* system was highly impolitic and it ultimately accelerated the process of the disintegration of the Tughlak dynasty. Similarly the establishment of the slave department was also a harmful institution, because it encouraged idleness besides being a source of heavy drain on the treasury. The system of allowing a retiring soldier to give his place to any one he liked without consideration of fitness, was open to strong objection. The Sultan possessed the virtues of kindliness, compassion and sympathy but their application was mis-

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directed. Like Humayun the clemency of Feroze stood in the way of efficiency.

Another weak point in Feroze's administration was his fanaticism. He did not allow freedom of worship to the Hindus. The state was made subservient to the church. He was equally hard upon Shias who were treated as heretics. Under him government took on a predominantly theocratic character.

Thus Feroze was not successful as a king. The empire shrank in size and the position of the king also lost much of its prestige. His qualities of mercy deserve praise but he has been unduly praised by historians. He was a mediocre king with no flair for greatness.

Death, 1388.

Feroze Tughlak died in 1388 at the ripe age of 80. His last days were clouded by troubles. His eldest son had died in 1374. The relations between his younger son, Prince Muhammad and his minister Khan-i-Jahan Maqbul, were not happy. The disintegration of the empire started even during his lifetime because his reforms lacked permanence. Thus the reign of Feroze came to a close in "mingled sunshine and cloud."

Khah-i-Jahan Maqbul.

A word about the life and work of the great minister of Feroze, Khan-i-Jahan Maqbul would not be out of place here. Maqbul was originally a Hindu of Telingana. He was converted to Islam under Muhammad Tughlak who took a special fancy for the man. Muhammad Tughlak soon made him a fiefholder. Feroze Tughlak made him his prime minister and conferred on him the title of Khan-i-Jahan. Like Malik Kafur, Maqbul became indispensable for the Sultan and during his absence he always acted as regent. He was very useful to the Sultan and served him very faithfully and efficiently. His timely help to the sultan when he was caught up in the Rann of Cutch during his Sind expedition shows the resourcefulness, efficiency and loyalty of the minister. If Feroze could rule in peace, the credit should go to

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Maqbul. He was in the same relation to Feroze as Balban was to Nasir-ud-din.

Though a great man, the minister had many weaknesses. He was a debauch and maintained a large *harem* of 2,000 women. He soon became very ambitious and haughty. In spite of these weaknesses Khan-i-Jahan Maqbul was a great man and deserves praise for his great qualities. He died in 1376 and his son, Juna Shah, was made Khan-i-Jahan.

The later Tughlaks and the Invasion of Timur, 1398

Nasir-ud-din, 1390—94 A.D.

Muhammad, the eldest surviving son of Feroze, occupied the throne under the title of Nasir-ud-din in 1390. The new Sultan took steps to curtail the power of the nobles. He received useful help from the Hindus of Mewat and more particularly from a Hindu chief named Rai Sarwar. He could not manage the affairs of the State well. There was confusion and disorder everywhere. Rebellions took place in Gujrat and Rajputana.

Mahmud Tughlak 1394—1412.

Nasir-ud-din was succeeded by his son Humayun, who died in a short time. The throne was seized by his brother a minor, under the title of Mahmud Tughlak. This prince was weak and inefficient and was a mere puppet in the hands of his mighty nobles. Powerful factions grew at the court, all of which openly disregarded the authority of the king.

One by one the various provincial governors declared their independence. The minister Khawaja Jahan Malik Sarwar founded an independent state in Jaunpur and controlled Bihar and Oudh. He assumed the title of Sultan-i-Sharq or the King of the East in 1394. Muzaffar Khan of Gujrat and Dilawar Khan Ghori of Malwa in 1396 and Nasir Khan of Khandesh in 1399 declared their independence. There was trouble in the north also, where the Khokhars revolted.

Nusrat Khan

Nusrat Khan, another grandson of Feroze, claimed the throne of Delhi. He was supported by some selfish nobles who wanted to

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fish in troubled waters. The rival set himself up in Ferozabad near Delhi. It was only after a protracted struggle lasting three years that Mahmud could suppress him with the help of his powerful noble, Iqbal Khan, who for all practical purposes became the king-maker. Iqbal Khan became the *Vazir in* 1398.

Invasion of Timur.

It was at this critical juncture when the country was torn by internal struggle that the Timur invaded India in 1398. Timur or Timur Lang (Timur the Lame) or Tamerlane, was a descendent of the much-dreaded Chingiz Khan. He invaded India after conquering Khorasan, Afghanistan, Sistan and Persia, and Iraq. Most probably Timur had heard of the military weakness of the Indian empire. He sent his grandson Pir Muhammad in advance to guage the situation. Pir Muhammad conquered Uch and Multan. Timur himself came soon after and overran the whole of the Punjab after feeble resistance by the local governors. Timur advanced upto Delhi almost unopposed. The Sultan marched against the enemy, but was easily routed and he sustained heavy losses. Mahmud Tughlak fled away from Delhi and Timur entered the city and was proclaimed as the emperor of India. The city was given over to massacre, rape and rapine for five days. Thousands of people were put to the sword and property worth millions was looted and burnt. Timur seized immense booty and thousands of slaves and skilled workers. On his way back "the scourge of God", as Timur is known, subdued Meerut, destroyed Hardwar and reduced Jammu. He made Sayyid Khizar Khan, the Tughlak governor of Lahore, his lieutenant in India. He retired in March, 1399.

Effects of Timur's invasion.

Timur, like Mahmud of Ghazni and Chingiz Khan was a mere raider. Like Mahmud he came to India, not with a view to conquering India, but for plundering it. As such his invasion could not be said to have produced any important results.

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Perhaps the most important effect was the liquidation of the Tughlak empire. The weak and inefficient Sultan Mahmud ran away from Delhi giving up all vestige of authority. This encouraged the already rebellious governors to shed off all traces of allegiance to Delhi. Kanauj, Oudh, Multan, Sindh, Dipalpur, Biana, Samana and other provinces became completely independent. Timur's invasion also encouraged the various Rajput princes to regain independence. Mewar, Gwalior and Marwar were the first to throw off the yoke of Muslim rule.

1. Sounded death-knell of the Tughlak dynasty.

Timur's invasion caused social and economic confusion of the worst type. Cities and people were destroyed. Men, women and children were taken away as slaves. Property was looted. It left anarchy, pestilence and famine behind it and "inflicted more misery on India than had ever been inflicted by any conqueror in a single invasion."

2. Caused confusion.

The city of Delhi suffered most. It was in worst chaos and confusion. There was no government in the city for over two months. Thousands died of pestilence and disease. Business came to a standstill and life and property were at the mercy of the freebooters. Crops were destroyed and those who survived the terrible holocaust, died of hunger and distress. It was after a long time that Vazir Iqbal Khan regained possession of Delhi and some sort of government was created. In 1401 he persuaded the fugitive King Mahmud to return to Delhi, because he thought that "the prestige of the fugitive Mahmud Shah would be useful to him."

3. Dislocation of Delhi.

The invasion brought to the forefront the Sayyids. On his return Timur had appointed Khizr Khan, his deputy in India. This man consolidated his position and after sometime assumed sovereignty and laid the foundation of the

4. Rise of Sayyids.

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Sayyid Dynasty which ruled over Northern India for a while.

5 Contact with Central Asia.

Timur's invasion established communication between India and Central Asia. Merchants and traders from Samarqand began to come to India freely.

6. Forerunner of Mughal invasion.

This led to the growth of trade and commerce. This contact can explain to some extent the easy access of the Mughals to India about one hundred years later.

7. Spread of Indian Art.

Timur had carried away many Indians as slaves. Among them were some fine workmen and artisans well versed in various Indian arts and crafts. They applied Indian style of architectuae while constructing new buildings for their masters.

8. Hindu aminosity and awakening.

Invasion can also be said to have increased bitterness between the Hindus and the Muslims because Timur destroyed Hindu temples, carried away Hindus and looted their property. The Hindus began to hate the Muslims intensely and this feeling of animosity led to some awakening among them. Some of the Rajput princes made up their mind to oppose the Muslim "*Mlechhas*" tooth and nail. In this way the slumbering Hindu nation was awakened to action.

End of the Tughlaks.

After Timur's invasion, Sultan Mahmud, became a mere puppet in the hands of his minister Mallu Iqbal Khan. The empire shrank in size. It was just a skeleton of its former self. The powerful minister tried his best to regain some of the lost territories. He attacked Jaunpore, where Ibrahim Shah had assumed sovereignty. While he had gone there, the puppet emperor fled away to Kanauj and established himself there. Mallu attacked him but failed. Mallu next proceeded to the Punjab to fight against Khizar Khan, the Sayyid ruler, but was defeated and slain in 1405. Hearing this Mahmud came to Delhi. But the empire was now breaking up. with

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terrific speed. The process of disintegration could not be checked. A loyal soldier, Daulat Khan Lodhi, rendered the Sultan useful service in regaining some lost territories, but these efforts were of no avail. Mahmud died in 1412 at Kaithal and with him, in the words of Ferishta "fell the kingdom of Delhi from the race of the Turks, who had mightily swayed the sceptre for more than two centuries."

Causes of the fall of the Tughlak Empire.

The fall of the Tughlak Empire was no surprise. Even during the reign of Muhammad Tughlak the people had turned against the empire. The nobles were hostile to it as ever. The benevolent rule of Feroze checked the growing animosity of the people to some extent, but as he lacked military skill and was too timid and docile effectively to check the centrifugal tendencies, the empire began to break up even in his own life-time. Bengal and Sind became virtually independent. The Hindus were hostile because of the fanatical policy followed by Feroze. The revival of *Jagirdari* system carried in it the germs of the disintegration of the empire. The theocratic character of the State under Feroze adversely affected its efficiency; and the influence of the *Mullahs* and the *Muftis* proved disastrous in the long run."

The ease-loving succeeding Sultans, their lack of experience and military skill, all greatly helped the process of the downfall of the Tughlak empire.

Lastly, Timur's invasion, struck the final blow. It hastened the fall of the empire by creating confusion, anarchy, disorder and the worst social and economic upheaval that the country had not witnessed for long. In the ensuing chaos the provincial governors assumed independence, and brought about the collapse of the Tughlak rule.

QUESTIONS

1. "Muhammad Tughlak was a genius with a share of that madness to which great wit is nearly allied and his character was a strange medley of the most contradictory qualities' Discuss the character of Muhammad Tughlak in the light of the above statement.

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2. Is it correct to call Muhammad Tughlak a mad man and monster of cruelty ?

3. Muhammad Tughlak has been called a transcendent failure. Discuss.

4. Discuss the important administrative measures of Muhammad Tukhlak. What conclusious do you draw from these about the charac ter of the Sultan ?

5. "Feroze is well-known in history for his administrative reforms; but he had nothing of the ability, intrepidity and vigour of Ala-ud-din Khalji or Muhammad Tughlak." Discuss.

6. Give details of the internal administration of Sultan Feroze Tughlak and show how he ranks among the important rulers of Delhi.

7. Smith compares Feroze Shah Tughlak with Asoka and Akbar. What was in common among these rulers ?

8. Examine critically the character and achievements of Feroze. Was his leniency and clemency responsible for the downfall of the Tughlak Dynasty ?

9. Describe the invasion of India by Timur. What were the effects of the invasion ?

10. Give an account of the political condition of India cn the eve of Timur's invasion.

11. Draw a map of India to illustrate the political geography of the country in 1398. Mark in it the route of Timur's inroad and return.

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CHAPTER XII

THE SAYYIDS AND THE LODHIS
1414-1526 A.D.

The Sayyids, 1414-51 A.D.

First Sayyid ruler Khizr Khan, 1414-21.

It has been mentioned before that the last of the Tughlak rulers, Mahmud was held by his faithful minister Daulat Khan Lodhi, an Afghan noble of the court. After the death of Mahmud in 1413, the nobles chose him as their leader. He did not assume sovereignty. He tried hard for about a year to bring round the provincial governors and fief-holders but without success. Meanwhile Khizr Khan, the deputy of Timur in India, who was the Governor of Lahore and Multan, captured Delhi and took Daulat Khan prisoner. Khizr Khan thus became the king of Delhi. He was the first Sayyid Monarch.

Khizr Khan had to face many difficulties on coming to the throne. The Afghans as well as the Turks were against him. Moreover there was little respect for law and order. His revenues were also very meagre. He made heroic efforts to evolve some sort of administration out of the prevailing confusion. With the help of his able minister Taj-ul-Mulk, he was able to subdue Rohilkhand, Doab and Gwalior, etc. He died in 1421 without creating better conditions.

Mubarak Shah, 1421-34.

The task of consolidation was left to his son, Mubarak Shah. He quelled rebellions in Sirhind, Lahore, the Doab, Rohilkhand and Mewat. He also repulsed an attack by the ruler of Jaunpur. The Sultan was assassinated in 1434 A.D. Mubarak Shah was successful in establishing his authority over considerable territory.

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Sultan Muhammad, 1434-45.

Muhammad succeeded Mubarak Shah. The new Sultan was a mere puppet in the hands of his perfidious *Vazir*, Sarwar-ul-Mulk. Sarwar was soon supplanted by his rival Kamal-ul-Mulk. The new minister was not good administrator. He gave himself up to a life of ease and luxury. This led to many rebellions in the country, Delhi, Malwa, Jaunpur and Rajputana. The Rajput ruler Kumbha marched on Delhi. The Sultan was panic-stricken. He would have fled away from his capital, had not the Governor of Lahore, Bahlol Lodhi come to his assistance. After the retirement of the Rajput chief Bahlol himself became a source of danger. Bahlol was the master of the Punjab and was much more powerful than the Sultan. He besieged Delhi but had to return without achieving his object. Muhammad died in 1445.

Ala-ud-din, 1445-51.

Ala-ud-din, who succeeded Muhammad, was a weak and inefficient ruler. Bahlol now got an excellent opportunity to try the conquest of Delhi. He attacked the capital in 1447, but once again his attempt failed. These repeated attacks forced the Sultan to shift his capital to Badaun. Hamid Khan, minister of Ala-ud-din, proved treacherous. He invited Bahlol to occupy the throne of Delhi, which he did in 1451. Ala-ud-din acquiesced in the usurpation and contented himself by retaining the fief of Badaun. Thus the Sayyid dynasty came to an end, yielding place to the Lodhi Afghans.

The Lodhis, 1451-1526 A. D.

Bahlol Lodhi, 1451-89.

The first Lodhi Monarch, Bahlol was a man of sterner stuff than the timid and nincompoop Sayyids. He had made his mark as a governor even before he became the Sultan of Delhi. Bahlol also commanded in respect of the Afghan chiefs.

The task before Bahlol was by no means easy. After the migration of Ala-ud-din to Badaun the empire of Delhi had ceased to exist. Bahlol proved himself equal to the task. He took vigorous action against the king of

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Jaunpur. He also reduced the power of the Rajput chief of Alwar. In short his reign of 33 years was marked by the successful subjugation of enemies. He was a pious and kind-hearted man. He did not care for pomp and show. He thought "it was enough for him that the world knew that he was a king without his making a vain parade of royalty".

Sultan Sikandar, 1489-1517

Bahlol was succeeded by his son Nizam Shah, who took the title of Sultan Sikandar. The new Sultan was as energetic as his father. He put down the rebellion of his brother in Jaunpur, and extended his domination over Bihar and Banaras in 1495. He also created better relations with the ruler of Bengal. He failed in controlling the turbulent Afghan chiefs. In order to keep effective check on some eastern parts of his empire like Etawah and Gwalior, he shifted his capital to Agra.

Sikandar was a good and enlightened ruler. He organised an efficient system of administration. He was benevolent and just. The growing power of the nobles was reduced by him. He was fanatical and he treated the Hindus harshly. Their temples were destroyed and forcible conversions to Islam were made. Under him the state became theocratic, which ultimately led to the weakening of the king's authority. All things considered Sikandar can be called the best of the Lodhi rulers.

Ibrahim Lodhi, 1517-26.

After Sikandar his son, Ibrahim came to the throne. Ibrahim, besides being weak and indolent, was also rude and haughty.

He was a headstrong and vain person. The nobles were soon alienated from him. Since the time of Bahlol the nobles had increased their powers enormously. Like the Tudor chiefs in England, the nobles refused to submit to the haughty ruler. The tussle resulted is open rebellions throughout the country. The nobles placed on the throne of Jaunpur his younger brother, Jalal. Jalal took the title of Sultan with the help of Azim Humayun, the Governor of Kalinjar. He was soon deserted by his nobles and had to seek refuge in Gwalior. He was later

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on captured and put to death. This rebellion made Ibrahim all the more ruthless and haughty. He insulted Humayun which frightened the other nobles. Darya Khan, the Governor of Bihar, openly revolted. His son, Muhammad, who succeeded him, struck coins in his own name. Ibrahim's uncle, Daulat Khan Lodhi, revolted and he even invited Babar, the Mughal, to invade India. The imperial troops were defeated by Maharana Sanga of Mewar.

Babar who had already captured the whole of Afghanistan had ambitions of expanding towards the east. Even before the invitation was extended to him he had raided the borders of India a number a times. In 1524 he advanced upon Lahore and after capturing it went back to Kabul. Daulat Khan who had planned to become an independent king himself, turned out Babar's lieutenants from the Punjab. Babar could not atonce come to the Punjab to chastise the Daulat Khan because he was engaged in fierce struggle against the Uzbegs. He came early in 1526 to secure the submission of Daulat Khan and to proceed further. This was his fateful expedition to India which made him the ruler of the country. After conquering the Punjab he marched upon Delhi. He met Ibrahim Lodhi in the famous plain of Panipat in April 1526. Ibrahim was defeated and slain on April 29, 1526. Babar thus became the first ruler of India and assumed the title of *Padshah*. The Sultanate of Delhi came to an end in 1526.

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CHAPTER XIII

THE PROVINCIAL KINGDOMS OF NORTHERN INDIA

Disintegration of the empire of Delhi.

The mighty structure of the Sultanate of Delhi had begun to crumble by the middle of the 14th century. In the beginning of Muhammad Tughlak's reign the boundaries of the Sultanate embraced almost the whole of the country barring a few small states, notably Orissa and Rajputana. The failure of the Sultan's administration and ensuing general discontent led the two distant states of the south, Telingana and Vijayanagar to declare their independence. The process of disintegration continued through the latter part of Muhammad Tughlak's reign. By the time of the Sultan's death (1351) the authority of Delhi had almost vanished from the South. The mighty Bahmani Kingdom had come into existence by that time. At about the same time Bengal also became independent. It was clear that unless a strong man came to the throne the centrifugal tendencies in the Sultanate could not be checked. Feroze was no soldier. He made frantic efforts to recover Bengal, Sind and Gujrat. He could only get nominal submission of the rebels. The reign of Feroze witnessed the loosening of imperial control. As soon as he died (1388) there were mass defections in all directions. The invasion of Timur further accelerated the process. At the opening of the fifteenth century the empire of Delhi was reduced to a skeleton. Gujrat, Jaunpur, Malwa, Khandesh, the Doab, Rohilkhand, and the Punjab seceded from Delhi one after another. Throughout the fifteenth century this process of dismemberment continued unabated. It was Babar (1526—30) who after putting an end to some of these states once again unified the country under one central authority.

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One thing that deserves special notice is the fact that the decline of the Sultanate of Delhi did not affect the domination of the Muslims. It was only in the hills, Rajputana and Vijayanagar that Hindus could assert themselves, otherwise in the whole of India, the Muslims remained in power. On the other hand, the growth of these independent Muslim states strengthened the Muslim domination because the new rulers were able and strong men. Some of the Hindu states were engaged in continuous struggle against their Muslim neighbours.

Bengal

Bengal was first conquered by a general of Muhammad Ghori, Muhammad Bakhtiyar Khalji in the beginning of the 13th century. As Bengal is very far off from Delhi, it was always very difficult for the succeeding Sultans to keep it under effective control. Bakhtiyar's rule extended from Bihar to the river Brahmputra with his capital at Lakhnauti (Gaur). There were rebellions in Bengal in the times of Iltutmish and Balban. From 1282 to 1331 the province witnessed orderly government because Bughra Khan, the younger son of Balban, and his family held sway over Bengal. Gias-ud-din Tughlak was able to assert the authority of Delhi, but it was short-lived. During the last years of Muhammad Tughlak's reign a Muslim officer. Malik Ilyas, made himself independent in Bengal. Feroze Tughlak failed to subdue him. Ilyas's successors ruled over Bengal till 1407 when a Hindu. Raja Kans, held sway till 1414. His son and grandson embraced Islam. It is possible that they were responsible for large-scale conversions of Hindus to Islam, resulting in Muslim domination. The successors of Kans were supplanted by a descendant of Ilyas. Bengal was then ruled by a line of Abyssinians. In 1493 the throne passed to the Sayyids. The first of the Sayyids was Husain Shah, 1493—1518, who was a great ruler. He was succeeded by his son Nusrat Shah who was equally great. He was murdered in 1533. Five years later the famous Afghan Sher Shah Suri conquered Bengal. The Afghans held sway till they were defeated by Akbar. The Muslim rulers of Bengal were

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enlightened princes. They were great patrons of art and literature. They were responsible for the regeneration of the Bengali language which had been neglected by the Hindu rulers who patronised Sanskrit. Nusrat Shah ordered the translation of Mahabharata into Bengali. Ramayana was also rendered into Bengali by the poet Krittivasa. The Bhagvata Gita was translated by Maladhar Vasu. The great Bengali poet Vidyapati lived at Nusrat Shah's court.

Jaunpur

Jaunpur in Oudh, became the headquarters of the *Sharqi* dynasty. The city of Jaunpur was built in 1360 by Feroze Tughlaq in memory of his predecessor (Jauna). It was situated in the Hindu-dominated area. Malik Sarwar founded the kingdom of Jaunpur in 1394. He established his authority over Oudh, the Gangetic Doab as far west as Koil (Aligarh) and in the east over Trihut and Bihar. Mubarak Shah ascended the throne on Sarwar's death in 1399. During his reign the Delhi Sultans made unsuccessful attempts to subjugate Jaunpur. The various rulers of Jaunpur were continuously at war with Malwa and with the Lodhis. Ibrahim Shah Mahmud and Muhammad came to the throne one after another. The last-named ruler was violent and capricious. He was replaced by his brother Husain, an ambitious ruler. After conquering Orissa and Gwalior, he advanced on Delhi but was defeated by Bahlol Lodhi, in 1476. Jaunpur was occupied and annexed to Delhi.

Although the *Sharqi* Kingdom lasted for less than a hundred years, it gave to the people prosperity and all-round progress. A number of beautiful buildings were erected by them. The most famous of these being Atala mosque at Jaunpur. Their style of architecture shows a pleasing combination of strength and refinement, and like Fatehpur Sikri, the mingling of the Hindu and the Muslim styles. Contemporary writers have showered praise on the prosperity and grandeur of Jaunpur, which was called "Shiraz of the East".

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Kashmir

Kashmir, the loveliest and most natural spot in the world remained immune from Muslim control for a considerable time. Practically no Muslim invader or conqueror entered the beautiful valley till the middle of the fourteenth century. "If the valley escaped being annexed by the Muhammadan rulers of India, it was due to its natural isolation and the physical difficulties its conquest offered rather than to its military strength and abundance of resources".* From time to time, a Muslim adventurer would enter its boundaries for loot but none could penetrate into the interior. In 1338 the last Hindu ruler was supplanted by a Muslim adventurer, Shah Mir. Under him and his successors Islam gradually spread, and the majority of the ignorant, poor and peaceful Kashmiris were converted to Islam. Twelve of Shah Mir's descendants came to the throne, The most famous of these was Sikandar, the Idol Breaker, 1386—1410 A. D. Sikandar greatly encouraged conversions to Islam. Most of the Hindu temples were destroyed and many Brahmins converted. Today the Muslims in Kashmir constitute about 80% of the population. It is the result of these mass scale conversions. Under his successor Zain-ul-Abidin the valley got relief. He was tolerant and merciful. Because of his high ideals he has been called the "Akbar of Kashmir." He ruled from 1421 to 1472. After his death confusion prevailed in Kashmir and Mirza Haidar Dolghat, a cousin of Babar, conquered Kashmir. He ruled over it on behalf of Humayun till 1551. After passing through various vicissitudes the valley passed under Mughal control in 1586 A. D. Henceforth the valley became a favourite resort of the romantic Mughal emperors.

Sind and Multan

Sind has remained aloof from Indian politics. After the Arab conquest, the succeeding rulers of Sind claimed to represent the Caliphs. In 1010 it was conquered by

*R. C. Kak: An Outline of the History of Kashmir (in *A Guide to Kashmir Monuments*).

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Mahmud of Ghazni and remained under the authority of his dynasty till 1053 when the Sumras, a local Rajput clan, converted to Islam, seized power. They ruled over Sind for about 300 years till 1351. They were subject to frequent attacks by the Sultans. Nasir-ud-din Qubaicha held sway there for long and so did Muhammad and Feroze Tughlak. In 1351 Sumras were replaced by Sammahs, who claimed descent from the Jam of Jamshid. The Sammahs were supplanted by the Arghuns, who probably were connected with Chingiz Khan. The Arghuns were driven out by Akbar in 1592 when he annexed Sind.

Multan remained attached to the empire of Delhi ever since Iltutmish defeated Nasir-ud-din Qubaicha in 1228 to the invasion of Timur in 1398. It broke away completely from Delhi in the time of the Sayyids and came under the rule of the Langahs who were Arabs. The last Langah was overthrown by Shah Hussain Arghun of Sind in 1525. Humayun annexed Multan to the Mughal Empire.

Gujrat

Gujrat is a very rich and prosperous territory. It attained its independence when Muzaffar Shah, the Governor, withdrew his allegiance in 1401. Its real founder was Ahmad Shah who ruled from 1411 to 1441. He was a good and successful administrator, who established his sway over the whole of Gujrat and defeated his neighbours, the sultans of Malwa and the chiefs of Rajputana. His grandson, sultan Mahmud Begara, was the most eminent king of Gujrat. He ruled from 1458 to 1511. He defeated many Rajput chiefs. He interfered in the affairs of Malwa, Khandesh, Sindh and the Deccan. Towards the close of his reign he came in conflict with the Portuguese who had established themselves on the western coast of India. Mahmud died full of glory in 1517 after ruling for 52 years. Bigarah's son, Muzaffar Shah II (1511—26) made supreme efforts to protect the Muslim King of Malwa from being overrun by the Rana of Mewar Sangram Singh, who even threatened to invade Gujrat. Bahadur Shah, who succeeded Muzaffar was the

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last ruler of Gujrat. He ruled from 1526—37. He conquered Malwa in 1531, captured Chittor in 1533 and also defeated the Portuguese in Dui. Humayun attacked Gujrat in 1535. Bahadur Shah fought bravely against the Mughals but was unfortunately drowned off Dui in 1537. Gujrat was annexed by Akbar in 1572.

Gujrat was the home of a beautiful style of architecture "in which the Hindu and Muslim styles of architecture were exquisitely blended". They developed most delicate workmanship in stone. Gujrat was also noted for weaving industry.

Malwa

After Timur's invasion Malwa became independent under Dilawar Khan. In 1405 his son, Hushang ascended the throne. Malwa and Gujrat were constantly at war with each other. Malwa did not gain anything out of these wars, Malwa also came in conflict with Delhi, Jaunpur and the Deccan. Dilawar's minister, Mahmud seized the throne in 1436. His dynasty ruled for about one hundred years. Mahmud ruled successfully, defeating Rana Kumbha and other Rajput princes. In 1510, Mahmud Shah II made himself king with the help of Medini Rai of Chanderi. Medini Rai became very influential in Malwa and his domination was resented by Muslim officers and the king of Gujrat. When the king of Gujrat attacked Malwa, Rana Sanga came to the help of Medini Rai. Mahmud was defeated but reinstated with reduced powers. Bahadur Shah of Gujrat now attacked him and annexed it. In 1535, Humayun conquered Malwa. It was finally annexed in 1562 by Akbar.

Khandesh

Khandesh was the second Muslim State to establish its independence south of the Narbada. It comprised the valley of the Tapti and extended to Berar on the east. Feroze Tughlak entrusted this to one of his followers, Malik Raji Faruqi. Faruqi established his independence by 1399. It was soon overrun by Gujrat. Adil Khan II (1457—1503) struggled hard though unsuccessfully to

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overthrow the yoke of Gujrat. After 1510 there was serious confusion and disorder in Khandesh. Muhammad Bigarah of Gujrat came to its rescue. Slowly the time of Faruqi Kings became extinct. In 1601 Akbar captured Khandesh and its famous fortress, Asirgarh.

The Hindu Principalities of the North

In order to complete the picture of the North some mention of the Hindu states is necessary. The conquest of India by the Turkish Sultans put an end to almost all the Hindu states. Petty Rajput Rajas who made their submission to the Sultans were allowed to rule provided they paid them regular tribute. Their allegiance was neither real nor continuous. It depended upon the personality of the Sultan. If he was weak, the Hindu rulers would assert their independence and cease to pay the tribute. The new Sultan had to reconquer them before they made submission to him. Such were the chiefs of Mewat, the Doab and Katehar (Rohilkhand), etc.

Broadly speaking, there were two belts of territory where independent Hindu rulers ruled. The first belt comprised of regions consisting of the sub-Himalayan states such as Jammu, Kangra, Garhwal, Almora, Nepal and Bhutan. The second region was the territory stretching from the Aravallis on the west to Orissa in the east. This belt was inhabited by the Rajputs who were never completely subdued by any Muslim conqueror. Among these states the most important were Rajputana, Bundelkhand and Gondwana.

Mewar was the most prominent state of Rajputana. It was ruled by the famous Sisodias. In 1303 Ala-ud din Khalji overran the state, but very soon Hamir, the Chief of the Sisodias re-established his independence. The next important ruler was Mokal who greatly extended his dominions at the cost of Muslim principalities. His successor, Kumbha (1433—68) was a very powerful ruler. He captured many new states and gave unity to Rajputana by eliminating small Rajput states. In 1437 he attacked Malwa, defeated its king, Mahmud and took him prisoner. Like a true Rajput he let him off. Mahmud

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tried to retrieve his lost honour by attacking Kumbha many a time, but was defeated. In 1457 the combined forces of Gujrat and Malwa attacked him, but without success.

Kumbha was an accomplished king. He was an artist and poet. He wrote books on music and architecture and produced many dramas. He was also a great builder. The famous tower of victory at Chittor was erected by him to mark his victory over Mahmud. He was unfortunately assassinated by his son Uday Sain in 1468. After Kumbha's death there was confusion and disorder. Uday could not occupy the throne. It went to his younger brother, Rayamal. After Rayamal there was a war of succession among his sons. One of them, Sangram Singh, better known as Rana Sanga, occupied the throne in 1509.

Rana Sanga was the greatest of the Sisodias. He waged constant wars against his enemies and was successful everywhere. He attacked the Lodhis of Delhi and the king of Malwa. The king of Gujrat was defeated, and Ahmadnagar and other towns were plundered by him. This was a great achievement for a Hindu ruler. After centuries of domination, where the plunder and desecration of the Hindu temples and towns was the rule, Sanga turned tables against the tyrants. By 1526, Rana Sanga had become the most powerful ruler of northern India. Any invader of India had to contend against him before he could claim supremacy. Babar in his memoirs acknowledges Sanga's power and prestige and calls him "King of substance". After defeating Ibrahim Lodhi in the battle of Panipat in 1526, Babar made huge preparations to face this seasoned and brave Rajput warrior. So powerful was the Rana that Babar's heart sank at the sight of the Rajput army. The two armies met at the famous plain of Kanwaha in 1527. The Rajputs were defeated because of their old and obsolete methods of warfare. Rana Sanga made another bid for recovering the lost honour, but he was poisoned to death by his nobles who did not want the hostilities to be prolonged. With his death passed away the greatness of Mewar. The spirit of Rana Sanga continued to live among his noble successors, particularly in

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Rana Pratap, who continued relentless struggle against the Mughals.

Another important Hindu principality was Orissa. Because of its exclusive position it did not play an important part in the politics of the country. It continued strong even under the heaviest odds. In 1457 Husain Shah *Sharqi* of Jaunpur invaded it, but he could not subdue it. In 1477 the Bahmani kings attacked it, but could not reduce Orissa completely. It was conquered by Akbar in 1592.

QUESTIONS

1. Describe the political state of India on the eve of Babar's invasion.

2. Draw a map of India to show the political condition of India in the opening of the 16th century.

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CHAPTER XIV

THE BAHMANI KINGDOM

Origin of the Bahmani Kingdom, 1347 A.D.

It has already been observed that the weak and capricious rule of Muhammad Tughlak was responsible for the outbreak of many rebellions in different parts of the country. The distant South was the first to break off from the Tughlak empire.

There was much unrest in the Deccan. In order to keep a strict watch over the affected areas Muhammad Tughlak appointed a Hindu convert, Aziz Himar, his viceroy at Daulatabad. About the same time he summoned two nobles, whose loyalty was doubted, to appear before him. While the two *amirs* were proceeding to Delhi they took counsel together, attacked Daulatabad and occupied it. One of them, an old man, Ismail Makh, became king under the title of Nasir-ud-din. Sultan Muhammand Tughlak attacked Daulatabad; just then a rebellion broke out in Gujrat. Muhammad immediately returned entrusting the work to his generals. The imperial forces were defeated by one of the rebels, Hasan Gangu. Ismail Makh abdicated in favour of Hasan, as he was the fittest man to deal with the difficult situation. Hasan ascended the throne at Daulatabad in 1347, assuming the title of Ala-ud-din Bahman Shah, after the name of Bahman-bin-Isfindyar, the king of Persia, whose follower Hasan was. It is wrong to suppose that the dynasty was given this name after some Brahman master of Hasan Gangu.

After the death of Muhammad Tughlak, his successor, Feroze, had neither the will nor the means to attempt the reconquest of Daulatabad. The infant kingdom was left free to grow. The Bahmani Kingdom extended from Berar in the North to the Tungabhadra in the South.

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From the very beginning territorial disputes arose between the Bahmani Kingdom and its neighbour, the Hindu Vijayanagar empire. Ala-ud-din Bahman Shah divided the Kingdom into four provinces or parts, Gulbarga, Daulatabad, Berar and Bidar. Each of these provinces was under the charge of a governor. The capital of the kingdom was at Gulbarga.

Muhammad Shah I 1358—75.

Ala-ud-din died in 1358 and was succeeded by his eldest son, Muhammad Shah I. The new Sultan had to face many difficulties and had to wage fierce wars against Bukka, the Raya of Vijayanagar. The Raya demanded the restoration of those territories which had been forcibly occupied by Ala-ud-din. Muhammad Shah led an expedition into Telingana, and captured it. The ruler of Warrangal had also to cede to him Golconda. After scoring victories over Telingana and Warrangal, Muhammad Shah came in conflict with Bukka, over the latter's claim of the Raichur Doab which was held by the Sultan. In the battle that followed near Adoni, a fortress South of the Tungabhadra, the Hindus were completely routed in 1367. Incidentally, this was the first occasion when the Muslims employed artillery in India. It was worked by European and Turkish gunners. The Hindu Raya sued for peace and agreed to pay a heavy indemnity. Muhammad died in 1375. During the course of the 17 years of his reign he consolidated the infant Bahmani kingdom.

The Sultan is said to have been diligent and methodical administrator. He placed the central and provincial administration on sound footing. He introduced the practice of divided ministerial responsibility. A cabinet of eight ministers, each incharge of separate departments, was also instituted by him. The various departments were: (1) *Vakil-ul-Sultanat* (regent of the State, (2) *Vazir-i-Kul* (Supervisor-in-General), (3) *Amir-i-Jumla* (Finance Minister), (4) *Vazir-i-Ashraf* (Foreign relations), (5) *Nazir* (Deputy Finance Minister), (6) *Peshwa* (Assistant to Regent of the State), (7) *Kotwal* (Superintendent of Police and Magistrate) and (8) *Sadr-i-*

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Jahan (Chief Justice). This system appears to have been later adopted by Sivaji, who, too, organised a cabinet of eight called *Ashta Pradhan*. This system worked very well and was followed by all his successors to the end of the kingdom.

Mujahid Shah 1373—77.

Muhammad died full of glory in 1373. His son, Mujahid Shah, who succeeded him did not possess the qualities of his father. He was a puritan and followed a ruthless domestic policy. He began to favour the Persians and the Turks. He came in conflict with Bukka Raya over Raichur Doab, but was defeated. He was murdered by his uncle Daud in 1377.

After Mujahid's death there was confusion and disorder. Daud was also murdered by a slave. Mujahid was succeeded by weak rulers, Muhammad Shah II (1378—98), Ghias-ud-din, and Shams-ud-din, who ruled for short periods only. The period was one of confusion and chaos.

Feroze Shah II, 1397—1422.

The situation was saved by a great king, Feroze Shah, who came to the throne in 1397. The new Sultan, eighth in line of succession of the Bahmanis, was one of the most gifted rulers. In his times the kingdom reached its zenith. The territories were fully consolidated and the prosperity and happiness of the people was assured.

The Sultan was highly cultured and accomplished. It is said that the Sultan had a *harem* of 300 women belonging to different nationalities and he could talk to each one of them in her own tongue. Feroze thoroughly reorganised the administrative machinery. He employed Hindus to positions of the trust and responsibility. In his religious policy the Sultan was a bigot. The famous Muslim saint Gisu Daraz, lived under his patronage. Unfortunately the Sultan degenerated into a voluptuous and capricious ruler towards the end of his reign.

Feroze was a great general. He fought thrice against the rulers of Vijayanagar. In 1398 Hari Hazara marched on Raichur Doab to capture the fortress of Mudgal. He was cleverly murdered by one of the nobles of Feroze

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who went to Raya's court disguised as a musician. In 1406 Buka II led an expedition to the fortress of Mudgal. This time cause was not political but romantic. The Raya wanted to marry Nihal, the beautiful daughter of a goldsmith who lived in Mudgal. Nihal did not want to marry a Hindu. The two emperors came in conflict over this issue. Feroze attacked Vijayanagar and defeated the Raya. It is mentioned by Ferishta that Feroze forced the Raya to marry his daughter to him and cede him the territories of Bankapur and other districts in dowery. Nihal was married to the son of Feroze.

Feroze led an unprovoked attack on Pangal in Warrangal. Devaraya II of Vijayanagar sent help to the ruler of Warrangal. Feroze could not face the combined forces and he suffered a defeat. Devaraya continued to march and he would have captured the whole of the Doab, but for the skill and courage displayed by Ahmad Khan, brother of Feroze who forced Feroze to abdicate in his favour. Shortly after this, Feroze died in 1422.

Feroze was a great builder. He built many cities, fortresses and beautiful buildings. A city named Ferozeabad was built by him near Gulbarga. In Gulbarga he constructed many beautiful mosques and other edifices.

Hasan Khan

Feroze was succeeded by his son Hasan Khan. He proved himself to be highly inefficient and weak. He gave himself entirely to the beautiful Nihal. Before long he was replaced by his uncle Ahmad Khan.

Ahmad Shah Wali 1422—1435.

Ahmad Khan, on assuming sovereignty, called himself Ahmad Shah Wali or saint. He renewed struggle with the traditional enemy Devaraya of Vijayanagar in order to wreak vengeance for the humiliation received by his predecessor at Pangal. The fight took place near the banks of the Tungahadra in which the Hindus were routed leaving 20,000 dead. The Hindus, however, once again attacked Ahmad Shah while he was out hunting, but he escaped. This led to the invasion of Vijayanagar by Ahmad. The Hindus sued for peace. They paid heavy indemnity in gold and jewels and the son of the king was

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sent as a hostage. After defeat of Vijayanagar, Ahmad attacked the other two Hindu States of Warrangal and Orissa which had helped Vijayanagar. The ruler of Warrangal was killed and his territories annexed which extended the Bahmani kingdom to the sea. Next, the ruler of Hushang Shah was defeated. He fought against rulers of Kon-Kan and Gujrat, but suffered defeat. After the addition of new territories Gulbarga no longer remained a central place. The capital was shifted to Bidar. The Sultan died in 1435.

Ala-ud-din II, 1435—57.

Ahmad was succeeded by his son Ala-ud-din. His mother raised the standard of rebellion against Ala-ud-din and forced the new sultan to give him Raichur Doab. He, too, fought against Vijayanagar incessantly. The long struggle produced no tangible results. Ala-ud-din conquered Khandesh. He also fought against Kon-Kan. Ala-ud-din was a good ruler and he took steps to promote the welfare of his subjects.

Humayun and Nizam Shah, 1457—1463.

Ala-ud-din was succeeded by his son Humayun, who was intelligent and educated, but was given to excesses of temperament. He was very cruel and inflicted severe tortures on his people. He is called "Humayun the *Zalim*" or tyrant. He died in 1461. His affairs were managed by his able minister Mahmud Gawan and Khwaja Jahan. Humayun was succeeded by his minor son Nizam Shah. The administration was carried on by his mother, Makhduma Jahan with the help of Mahmud Gawan. She was an intelligent lady and carried on the affairs of state well. She made ample amends for the follies of her husband. She could not resist the attack by the king of Malwa, Mahmud Khalji, who plundered the capital in 1462. The king of Gujrat, Mahmud Bigarah was requested for help, but in the meantime the invader was forced to withdraw. Nizam Shah died of heart failure in 1463 and was succeeded by his brother Muhammad Shah III, who was destined to play a very important role in building the Bahmani kingdom.

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Muhammad Shah III, 1463—1482

Muhammad was only nine years old when he came to the throne. The affairs of government were carried on by the dowager Queen as before with the assistance of Mahmud Gawan. This minister had come to the fore after the execution of the minister Khwaja Jahan who was found guilty of embezzlement. Muhammad was married at the age of fourteen and was now freed from the apron strings of his mother.

Muhammad's reign witnessed many important military exploits. In 1467 the ruler of Malwa was subdued. Similarly many cities were recovered from Orissa, Telingana and Vijayanagar. Kokan, Belgaun and Goa were also conquered. Mahmud Gawan attacked the famous temple of Conjeevaram or Kanchi from where he carried away enormous booty. Similarly Masaulipatam was also sacked. Mahmud Gawan was mainly responsible for all these exploits.

Mahmud Gawan.

The account of Muhammad III's reign would be incomplete without the mention of Gawan's life. Mahmud Gawan was a foreigner who hailed from Gawan, a village in Persia. He came to India with a view to trading and visiting the holy places of the Muslims. When he met Ala-ud-din II, he was so much impressed by his talents that he persuaded him to stay on with him. He progressively rose from position to position till he became a minister of Nizam Shah. Later on, after the death of the Chief Minister Khwaja Jahan, he succeeded him to the highest position. Mahmud Gawan was an able minister and intrepid soldier. He conducted the affairs of the kingdom very well. He was also responsible for many important military exploits which brought glory to the Bahmani Kingdom. Under his guidance the kingdom attained the highest successes. Its boundaries now touched the largest area—from Narbada in the North to river Krishna in the South.

Mahmud Gawan introduced a sound system of administration. Dr. Ishwari Prasad says that his vigilant eye supervised all departments. Finances, Education, Police, Justice, Land Revenue and Public Works, were all

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reorganised by him. The provincial administration was modified in such a way that the chances of rebellion by governors were minimised. The power of provincial governors were curtailed. He introduced the system of checks and balances by directly appointing some high provincial officers like Revenue Collectors and Commanders of provincial armies. Thus Mahmud Gawan was largely responsible for the rise of the Bahmani power. Had he not appeared on the scene the tottering Bahmani Empire would have come to an end sooner.

Mahmud Gawan met a tragic end. There were two parties at the court—the Irani and the Deccani, The Deccanis grew jealous of his power. They forged a treasonable letter in Gawan's name and addressed to the ruler of Orissa. It was shown to Muhammad Shah. He was so credulous as to order the execution of his minister who had served him so loyally and well. He was executed on April 5, 1481 and with him departed the glory of the Bahmanis, as the later events were to show.

Mahmud Shah 1482-1512.

Mohammad Shah died in 1482 and was succeeded by his eight-year old son, Mahmud. The boy-king was a worthless lad. The entire administration fell into the hands of his ambitious minister, Amir Barid. The reign of Mahmud was an endless tale of murders, confusion and disorder. The various provincial governors became practically independent. Each one of them made preparations to set himself as an independent chief. It was only the strong hand of Mahmud Gawan that had kept the empire intact. The first to separate were Imad-ul-Mulk in Berar (1484) and Yusuf Adil Khan in Bijapur (1498). Before the death of Mahmud Shah in 1512, almost the whole of the mighty structure fell down like a house of cards. Only Bidar remained under the puppet Bahmani King. Even this was lost under Muhmud's weak successors.

After the separation of Berar and Bijapur other provincial governors followed suit. *Kasim Barid*, a minister of Mahmud Shah became independent at *Bidar*. His son, Amir Barid founded the Barid dynasty. Similarly at *Ahmad Nagar* the *Nizam Shahi* dynasty declared its

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independence in 1498 under the leadership of Malik Ahmad, the son of Nizam-ul-mulk, the leader of the Deccani party. After passing through various vicissitudes of fortune, this state was conquered by Akbar in 1600, when the famous Chand Bibi was its ruler. Qutb-ul-Mulk, the Governor of Telingana, became independent in 1518, established his power at *Golconda*. This state together with Bijapur, was annexed by Aurangzeb in 1687 because the Emperor could not tolerate the existence of these Shia States. Thus by the beginning of the 16th century the Bahmani Kingdom was parcelled out in five independent states of Berar, Bijapur, Golconda, Bidar and Ahmadnagar. The history of these states is largely a record of almost continuous quarrels with one another and with Vijayanagar. With the death of the last ruler Kalimullah Shah in 1527, the Bahmani Kingdom ceased to exist.

Achievements of the Bahmanides.

Between 1347 and 1518 eighteen Bahmanide Kings came to the throne. This period was full of wars and intrigue. The history of the period affords no pleasant reading. "Wars of revenge involving wholesale slaughter of defenceless people, intrigues, palace revolutions and sectarian quarrels filled largely the pages of the history of this dynasty." Dr. V.A. Smith has called the Bahmanide Kings blood-thirsty fanatics and drunken debauches. This is a rather prejudiced account. No doubt, some of them were tyrants and debauches, but there were certain noble and good rulers like Muhammad Shah I and Feroze Shah, etc. They were, however, all uncontrolled despots and were liable to extreme vagaries of temper at times. This was no exception to the times in which they lived. They were all engaged in life and death struggle against the neighbouring state of Vijayanagar and as such they had to be extremely cautious. In order to foster loyalty and create awe, they had to act in a barbarious way when occasion demanded.

The treatment meted out to the Hindus by the Bahmanide rulers was very cruel and severe. They were not eligible to any government post. They were badly treated. As a matter of fact, the Bahmanide rulers exploited even their Muslim subjects. The taxes were

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very oppressive and trade and agriculture were neglected. There were, however, some excellent oases of ordered government in the otherwise arid land of mis-government and tyranny. Making, perhaps, these as his basis, Meadows Taylor remarks about the Bahmanide rule : "In respect of education, the Bahmani kings were liberal for their time.....Colleges existed at the chief cities, all richly endowed. Thus, means of education were free to all who chose to learn Persian or Arabic.....The Hindus it may be presumed were neither assisted nor interfered with and their literature was confined to the Sanskrit language and to its professors Brahmins.....On all these points and in a general amelioration of manner there is no question that the Mohammadan occupation of the Deccan during the existence of the great Bahmani dynasty had not been barren of good effects."*

A Russian traveller and merchant Athanasins Nikitin, who visited the Deccan obout 1470, has left an excellent account of the general condition of the people. From his accounts it appears that the people were living miserable and unhappy lives. He says : "The land is overstocked with people ; but those in the country are very miserable, whilst the nobles are extremely opulent and delight in luxury, they are wont to be carried on their silver beds, preceded by some 20 chargers caparisoned in gold and followed by 300 men on horseback and by 50 on foot, and by hornmen, ten torch-bearers, and ten musicians."

About the kings he says, "The Sultan is a little man, twenty years old, in the power of the nobles...The Sultan goes out hunting with his mother and his lady, and a track of 10,000 men on horseback, 50,000 on foot ; 200 elephants adorned in gilded armour ; and in front 100 horsemen, 100 dancers, and 300 common horses in golden clothing ; 100 monkeys and 100 concubines, all foreign."*

Thus it is clear from the accounts of an unbiassed foreign traveller that the condition of the common people was very bad as compared to the luxurious living of the nobles. This account, however, pertains to one

*Meadows Taylor : History of India (new edition) p. 186.
*Quoted by Dr. V. A. Smith : Oxford History of India p.298.

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particular period only.. From this it can be safely presumed that conditions did not differ materially under other rulers.

One noteworthy achievement of the Bahmanide kings was the development of the style of architecture and construction of many beautiful buildings. Much of their architecture was introduced from abroad. Several of their monuments like the College of Mahmud Gawan at Bidar, tomb of Gisu Daras and the Jami *masjid* at Gulbarga are Persian in style. The forts at Gawilgarh and Narnala are beautiful specimens of mountain fortresses and reflect the Bahmanides grasp of military science.

QUESTIONS

1. Narrate the events that led to the establishment of the Bahmani Kingdom in the Deccan.
2. Give an account of the rise and fall of the Bahmani Kingdom.
3. Trace the rise of the Bahmanide Kingdom, to the death of Mahmud Gawan. What led to its subsequent dismemberment ?
4. What part did Mahmud Gawan play in the rise of the Bahmani Kingdom ?
5. Write notes on :—
   (*i*) Mahmud Gawan.
   (*ii*) Hasan Zafar

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CHAPTER XV

THE VIJAYANAGAR EMPIRE

Ever since the dawn of history the South had remained cut off from the rest of India. Hindu kings like Samudragupta entered the South but that was a very ephemeral phase. Soon after, the South once again reverted to its insulation. The first Muslim to penetrate into the South was Ala-ud-din Khalji. We have seen how Malik Kafur overran the whole of the South, inhabited and ruled by the Hindus, with electric speed. The Hindu rajas were deprived of much of their wealth but they were not dethroned.

Origin of Vijayanagar.

It was, however, the tyranny of Muhammad Tughlak which brought home to the Hindus the true nature of Muslim rule. Muhammad's oppressive rule made the Hindus realise the need for organisation in order to throw off the Muslim yoke. In the words of Robert Sewell, "everything seemed to be leading up to one inevitable end —the ruin and devastation of the Hindu provinces, the annihilation of their old royal houses, the destruction of their religion, their temples and their cities. All that the dwellers in the South held most dear seemed tottering to its fall."* It was this feeling which produced two great leaders—two brothers—Harihar and Bukka, to save the Hindus from the clutches of the Muslim rule. The unpopularity of Muhammad Tughlak and the subsequent disorders all over his empire facilitated their task.

Harihar and Bukka were the sons of one Sangama of Warrangal. The family ran away from Warrangal when it was attacked by the Muslims in 1323. The origin of the

Harihar and Bukka.

*Sewell : *A forgotten Empire*, p. 5.

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family is shrouded in mystery. The concensus of opinion, however, holds that Harihar and Bukka were two feudatories of the Hoysala king. They laid the foundations of their own principality with Vijayanagar, as their capital in 1336. The site selected for the new city was excellent—surrounded by the Hemakuta range on one side and by the might Tungabhadra on the other. The two brothers were inspired in their work, like Sevaji, by their Guru Mahava or Vidyaranya, who constantly kept on dinning into their ears the supreme necessity of protecting the Hindu religion and culture from the Muslim onslaught.

Harihar I, 1336—1353.

Harihar, the founder of the Vijayanagar empire, was a great conqueror. He annexed many territories round about Vijayanagar. Taking advantage of the weakness of the rulet of Anagond in the vicinity of Vijayanagar, the tottering condition of the Hoysala dynasty and disorders at Delhi, he largely extended his dominions from the Krishna to the Kaveri and from sea to sea, He set up sound provincial arrangements by which empire was divided into provinces, each under a reliable governor. Harihar died in 1353 A.D.

Bukka, 1353—1379

Bukka succeeded Harihar. He was an equally great ruler. It was under him that the Vijayanagar empire came in conflict with the Muslim neighbour, the Bahmani kingdom, over the possession of the Raichur Doab. In 1360 he was defeated by Muhammad Shah I. In 1365 the Muslims inflicted another defeat. In 1367 Vijayanagar was besieged and had to sue for peace.

Hari Har II, 1379—1404.

So far the rulers of Vijayanagar had not assumed royal titles. It was Hari Har II, the successor of Bukka who styled himself *Maharajadhiraja*. His reign was marked by a long spell of peace and prosperity. The contemporary Bahmani King was Muhammad Shah, who was a peace-loving king. It, therefore, afforded time to Harihar II to consolidate and reconstruct the work of his predecessors. His general Ganda extended his territories as far as Trichinopoly and Conjeevaram and

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conquered the Keralas, Taluvas, Andhras and Kutkas. He also expelled Muslims from Goa. But the rash act of his son in invading the Doab brought disastrous consequences to the Raya. His chief minister was the scholar, Sayana, the author of a famous Commentary on the Vedas. The Raya was tolerant in religious matters, Harihar died in 1404. His eldests on Bukka II's reign of two years (1404—06) was uneventful.

Deva Raya I, 1406—22.

Deva Raya was the next ruler. His mad love for the beautiful girl Nihal of Mudgal and its consequences have been narrated in the previous chapter. The war ended in humiliation to the Vijayanagar empire. Deva Raya attacked the Bahmani kingdom in 1417 when he was successful. He died in 1422.

Deva Raya II 1424—46.

Deva Raya II, the grandson of Deva Raya I was the next important ruler. He suffered a heavy defeat at the hands of Ahmad Shah, the Bahmani King, in the beginning of his reign. He prepared for a second attack. He won over his Muslim population by adopting a conciliatory policy towards them. It was with their support that he defeated the Bahmanide in the second encounter. But he was defeated agnin in 1443 with heavy losses.

His period is important because it was during his reign that the famous Italian traveller Nicoli Conti, visited India. The Persian Chronicler, Abdur Razzak also visited his dominions. Both of them have left detailed accounts about the contemporary social, economic and religious conditions.

Nicolo Conti.

Nicolo Conti visited Vijayanagar just after the accession of Deva Raya II. He was much impressed by the grandeur of Vijayanagar. He has mentioned about the diamond mines of Golconda. He estimates the army of the Raya at one million. Writing about the social customs of the people he says that polygamy existed and *Sati* was practised. "Their King", says he, "is more powerful than all the other kings of India. He takes to himself 12,000 wives of whom

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4,000 follow him on foot, wherever he may go and are employed solely in the service of the kitchen. A like number, more handsomely equipped, ride on horseback. The remainder are carried by men in litters of whom 2000 or 3000 are selected, as his wives on condition that at his death they should voluntarily burn themselves with him." He has also mentioned some superstitious and peculiar practices of the Hindus.

Abdur Razak.

Abdur Razak visited the court of Deva Raya II about 20 years later *i.e.*, in about 1442 A.D. He was an ambassador from Persia to the court of the Zamorin of Calicut and the Raya. He, too, has left a detailed account about Vijayanagar. He writes, "The city of Bidjanagar, is such that the pupil of the eye has never seen a place like it, and the ear of intelligence has never been informed that there existed anything to equal it in the world." He also mentions that brother of the Raya made an unsuccessful attempt on his life in 1442. In 1443 the Bahmani king attacked Vijaynagar in which the Raya lost his eldest son. Abdur Razak says that foreign trade was flourishing. Art and literature made considerable progress under him."

First and second usurpation.

Not much is known about the reigns of Deva Raya's successors, Malik Arjuna, Virupaksha and a few other weaklings. About their rule Sewell says, "This period was without doubt a troublous one, and all that can be definitely and safely stated at present is that for about forty years prior to the usurpation of Narasimha the kingdom passed from one hand to the other, in the midst of much political agitation, discontent and widespread antagonism to the representatives of the old royal family, several of whom appeared to have met with violent deaths."*

Vijayanagar was attacked by the combined forces of Bahmani Sultan and the Gajapati, king of Orissa. During these expeditions, Vijayanagar lost Goa, Telingana and other districts.

*Sewell : A Forgotten Empire. pp. 97—98.

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The first usurpation took place in 1485, when Narasimha Saluva, a chief of Chandragiri, put an end to the Sangama dynasty by declaring himself the king. Nara-Simha soon became very popular and got unstinted support from the nobles and grandees. He took steps to consolidate the territories and guarded his empire effectively against invaders. He effected many important conquests. He became master of all the country lying from Karnatak to Telingana, along the coast upto Masulipatam. In short the usurper proved himself very efficient and strong. He died in 1498.

Narasimha Saluva was succeeded by his son Immadi Narasimha. He was replaced by another usurper, his general Narasa Nayaka, who belonged to the Tuluvas. This was the second usurpation. Nayaka who ruled till 1503 was an energetic and wise king. He was succeeded by his son Vira Narasimha, who died in 1509.

Krishnadeva Raya, 1509—29.

The Tuluva dynasty, however, is known not for its usurpation but due to the greatness of Krishnadeva Raya, who was perhaps the best king of the empire. During his reign the empire reached its zenith of glory. Krishnadeva Raya was not only a very great conqueror but he was an excellent administrator also. He improved the finances of the empire. He completed many irrigation works with the help of the Portuguese engineers. He was a great patron of art and letters. The great fame of the Raya, however, rests on his splendid conquests. When he came to the throne luckily for the Raya, the Bahmani Kingdom had been split up into five independent principalities of Ahmadnagar, Golconda, Bijapur, Bedar and Berar. In 1520 he gave a crushing defeat to the ruler of Bijapur and recovered from him the much-disputed Raichur Doab. He also defeated the ruler of Orissa and married his daughter. The whole of his territory south of the Krishna was annexed. In this way his empire now extended from Cuttack in the east to Salsette in the west. It now included the whole of the Madras Presidency, Mysore and some parts of the Deccan.

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Describing the greatness of Krishnadeva Raya, the Portuguese Chronicler Domigno Pius says: "He is the most feared and perfect king that could possibly be, cheerful of disposition and very merry....He is a great ruler and a man of much justice, but subject to sudden fits of rage." Krishnadeva Raya's chief minister was Saluva Thimma who served him very loyally and efficiently. The king had full faith in him and looked upon him as his father. He was affectionately called by all Appaji or "Father". Babur has also mentioned about the Raya. He regarded him as a great King of India and bracketted him with Rana Sanga. This great ruler died in 1529, after carrying the empire to that high pitch of glory that it had never witnessed before.

Achyuta Raya, 1529—42.

This great ruler was succeeded by his brother, Achyuta Raya. Factions soon broke out in the realm. To keep the empire intact became a difficult task. Adil Shah of Bijapur attacked the empire of Vijayanagar and occupied the fortresses of Raichur and Mudkal which had been conquered by Krishnadeva Raya after a long struggle. Achyuta became unpopular because of his ill temperament and bad manners. Sewell remarks: "His conduct and mode of government ruined the Hindu cause in southern India and opened the whole country to the invader though he did not himself live to see the end." According to Nuniz, a European traveller, Adil Shah visited Vijayanagar in 1536, which shows that there were factions in the empire and Achyuta had no scruples in inviting the traditional mortal enemy of his country to come and help him against his enemies.

Sadasiva Raya and Rama Raya.

Achyuta Raya died in 1542 and was succeeded by his nephew Sadasiva, who ruled till 1570. The real power rested in the hands of his minister Rama Raya who was the son of Krishnadeva Raya's Minister. By 1550 the minister curtailed the powers of the king and claimed equality with him. Soon after he assumed royal powers and by and by Sadasiva's name was omitted altogether from royal orders, and the minister became *de facto* ruler.

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Talikota.

Rama Raya was an ambitious ruler. He began to interfere in the affairs of the Deccan Sultanates. This proved fatal to the Hindu empire. He began to help one Sultan against the other, which excited the animosity of the other Muslim rulers. In 1543 he entered into an alliance with Ahmadnagar and Golconda against Bijapur. In 1558 he entered into an alliance with Bijapur against Ahmadnagar. Rama Raya's armies perpetrated many cruelties upon the Muslim population. This meddling into the affairs of the Muslim states led to the combining of all the Muslim states against the growing influence of the Hindus. The combined forces of the Sultans, except those of Berar, moved towards the Hindu territory on December 25, 1564. Rama Raya who was very confident of himself treated the expedition contemptuously. He collected a force and met the enemy near the fortress of Talikota in the neighbourhood of Krishna on January 23, 1565. The Hindus fought well but suddenly Rama Raya, who was supervising the operation, was taken unawares and captured. He was put to death. The mighty Hindu army fled away in confusion. This defeat created panic in the city of Vijayanagar. The cowardly princes at once ran away from the city taking away as much gold as they could possibly lay their hands on in the confusion. The city was at the mercy of the Muslim hordes who plundered and killed the people indiscriminately. This was the end of the once mighty and splendid capital.

Effects of Talikota.

It was one of the most decisive battles in Indian history. It was as important as the first battle of Panipat and the battles of Plassey and Baxar. If did not merely mean the defeat of the Hindus but the hopes of Hindu domination in the South were shaltered. In the first place it wrecked the mighty Vijayanagar empire and opened the way for the Muslim penetration into Peninsular India. Secondly, it led to the expansion of Bijapur and Golconda which annexed most of the territories formerly occupied by the Hindus. Thirdly some of the Hindu Viceroys established their own independence in the distant places. The Naiks of Madura

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being a prominent example. Fourthly, the kingdom of Mysore took its birth out of the ruins of Vijayanagar. Lastly, the collapse of Vijayanagar led to the fall of the Portuguese power because much of the trade and prosperity of the Portuguese was connected solely with Vijayanagar. Referring to this Couto, a Portuguese Chronicler remarks: "By this destruction of the kingdom of Vijayanagar, India and our state were much shaken, for the bulk of trade undertaken by all was for this kingdom to which they carried horses, velvets, satins and other sorts of merchandise, by which they made great profits and custom house of Goa, suffered much in revenue....."*

End of the Empire.

After the battle of Talikota, Sadasiva, the fugitive king fell into the hands of Rana Raya's brother Tirumal, who soon usurped the throne for himself. This was the third usurpation. Tirumal laid the foundation of a new dynasty which continued to rule till the end of the seventeenth century. With this usurpation, the empire of Vijayanagar ceased to exist, Later on, Shivaji built up his empire on the ruins of Vijayanagar. "Shivaji conquered all the Konkan country by 1673 and four years later he had overthrown the last shreds of Vijayanagar authority in Kurnool, Gingi and Vellore, while his brother Ekoji had already in 1674, captured Tanjore and established a dynasty there which lasted for a century".†

Achievements of Vijayanagar empire.

Various European and Asian travellers like Nicolo Conti, Domiquo Paes, Fernas Nuniz and Abdur-Razzak have left detailed accounts of what they saw at Vijayanagar. The Vijayanagar empire was essentially a military state founded in order to defend Hindu culture and religion in South India by creating a strong bulwark against the Muslim penetration into those territories. The Rayas were autocratic but had given local autonomy to their people. Justice was in the hands of *Panchayats*. Land tax was not very heavy. Although the European

*Quoted by Sewell in his "A Forgotten Empire" p. 210.
†Oxford History of India, p. 311.

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writer Nuniz says that the king charged $^{9}/_{10}$ of the produce as land revenue but this was not feasible. Most probably the share of the state was $\frac{1}{6}$ of the produce.

The Vijayanagar kings patronised art and literature. They respected learned men and some of them were appointed as advisers. Sanskrit and Telugu literature received great impetus at their hands. Krishnadeva himself a poet was called "Andhra Bhoja" as he occupied the unique place in Telugu literature as Bhoja in Sanskrit. They spent largely an the construction of works of public utility like tanks, dams and lakes. Painting and sculpture also progressed. They constructed beautiful temples. The famous Vithal temple at Mysore is in example.

The people were generally happy and contented although there was much disparity between the high and low. South India under the Vijayanagar emperors attained a remarkable state of prosperity. There were no less than 300 seaports carrying on maritime commerce and regular trade was maintained with Europe and Persia. As has been pointed out before the prosperity of the Portuguese depended upon trade with Vijayanagar. Men were honest and law-abiding, women were cultured and accomplished. They were given education and occupied a respectable position in the society.

The Vijayanagar empire on the whole worked for the good of the people. It was eminently successful for a longtime in fulfilling the mission for which it was brought into existence, the defending of Hindu culture and religion in the South against Muslim onslaught.

QUESTIONS

1. Describe briefly the origin, development and downfall of the Vijayanagar empire.
2. Describe the relation of the Bahmanides with the Vijayanagar Empire.
3. Write notes on :—
   (*i*) Krisnna Deva, Raya.
   (*ii*) Battle of Talikota.
   (*iii*) War of the Goldsmith's daughter.
   (*iv*) Abdur Razzak.

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CHAPTER XVI

ADMINISTRATION AND STATE OF SOCIETY UNDER THE DELHI SULTANATE, 1200—1526.

The Impact of two Cultures.

This period experienced the impact of two cultures, Hindu and Muslim. In the opinion of several British writers this era was marked by tyranny, bloodshed and rapine. In fact, Turko-Afghan rulers came and settled here, and in course of time became Indian. They too considered India as their homeland. India tried to absorb foreign culture, and slightly changed thereby. Different scholars hold different views regarding the degree of this interaction. Dr. Tarachand in his Influence of Islam on Indian Culture says that "not only did Hindu religion, Hindu art, Hindu literature and Hindu science absorb Muslim elements, but the very spirit of Hindu culture and the very stuff of Hindu mind were also altered." Havel says that "Islam seized her political capitals, controlled her military forces, and appropriated her revenues, but India retained what she cherished most, her intellectual empire, and her soul was never subdued."

The truth seems to be that Hinduism was never deeply touched by Islam. Its effects were merely on the externals and not on the spirit which remained unchanged. The influence of Islamic culture was confined to the court and clerical party; while Hinduism produced deeper effect on Islam.

The conduct of the Muslim Kings was in general haughty and overbearing, and sometimes cruel towards their Hindu subjects. But it could not always be warlike. There were several reasons for it. With their limited resources in men and money they could not subdue

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this vast country. Whether willingly or unwillingly the Muslim Kings had to seek co-operation of the subject peoples. Besides for running the administrative machinery smoothly Hindu clerks had to be employed. The Kayasths specialised in the lower branches of civil administration. Agriculture and trade were in the hands of the Hindus, and revenues could not be collected without the assistance of Hindu clerks.

Nature of the Muslim State.

The nature of the government under the Sultans was essentially despotic and theocratic. Some Sultans, notably Ala-ud-din Khalji and Muhammad Tughlak, acted independently of the *Mullahs*; but this did not mean the giving up of Islamic principles. Unlike Akbar the Great, the Sultans had yet no idea of a secular state. They still considered themselves to be the representatives of the Caliph and almost all the Sultans including Iltutmish and Feroze Tughlak asked for recognition by the Caliph. They, however, struck coins and read *Khutba* in their own names. After the Tughlaks this practice discontinued principally because the authority of the Caliph had waned. The early Sultans were, however, no religious fanatics. In general one of them resorted to forcible conversions or desecration of Hindu temples in order to annihilate them. These were plundered and destroyed only where it was calculated to bring them rich booty. Political exigency, however, compelled the Sultans to propound a new theory of Kingship which was very much akin to the Christian theory of Divine Right of Kingship. The Sultans claimed to be "God's vicar in things temporal." This device was found useful for overaweing the turbulent chiefs and ignorant and credulous populace when the hold of religion on the minds of the people was great. Besides this, the Muslim rule was essentially a military occupation. The government was run by military officers holding civil charges. The safety and success of the empire depended upon the personal valour and aptitude of the Sultan. "The length of his sword determined the extent of his sway."

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Administration.

The administration under the Sultans has not been discussed by the historians so thoroughly as under the Mughals. Some sort of a connected account about their administration has been gathered from various sources, notably the contemporary chroniclers both Indian and foreign.

The King.

The position of the king in the thirteenth century was that of a leader among chiefs of equal rank. As most of those who came to the throne were originally slaves or powerful chiefs, the other nobles were not very much amenable to their control. The King tried to avoid picking up a quarrel with them because it could prove fatal to his position. It was Balban, however, who added dignity to this office by prescribing a formal decorum and etiquette to be observed by the nobles in his presence. The kingship was not hereditary—at least not in practice. The most powerful came to the throne proving the famous theory of the "survival of the fittest." "The imperial throne was a competitive post ; everyone could aspire for it, at the risk of his neck, if he failed ; it had not become the monopoly of a particular dynasty." Anyone who could occupy the throne was the King. The Khaljis and Tughlaks developed the personal power of the king and under them it became more orderly and hereditary.

The Sultans like the Persian monarchs and in common with Christian Kings, claimed a divine superiority, if not for their persons, at least for their office. But this theory was respected more by breach (assassination and usurpation) than in observance. The real authority of the monarch depended upon his military efficiency and the loyalty of provincial governors. His position was fraught with many dangers. He lived in constant fear of his enemies and traitors. As a matter of fact, it was very risky to become a king. Perhaps Bughra Khan who declined the kingly office realized it too well. As has been pointed out before, the personality of the Sultan accounted for much. As a matter of fact, according to Islamic law, the very office of the King is *ultra vires*, an unrecognised constitution. In Muslim law there is

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room only for an elected governor, who was removable. That was why a successful rebel was not looked upon as a criminal. There was not much difference between a *dejure* and *de facto* ruler. As law of primogeniture was also unknown to Islam, it created confusion. It was the cause of repeated wars of succession after the death of every monarch. In a way it was good because it brought to the fore only the best, after this competitive test.

Powers of the King.

The Sultan was autocratic. He had unlimited powers. His word was law. There was no distinction between the Sultan and the State. He could put man to death by mere order and save anyone he liked. He was the judge, the commander and the religious head, all combined in one. The Sultan did not use his autocratic powers sparingly. As a matter of necessity he had to be very autocratic and high-handed. This was the only way by which the conspirators and traitors, could be put down and the latent ones could be overawed into submission. A weak king could not hope to rule. It was a fatal defect. Many weak and indolent Sultans were kicked off the throne and had to pay with their lives for their inefficiency. Thus his position differed materially from the democratic Caliph. The King was not hated by the people in general for his autocracy. An average man looked upon him as his saviour, the protector against foreign invaders and internal oppressors. The feudal chiefs, did not like him to be strong because it spelled disaster for them. They could prosper only when the central authority was weak.

The imperial council and court.

The king transacted business through two assemblies (*a*) the *Darbar-i-Khas* and (*b*) the *Darbar-i-Am*. The first was like an executive body or inner cabinet of ministers and grandees, whom the king consulted *in camera* on important problems of the state. The advice of the council was not binding on the king but usually he followed the decisions or wishes of the members. This smaller body was also known as "*Majlis-i-Khalwat*". The *Darbar-i-Am* was the court of the king where routine

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business like justice, rewards, honours and interviews were granted by the king in the presence of high officers and nobles. Special *darbars* were held on occasions like the birthday of the king and festival days. The proceedings of these courts were controlled by a number of officials of whom *barbak* was the most important.

There were four chief ministries or departments *i.e.*, (1) Revenue or *Diwan-i-Vizarat*, (2) War (*Diwan-i-Arz*), (3) Local and Provincial Government (*Diwan-i-Insha*) and (4) Markets (*Diwan-i-Rujasat*). There were other minor departments of justice presided over by *Qazi-ul-Qazat*. Admiralty under *Amir-i-Bahr* and Agriculture under "*Diwan-i-Amir Koh*i" etc. The officer-in-charge of each of the principal departments was known as *Vazir* or minister. Sometimes there was a higher officer the *Naib-i-Mulk* or regent of the kingdom whose position was higher than the ministers. Malik Kafur, Balban and Khah-i-Jahan Maqbul held this post. The working of the departments was quite complicated like modern bureaucratic system. There were a number of officials and clerks dealing with various aspects of the department.

Most of the officers were army officers who were given civilian duties. As a matter of fact, there was no distinction between a civil and a military officer. The revenue work was entrusted almost entirely to the Hindus. It was very common for a new king to dismiss all the officers of his predecessor because he wanted to place in positions his own trusted followers. Thus there was no fixed tenure of office and no security of service. It all depended on the whim of the king and the personal approaches of the officer. Intrigue and cliques were very common among the officers and the nobles. If a particular group or faction found favour with the king the party would steadily eliminate the officers of the rival group. The groups were based on families, communities, or the towns or places from where the members originally came. Thus there was a Khalji party, coming from Khalji and the Turki party, etc. Bribery was rampant.

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Justice.

Justice was carried on by a hierarchy of courts under the supervision of the Lord Chief Justice, *Qazi-ul-Qazat*. There were lower courts which decided cases locally. Appeals from these local courts lay to the chief *Qazi*. Appeals could also be taken to the king from the *Qazi* or even in the first instance. In the courts, the Muslim law was enforced for all Muslims and non-Muslims alike. The *Mufti* expounded the law whereas the *Qazi* delivered the judgement. The *Muhatisab* and *Kotwal* also enjoyed magisterial powers. There was a special officer, known as *Amir-i-Arz*, to receive complaints. The *Sader* heard and decided religious cases. Civil cases, in which the parties were Hindus, were decided by *Panchayats*. Where one of the contestants was a Muslim, the case was brought before the *Qazi* who administered the Muslim law to the detriment of the Hindu. Local customary law was also recognised.

Land revenue.

The revenue department was under *Diwan-i-Vizarat*. It consisted of *Diwan-i-Ashraf* (the Accountant-General), *Mir Bakhshi* (Pay-master-General) and *Amils* (collectors), etc. Before the time of Ala-ud-din the general practice of collecting land revenue was through hereditary revenue collectors who were just like *jagirdars* or feudal lords. They were a constant source of trouble to the king as they became "overmighty". Ala-ud-din abolished this system. Feroze Tughlak reintroduced this system. *Shiqdars* were also appointed to collect the land revenue. They were assisted by the *Patwaris*, *Chaudhris*, *Balahirs* and *Khots*, etc. Besides the land revenue certain other taxes were also levied. These were the house tax, the grazing tax, water tax and some sort of a property and income tax. Income from crown or *Khalsa* lands was considerable.

The imperial army.

The imperial army consisted of the knights provided by the provincial governors and fief-holders, etc. Besides these there was a regular standing army employed, paid and trained by the king. A section of the irregulars known as *ghair wajah* also existed. The army was divided into infantry, cavalry, elephants and archers. Men of different

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nationalities like the Persian, the Turks and Indians were employed. A kind of crude artillery consisting of *manjaniqs*, *mangonels* and *mangones* which could fire out iron balls and stones, etc. was also employed.

The provincial government.

The provincial government was largely modelled on the system of central government. The empire was divided into a number of provinces each under the charge of a prince or a trusted lieutenant. The maximum number of provinces was 23 under Muhammad Tughlak. The provincial governor was like a miniature king. He was responsible for maintenance of peace and good government, dispensing justice, commanding armies and collecting land revenue, etc. The governor was paid from the revenues of the province. After deducting the expenses of his administration, he remitted the surplus to the centre. His position was just like that of a *jagirdar* or a feudal baron. The control of the king over the governor was very weak. More often than not, the governor would declare his independence under a weak king. The new king had to reconquer his territories. The Sultan kept himself informed of the doings of the governer through efficient and loyal news-writers.

The provinces were divided into smaller units under the charge of *Muqtas* or *Amils* and *Shiqdars*. The smallest units of administration were the villages which were self-governing republics. The king or his lieutenants did not interfere with the local institutions in the villages, the revolutions, changes of dynasties or foreign invasions left the villages undisturbed. This is the reason why an average village in India to-day is materially the same as it was centuries ago.

Religious Policy and the position of Hindus.

The Sultans were led by Muslim ideas of government and the influence of the *Mullahs* on them was quite strong. In spite of this the Sultans were no religious fanatics. None of them resorted to forcible conversions of the Hindus on a large scale. Feroze Tughlaq is the only exception. Sultans like Balban and Ala-ud-din Khalji attacked and desecrated Hindu temples, but this

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was due mainly to plundering their wealth and not because they wanted to destroy the Hindu temples. The other temples were allowed to exist and freedom of worship was granted to the Hindus. Similarly *jizya* was imposed on the Hindus because it was a welcome source of income. We should not depend upon the writings of contemporary chroniclers like Barni for our estimation of the religious policy of the Sultans. Such writers gave an exaggerated and dark picture of the position of the Hindus, because they were anxious to picture their heroes as the patterns of Islamic orthodoxy and virtue. "The stories of temples desecrated, idols demolished and Hindus converted or massacred which they relate must, therefore, be read in the light of their desire to show to an orthodox Islamic world for which they wrote, the zeal of these monarchs and their glory in dealing with the kafir."*

K.M. Pannikar adds : "In the period of conquest the Hindus had, no doubt, to undergo great miseries. They were deprived at one stroke of all political power in large areas. Their religion was held in contempt and their places of worship were constantly being destroyed. But all the same after first enthusiasm, the structure of economic life in the country forced even the most zealous and fanatical of kings to moderate this policy. .....Nor was conversion on such a scale as would displace the Hindu zamindar and cultivator ever carried out or even attempted as is demonstrated by the fact that even to-day in the Doab which was continuously under Muslim rule for seven hundred years, the Hindu population is in overwhelming majority. The land system in fact, did not change and, therefore, the Hindus in general in the countryside led fairly the same life as they had led before.....Even in regard to religion the idea that Hinduism was held in contempt by the early Muslim rulers would not bear examination. In fact, we have ample evidence that even under the most bigoted kings like Ala-ud-din Khalji and Feroze Tughlak, the Hindu religious leaders received honour and recognition."†

*K.M. Pannikar : *A Survey of Indian History*, p. 156.
†Ibid.

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Explaining the reasons for this tolerant policy the same writer says that the Hindus as accountants and petty officers were indispensable to the Muslims. The entire trade and commerce was also in their hands because the Muslims looked down upon this profession. The "Hindu *banya* remained then as now a necessary element in the structure of society." On the whole, the Hindu religion remained strong and unimpaired under the Sultans. "It is remarkable," says Pannikar, "that Muslims today in the United Provinces (Uttar Pradesh) which were continuously under Muslim rule for six hundred years number only 14 per cent. Hindu religion withstood the shock, but the evidence is incontestable that forcible conversions were few and the lot of Hindus could not have been exceptionally hard."

The influence of the *Mullahs* on the Sultans was no doubt great. The nobility and the Military class which were the main props of the Sultanate were also under the fanatical influence of the *Ulema*, whose chief desire was to eradicate Hinduism. In order to keep up certain appearances and win the support of the 'church-ridden' society the Sultans had to follow the dictates of the *Mullahs*. Even strong kings like Ala-ud-din Khalji and Muhammad Tughlak had to conform to the traditional policy of Hindu persecution. But these two monarchs flouted the authority of the *mullahs* also. Ala-ud-din was the first Muslim king to develop the theory of secular state by freeing himself from the law of the *shariat* and the dictates of the *ulema*.

Economic Conditions.

It is not easy to give a correct idea of the economic conditions prevailing during the three hundred years of the rule of the Delhi Sultans. Most of the writers and chroniclers confined their comments only to the political side. Occasionally some references are made by them, from which we can glean a little information on the subject. In the beginning of the Muslim rule, trade and commerce largely declined. For about fifty years there was no trade because of the great havoc caused by Muslim invaders. Moreover, during this period the Muslims carried away much gold, silver

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and other precious articles from India depriving the Indians of centuries of hoarded wealth. In order to crush the Hindus on political grounds, they deliberately followed a policy of impoverishing them. By the time of Iltutmish and Balban conditions materially changed. By clearing highways of robbers and constructing new roads, they encouraged trade and commerce. Foreign merchants began to come to India. Local artisans resumed their vocations. The Hindu merchants once again began to deal in the commodities to which they were accustomed through successive generations. As the Muslim adventurers despised trade, the Hindus held the monopoly.

The chief industries of the Indians were weaving, dyeing, calico printing, metal work, sugar industry, stone and brick work. Bengal and Gujrat were specially renowned for textile industries. The excellence of Bengal goods was praised by foreign as well as Indian writers. Merchants from Persia, Tibet, Bhutan, Rome, and Portugal came to India to carry these goods. The author of *Masalik-ul absar* writes: "Merchants of all countries never cease to carry pure gold into India and to bring back in exchange commodities of herbs and gums*. Countries round Persian Gulf depended largely on India for their food requirements. Varthema regarded Bengal as the richest country in the world for cotton, ginger, sugar, grain and flesh of every kind".

Agriculture was greatly encouraged by all the Sultans. They took special interest in the welfare of the peasantry. Canals were dug out and wells sunk for irrigation purposes. The taxes were quite reasonable. Necessities of life were quite cheap, and well within the reach of even the lowest classes. Ibn Batuta remarks that nowhere in the world were the things so cheap. But this "slump" did not mean unemployment. It was good for all. There were few famines and the people on the whole were quite prosperous. It should be noted that although the Muslims were the favoured children of the state, yet economically the Hindus were equally, if not more, prosperous than the Muslims. It was because

*Quoted in An Advanced History of India p. 397.

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trade; agriculture and petty posts were entirely in the hands of the Hindus. The aristocracy was entirly Muslim, but the Hindus were not impoverished. The standard of life of an average citizen was quite high.

Social Life.

The society was divided into various sections. Although the Muslims who conquered India, were a democratic people in theory but they did not practise it. Besides the distinction of high and low between the Hindus and the Muslims, there was this division even among the Muslims themselves. There were Amirs, Khans and Maliks among them. They were very powerful. The slave system existed among them, but as has been pointed out before the treatment meted out to the slaves was humane and even affectionate. The slaves were freely made, sold and purchased.

Regarding the division of society, K. M. Pannikar writes, "The main social result of the introduction of Islam as a religion into India was the division of society on a vertical basis. Before the thirteenth century, Hindu society was divided horizontally and neither Buddhism nor Jainism affected this division. They were not unassimilable elements and fitted in easily with the existing divisions. Islam, on the other hand, split Indian society into two sections from top to bottom and what has now come to be known in the phraseology of to-day as two separate nations, came into being from the beginniug. It was two parallel societies vertically established on the same soil. At all stages they were different and hardly any social communication or intermingling of life existed between them."* Thus there was a division and cross division of the society by two opposite forces.

Socially the Hindus were relegated to a lower position. Although they were not actually reduced to the position of "hewers of wood and drawers of water", yet they were now definitely inferior to even the humblest Muslim. This led many Hindus to embrace Islam because conversion meant not only social uplift but it held out prospects of prosperity also. The Muslims got their wives freely from

*K. M. Pannikar : *A Survey of Indian History*, p. 162.

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Hindu women which led to fusion of Hindu-Muslim cultures and regeneration of the off-spring. In order to guard against Muslim penetration who were treated by the orthodox as *Mlechhas*—untouchables—the Hindus made the caste system all the more rigid. This led to many social vices. Purdah system among the Hindus also came in vogue at about this time, because they wanted to hide the beauty of their womenfolk from the ogle of the *Mlechhas*. The liberty of the woman was considerably restricted. She was now confined only to the four walls of the house. Amir Khusro advised his daughter not to leave the *charkha* and always "keep her face towards the wall of the house and her back towards the door so that nobody might be able to look at her." The birth of a daughter now began to be looked upon as a liability because to save her honour from the vulgar riff raff people under the changed conditions was a very onerous task. The Hindus, therefore, practised infanticide, in order to be relieved of this liability. Polygamy among the Hindus also began to be practised. Early marriages were adopted in order to "get rid" of the girl before puberty had developed in her. The custom of *Sati* came into vogue. Widow-marriage was rare. Drinking was a common vice.

Literature.

The Sultans were patrons of art and literature mostly Persian and Arabic. Many foreign scholars and poets took refuge at Delhi where they were rehabilitated after being uprooted by the Mongols in Central Asia and Persia. Among the earliest writers was Al-Beruni who wrote *Tahqiq-i-Hind*, the most useful source of information about Mahmud of Ghazni. Minhaj-ud-din wrote the famous *Tabaqat-i-Nasari*, another important work on slave dynasty. Other great writers were, Amir Khusro, Nizam-ud-din Aulia and Mir Hasan Dehlvi. Barni's *Tarikh-i-Feroze Shahi* is yet another important book of the period. Feroze and Sikandar Lodhi encouraged the translation of Sanskrit works like *Ramayana*, *Mahabharata* aud *Gita* etc., into Persian.

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The Sultans extended patronage to Indian languages as well. Hindi flourished under the Sultans. Amir Khusro in comparing Hindi with Persian and Arabic remarked that it was "richer and more flexible than Persian." Bengali, Gujrati and Marathi also became rich. The famous poet Vidyapati wrote in Maithili, Chandidas in Bengali, Mira Bai in Rajasthani and Nathaswami in Maharashtri. All these poets flourished during the Sultanate period. The literature was now becoming popular with the common man instead of being the monopoly of a few learned *Pandits.* The *Bhakti* leaders gave a great impetus to vernacular literature. Sanskrit also continued to grow. In Gujrat Hemachandra Suri and Kumbha in Rajputana patronised Sanskrit.

But Sanskrit flourished only in distant places from Delhi like Mewar, Kalinjar and Gujrat, where Hindu Rajas were ruling. Another important contribution of the Sultanate to the development of Indian literature was the evolving of a vigorous common language, Urdu, which was an admixture of Arabic, Persian, Turkish and Hindi. The development of this language reconciled the Hindu to the Muslim. As the name 'Urdu' meaning 'Camp' shows it was first developed by soldiers who came together from various regions. In course of time it became the *lingua franca* for all Indians whether Hindus or Muslims.

Architecture and Art.

The Muslim rule led also to the development of art and architecture. The Hindu craftsmen put into execution the Muslim ideas of architecture, but in so doing they left their own impress on the object. This led to the fusion of Indo-Muslim architecture which was predominantly Hindu in ideas and execution.

In the Muslim buildings of this period it is difficult to determine the exact extent of Hindu and Muslim influence. One school led by Havell believed that the Islamic art and architecture in India was only a variation of the Hindu art and architecture. Others hold that the Indo-Muslim architecture of the time derived its inspiration chiefly from outside. In truth, the Indo-Muslim architecture derived from both the sources. At the imperial capitals

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of Delhi and Agra it was more pro-Muslim. In the provinces it freely drew upon Hindu ideals. This can easily be traced in the buildings erected in Jaunpur, Bengal, Gujrat and Kashmir. The Hindu architecture acquired spaciousness and breadth. Before the coming of the Muslims, the Hindus had seldom used concrete and mortar but afterwards it became a regular part of their system, In ornamentation the new features introduced by the Muslims were the geometric devices. and the lettering of sacred and historic passages. They also adopted the proportionate location of symmetry, strength and grace. In the words of Dr. Tara Chand "the simple severity of the Muslim architecture was toned down and the plastic exuberance of the Hindu was restrained. The craftsmanship, ornamental richness, and general design remained largely Hindu, the actuated form, plain domes, smooth faced walls and spacious interiors were Muslim super-impositions."

The Sultans were great builders. K. M. Pannikar says, "The pre-Mughal contribution to Indo-Muslim architecture has not received adequate and general recognition. The glory of the Taj Mahal and other Mughal masterpieces has eclipsed the greatness of the architecture of the first period and yet it is clear that Indo-Islamic building art originated and developed and produced some of its masterpieces in the fifteenth century. The Jami Musjid of Jaunpur, the mosques and palaces in Mandu and Ahmadabad demonstrate the truth of this observation."* The chief characteristics of the style of architecture of this period are the "Central Asian domes and glazed tiles." The style was massive and dignified but lacked the elegance and feminine beauty which the Mughal style contained. The important buildings of Qutb-ud-din Aibek and Iltutmish were Qutb Minar, Masjid Quwat-ul-Islam and *Arhai din ka Jhompra.* These buildings show Hindu influence to a large degree. It was under Ala-ud-din Khalji that a marked change in the style of architecture appeared. It now became more Arabic in design and

*K. M. Pannikar : *A Survey of Indian History*, p. 154.

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technique. All the buildings now on show simplicity of design and execution in keeping with Islamic principles. There is no ornamentation or complexity of design. The arches and domes are now typically saracenic. In some buildings, we find richness of details also.

The styles of the various Muslim provincial kingdoms show marked individuality. The style of the Sharqi rulers of Jaunpur was mainly saracenic but influenced by Hindu ideas. Their famous monuments are Atala Masjid, Jami Masjid and tomb of Hussain Shah. The art of the Sultans of Bijapur was richer than that of Jaunpur. Similarly the buildings of the Hussainis in Bengal like Qadam-i-Rasul and Adnia mosques have their stamps of individuality. The mosques at Ahmadabad are full of Hindu and Jain designs with their typical elegance and finish. The art of Gujrat is regarded as having been more directly influenced by Hindu style of architecture than at any other place in India. The Bahmani kings were also great builders. Their famous buildings were the Jami Masjid at Gulbarga, Charminar at Daulatabad, College of Mahmud Gawan at Bedar, Gol Gumbaz at Bijapur and many beautiful forts at Gowaligarh, Narnala and Mahur. As the Muslim religion is against idol worship and music, the arts of architecture and painting were neglected altogether.

Music.

As regards music the intense monotheism of Islam did not favour it, and so it could make no progress during the early period. In India the Muslims found music in a very highly developed state. The newly converted Muslims continued to sing their old songs of devotion and dedication. The Sufi movement readily took to devotional poetry and songs. The Muslims adopted Hindu way of instrumental music and Dhrupad. The celebrated poet Khusro invented *qawwalis* and *khyal*, and introduced *sitar* and *tabla*. Thus music served as another means of social intercourse between Hindus and Muslims. It is said that Ala-ud-din Khalji ordered Malik Kafur to bring from the Deccan Hindu musicians whose songs he used to hear with delight.

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The Indian classical music was encouraged and it was influenced by Persian musicians. Amir Khusro was a celebrated musician. He is believed to have invented the *sitar* and *tabla* and to have introduced *'Khyal'* and *Qawwalis.* The growth of Bhakti cult, which aimed at making a direct appeal to the minds of the follower employed the vehicle of music.

General Society.

It is wrong to say that the Muslim occupation of India resembled a military camp. There were certain forces at work compelling the Muslims to have some sort of social intercourse with Hindus. The government required revenues to maintain administrative machinery. Peace was essential for this purpose. It meant the establishment of some standards of justice between the rulers and the ruled. Security was to be guaranteed against the Muslim officials' rapacity and tyranny. To increase income and satisfy their desires commerce was to be developed. This was mostly in Hindu hands. Most of the Muslims had arrived here without families. They married Hindu women who took Hindu ways of life with them. The new converts to Islam in villages maintained friendly relations with their Hindu brethren, and continued their old customs and manners. The Hindu and Muslim saints drew their followers from both religions which further developed mutual understanding. Some of the Muslim kings patronised Hindu scholars and artists.

Thus as a result of all these intercourses, social distinctions and religious ideologies were levelled down. The Muslim kings borrowed Hindu ceremonials. The most common was the removal of the effect of the evil eye by adopting the Hindu practice of *utara* and *arti* which they now called *nisar.* This practice involved placing gold and silver coins and other things in plates, and offering them to the poor, after passing them over the head of the ruler a number of times. In the public *darbar* seats were arranged on the basis of Hindu castes, the courtiers being divided into *Ahl-i-daulat* (ruling class), *Ahl-i-sa'adat* (the intelligentsia) and *Ahl-i-murd* (the pleasure providing class). Hindus were admitted into services to some

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extent. The Muslims slowly and gradually adopted the caste system. Even the custom of *Jauhar* was adopted. Kamal-ud-din, the Governor of Bhatnair first destroyed his womenfolk and property and then started fighting with Timur. The Hindu turban became the general head-wear of the Muslims.

The Hindu caste system was also considerably influenced by Muslim impact on it. It led to rigidity in order to maintain purity of blood. Purdah was taken from their rulers. The upper class Hindus adopted the Muslim way of cooking some articles of food, especially *pulao*. Muslim dress was imitated, particularly the *payjama* and the *achkan*. Even *hookah* was accepted later on.

A resume of Sultanate period.

The rule of the Sultans was on the whole good and humane. Although they plundered and destroyed the Hindu temples and cities, yet it was no permanent destruction. The Sultans were not religious fanatics. They gave to the Hindus freedom of worship. The Hindus were also employed in civil and military services. Trade and commerce remained in their hands. There were no large-scale forcible conversions under them. Laudable attempts at laying the foundation of a secular state were also made by some of them, notably Ala-ud-din Khalji. Their chief merit was that they gave settled government to the country which had been torn by mutual quarrels and foreign invasions since long. Foreign invaders were checked and life and property were made safe. For this, even the Hindus looked upon the Sultans as their saviours. The Sultans also encouraged arts and letters. The Hindu architecture and literature were given due consideration. The Sultans also took steps to ameliorate the condition of the people. Agriculture and trade were given a great fillip by irrigation projects and by affording facilities to foreign merchants.

The heyday of the Sultanate was the period from Balban to Feroze Tughlak, *i.e.*, 1266-1388—a period of little more than one hundred years. During this period the empire was at its heights and could favourably compare with the glorious age of the Mughals. During

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this period the empire was free from foreion invasions, arts and crafts flourished, the boundaries of the empire touched almost the whole of India and the people were happy and prosperous. Unluckily it fell on evil days afterwards and within the next one hundred years it suffered a steep decline and was wiped out of existence in 1526.

QUESTIONS

1. Write a short note on the architecture and literature of medieval India.

2. Bring out the results of Muslim conquests on the moral, religious, social and literary life of India.

3. What was the condition of the subject people under the Delhi Sultans ?

4. Describe the central structure of the government under the Delhi Sultanate.

5. What was the condition of society under the early Muslim rule ?

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CHAPTER XVII

THE HINDU RELIGIOUS REVIVAL

Introduction.

In this period the greatest contribution of Indians is the evolution of the Bhakti cult. In Hindu religion there have been regular cycles of reform and decadence. Leaders like Buddha, Mahavira and Shankaracharya reformed the Hindu religion at various stages. The Bhakti cult which took its birth in India early in the Muslim rule, aimed at reforming the Hindu religion once again. It was a great Hindu revival movement. Its leaders rose in every nook and corner of India. It was a country-wide, if not a world-wide, movement because it was contemporaneous with the Reformation movement in Europe. The important doctrines of Bhakti were the realisation of God through love and personal devotion and not by religious formalities like *tapasya*, pilgrimages and idol-worship, etc. Ramanuja, Kabir, Nanak, Chaitanya, Mirabai, Eknath and Namdeva, etc., were the prominent leaders of the movement in various parts of the country. Like Buddha they preached their doctrines, which were very simple and straightforward through the vernaculars. Their hymns incidentally led also to the growth of vernacular literature.

Pre-Bhakti Hindu society and religion.

Before this great Hindu religious revival movement started, which is generally known as Bhakti cult, the Hindu society and religion had undergone several changes. Once again it had become priest-ridden. Buddhism which originally had aimed at purifying the Hindu religion, had failed in its mission and had in turn been absorbed by the salt-mine of the great Hindu religion. Its new interpretation, Mahayanism, had itself come very near Brahmanism. After the Gupta rule the Brahmins got ascendancy in political, social and religious

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affairs. Caste system became very rigid. Passing from one caste to another became impossible. The caste system became an engine of repression besides becoming an anti-national and reactionary force. The most numerous class of the people, the Sudras, were treated badly. They could not read the Vedas. They had to do the meanest jobs and could not hope to attain *nirvana*. Religion itself had become the monopoly of the priestly class. The Brahmins encouraged many vulgar superstitions. To the vast multitude of the people religion had become a meaningless affair. These religious drawbacks led to social evils as well. The people lost touch with their culture and history because they were ignorant. As the Brahmins and Kshatriyas were busy in exploitation of the people, they had little time left and practically no desire, to unify and strengthen the country. The Sudras who constituted more than 50% of the population did not identify themselves with the ruling classes. To them it made little difference if they were ruled by the Brahmins or the Turks, they had only to serve. In short, this sorry state of affairs led to social disharmony, ignorance and political weakness of the country. Besides, the Hindus were persecuted by the Muslims as the former believed in many gods and in idol-worship. This hatred between the rulers and the ruled was not desirable for both.

Bhakti Cult.

This state of affairs gave rise to a religious reform movement, the Bhakti Cult, which was as much a religious movement as it was a social reform force. The reformers aimed at restoring harmony between life and spirit. They declared that truth was greater than religion. They wanted to simplify and purify the Hindu religion by eliminating religious formalities, and external acts like pilgrimages, fasts, counting of beads and various other mechanical practices. They preached oneness of God, brotherhood and equality of man and personal devotion or Bhakti to God. Personal devotion to the guru was the essence of the Bhakti movement. It condemned in the strongest terms the caste differences, the pretensions of the priests and the worship of idols. The heart of the Bhaktas bled at seeing

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social inequalities, exploitation and sorrowful plight of the common man. They wanted to uplift the humblest man to the height of the so-called twice-born men. They held that the dignity of man depended not on his birth but on the nobility of his actions. Bhakti taught equality of all, whether rich or poor, noble or humble, and belief in one transcendent God, by whatever name he may be called. Ram and Rahim, Krishna and Allah were the names of one and the same Divine Being. Koran or Puranas were as holy for one as for the other. Visiting Kaba or Kailash did not matter.

Evidently the Bhaktas had been deeply impressed by the monotheism, equality and simplicity of Islam. In this respect Bhakti movement was the direct result of the Muslim-Hindu cultures. Bhakti movement aimed at bringing the two peoples together by giving them a common religion and culture in which Hindu ideas found as much expression as the Muslim religious principles. According to Sir John Marshall, "seldom in the history of mankind has the spectacle been witnessed of two civilisations, so vast and so strongly developed, yet so radically dissimilar as the "Mohammedan and Hindus meeting and mingling together". Bhakti movement was a kind of "balm" for the "bleeding soul of Hinduism in northern India during the period of Muslim occupation."

In its earliest phase it was known, according to Sir R. G. Bhandarkar, as the *Ekantika Dharma*, meaning the religion of a single-minded love and devotion to the Beloved. He says, "It was based on the teachings of the Bhagwad Gita." Pannikar also says, "Essentially, therefore, the Bhakti movement was a new interpretation of Hinduism in terms of Islam's monotheism and equalitarianism, but its religious doctrine was that of Bhagwad Gita whose summons to surrender all and take refuge in God, came to have a special significance in the circumstances of the time." This cult became popular from the time of the great Ramanuja born in 1016 A. D., who became a source of inspiration to many *Sanyasis*. The Bhakti leaders from the fourteenth to the seventeenth centuries helped to free the popular mind from the thraldom of

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the priests. They also tried to remove many social vices like Sati, infanticide, and slavery. The importance of women in society was also advocated by them. Mutual love, charity, toleration, kindness, learning and personal cleanliness were the other points emphasised by the Bhaktas.

Causes of its success.

Like the rapid success of Buddhism, the Bhakti cult also became a very popular movement. Almost all those factors like its simplicity, absence of complicated rituals and sacrifices, social equality and use of vernaculars, which were responsible for the spread of Buddhism hold good also in the case of the wide popularity of the Bhakti cult. K. M. Pannikar adds one more significant factor. According to him, their long persecution by the Muslims had bewildered the minds of the Hindus. They were helpless and wanted to get rid of the spectacle of misery and persecution to which they were daily subjected by the petty officials. Bhakti movement offered them a welcome escape from this torment. It gave them a new philosophy of divine will and ascribed their misery to the will of God and got relief and solace out of this belief.

He further remarks: "A more significant point is its escapist character. All this sudden desire to surrender everything and seek refuge in God, normal as it is in mystics and religious men, found universal acceptance among the Hindus of the day, because of the terrible misery in which the great mass of Hindus lived at the time. The religion of mysticism is the religion of the elect, it becomes popular only when the masses have lost all and can look for nothing of value in this world. The ordinary man turns to heaven for his refuge when he has nothing to look forward to in this world. Healthy materialism is the normal outlook of even religious people when things go well. When on the other hand, a country is enslaved and its spirit weakened, it finds solace in a doctrine of other-worldliness. The saints and teachers of Bhakti, themselves mystics and men of God, found the people waiting for their message. The Bhakti cult

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became the new gospel of the fifteenth century—a religion of escape and essentially of worldly pessimism."*

He goes on to say that it was Tulsidas, the writer of *Ramayana* who glorified action as against inaction of the Bhakti movement. Similarly the Sikh Gurus, from Guru Arjun to Guru Gobind Singh, gave up this philosophy of pessimism and made the religion "vigorous and dynamic" by preaching resistance to the aggressor instead of ascribing it to the divine will. It is universally true that the people care for religion only when they are in misery' as in the days of the Buddha, otherwise in days of prosperity people are so much engrossed in their own vocations and business and luxuries, that religion becomes useless and superfluous for them. Considered from this point of view, all religions are "escapist". Lenin has called religion as the "opium of the masses." Pannikar, in support of his theory says, that the Bhakti movement never received the same interest in South India, its original home, as in the north, because due to the prosperity of the Vijayanagar empire the people in the south were prosperous and had nothing to escape from. But as in the north the conditions were materially different, Bhakti movement offered a welcome escape to the down-trodden Northerners.

The great Bhaktas.

The protagonists of the Bhakti movement arose in all parts of India and they preached in all languages. Kabir and Nanak preached in Hindi and Punjabi. Namdeva and Eknath in Marathi, Mirabai in Rajasthani and Gujrati, Chaitanya in Bengali, Basava in Kanarese, Vemana in Telugu and the Siddhars in Tamil.

Ramanand.

Ramanand lived in the fourteenth century. He criticised idolatory and protested against caste distinctions in his famous couplet : "*Jat pat na puchhe koi Har ko bhaje so Har ka hoi.*" He was the pioneer of the Bhakti cult. His disciples included men of all castes and classes. There were Brahmans as well as Sudras, Muslims, Jats and Weavers. Women were also admitted. Like a true Bhakta he stressed on God's love for all his creatures and promised salvation to all.

*K.M. Pannikar : *A Survey of Indian History* p. 181-82.

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Kabir.

Kabir was the greatest of the followers of Ramanand. It is said that he was the son of a Brahman, but was brought up by a Muslim weaver. It is believed that he lived from 1440 to 1518 A. D. He condemned all that created differences between Hindus and Musalmans. He was a poet and a singer. He composed songs of unity, brotherhood, salvation etc., and sang them so sweetly that he won the hearts of all. He condemned idolatory, meaningless ceremonies of the Hindus and the caste distinctions. He wrote in beautiful Hindi. His *dohas* produce a deep effect even in the present age of materialism. In piety verses he exhorts the people to give up the race for greed and devote their time to reciting the true Name. He regarded world as something unreal and like a dream. His poetry greatly appealed to the down trodden Hindus who saw a new ray of hope of attaining bliss in the world to come. His poetry had the effect of making people spiritually-minded. He promised *nirwana* to all those who led pious lives and recited the true Name. For his frank condemnation of the vulgar superstitions in both Hindu and Muslim religion he was not liked by the religious heads of either religions. He was even persecuted by Sikandar Lodhi. But to the common man he was a divine messenger. His teachings had deep effect on Guru Nanak. His *dohas* have been included in the holy *Granth*. Kabir's followers are called Kabirpanthis, although he had never aimed at founding a sect. He made great efforts to bring the Hindus and Muslims together. A typical verse* of Kabir is reproduced below :—

"If God be within the mosque, then to whom does this world belong?

If Ram be within the image which you find upon your pilgrimage, then who is there to know what has happened without?

Hari is in the East. Allah is in the West. Look within your own heart for there you will find both Karim and Ram.

*Rabindranath Tagore : *One Hundred Poems of Kabir*; LXIX.

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All the men and women of the world are His living forms. Kabir is the child of Allah and Ram. He is my Guru ; he is my Pir."

Guru Nanak.

Guru Nanak (1469-1539 A.D.) the founder of Sikhism, came under the influence of Kabir. He too, condemned the vulgar superstitions of the Hindus and wanted to make man a free thinker. He laid stress on good actions. He declared that external religious formalities were of no avail. This was a mere self-deception. He preached equality of all men. He was a kind of socialist leader, who advocated community dining and greater social intercourse among the people. He called these his two institutions of *Sangat* and *Pangat*. Besides this he showed intense love for his mother country and his compatriots. During his lifetime Babar invaded India. On seeing wanton destruction and the scene of carnage and plunder, his heart bled. He complained to God about His callousness. "On seeing this appalling misery did not Thine heart melt ?" he asks God. As his religion was proselytising several Hindus and Muslims embraced it. Guru Nanak's teachings were carried on by nine of his followers. Eventually it became a great religion and under the last Guru Gobind Singh it became an intensely patriotic and martial force. Guru Nanak wrote :

"Religion consisteth not in mere words. He who looketh on all men as his equal is religious. Religion consisteth not in wandering to tombs or places of cremation, on sitting in altitudes of contemplation. Religion consisteth not in wandering in foreign countries, or in bathing at places of pilgrimage. Abide pure amidst the impurities of the world. Thus shalt thou find the way to religion."*

Ravi Das.

A noted follower of Ramanand was Ravi Das, the cobbler, who founded an important sect. His teachings were just the teachings of other Bhaktas. It is noteworthy of this spirit of renaissance, as the Bhakti cult can be called that even the so-called untouchables, were now allowed to recite the

*Quoted in An Advanced History of India, p. 406.

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name of God and to preach it, whereas under Brahmanism they were not allowed even to touch the Vedas. Ravi Das preached self-surrender to God. "Hari is in all and all is in Hari. Lose yourself in God as a river loses itself in the sea."

Mira Bai.

Rajasthan produced the famous devotee of Krishna, the great and immortal poet Mira Bai, Instead of devoting herself to Rama, she worshipped Krishna. The spread of the Krishna cult in the North was due to the famous Brahman of the South, Vallabhacharya. There are many stories about her mental betrothal to Lord Krishna and her mad love for him. Her hymns addressed to the God of her choice are highly fascinating. She wrote in *Brij Bhasha*, the language of Krishna's birth place, and possibly in Gujrati also. Mira Bai lived in the 15th century.

Tulsi Das.

Tulsi Das was the famous author of *Ramayana*. His religion is that of the love of "a personal God who loves and cares for His children and makes Himself understood through His incarnation, Rama, the Saviour." The Rama cult reached its glory with Tulsi Das.

Chaitanya in Bengal.

In Bengal, a similar Bhakti movement spread under the inspiration of the great Chaitanya. He advocated passionate devotion to one's personal God Krishna, and roused his followers to devotional excitement by *Sankirtan* (chorus) and devotional dances. He recommended mendicancy and celibacy of the monks called *Gosains*.

His mission was carried on in Bengal by poets like Vidyapati and Chandidas. But soon after, the worship of Siva and Durga revived in Bengal and Krishna cult found a new home in Orissa, with its headquarters at Jagannath.

Deccan and Maharashtra.

The Deccan was also full of religious fervour. Namdeva was the first leader in the long list of Maharashtrian saints. He preached against fasts, austerities and pilgrimages. He insisted on singing the name of Hari and doing good deeds. Many Muslims and Harijans became his disciples.

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Dadu was another leader there. Like Guru Nanak and Kabir he condemned superstitions and wanted men to be simple and straightforward. He was a great poet. After him his disciples Gharib Das and Madho Das preached his gospel.

Tuka Ram, Namdeva and Ram Das were the leaders of the movement in Maharashtra. They advocated intense love for one's God who was represented as kind, affectionate and indulgent. They also preached equality of all men. They preached their teachings in the common language of the people which produced deep effect.

The Sufi movement.

The Sufi movement in Islam also gave an impetus to the Bhakti cult of the Hindus. The Sufi saints established a number of religious orders all over India. The earliest is the Chishti order founded by Khwajah Muin-ud-din Chishti. Born in Afghanistan in 1142, he came to India in 1192, and settled at Ajmer in 1195. He was worshipped both by Muslims and Hindus. His tomb is the famous resort of these pilgrims even up to the present day. The Chishti order included great leaders like Nizam-ud-din Aulia of Delhi born in 1238 A.D., and Sheikh Salim Chishti who died in 1572. Chhataris, Suhravardis, Qadini, and Madari were other notable orders.

In addition to these well-established orders, thousands of Muslim saints sprang up everywhere. They were worshipped as individual intermediaries with God by their devotees including both Muslims and Hindus. Islam though violently opposed to idol worship took to saint worship. These saints largely profited from the Hindu practice of '*Guru-chela*', which they called *Pir-murid*. Thus they converted large number of Hindus to Islam in peaceful manner.

Among the celebrated Muslim saints are Khwajah Khizr worshipped by placing burning lamps on wells, streams or rivers ; Guga Pir, a Hindu convert to Islam, who is supposed to rule over snakes ; Lal Beg, the saint of sweepers ; Panj Pir, the name given to a group of Muslim saints, and a host of others, prevailing all over the country, but particularly in Northern India.

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Effects.

The effects of this religious reform movement were many and far-reaching. It saved the Hindus from a growing sense of frustration. It gave them a new hope of life. Had the Bhaktas not consoled the Hindus by this message of hope and cheer, many of them would have been converted to Islam, and others would have sunk to such mental and moral degradation that they could never have risen again as a great people. The rise of the Sikhs in the Punjab and Mahrattas in Maharashtra was due to the regeneration engendered by this cult. Hinduism was galvanized and further conversions to Islam were stopped. Another good point of the Bhakti movement was that it brought the two conflicting religions together by giving them a common platform. The Bhakti movement led to religious toleration, which further led to peace, prosperity and cultural developments in the country. The Bhaktas by removing many vulgar superstitions from Hinduism made it a more rational and attractive religion. This broadened the outlook of the people. Moreover, the lower classes were now regenerated. These people had so far been treated as untouchables and were useless for the country. The Bhakti cult also gave a great fillip to the growth of vernacular literature, especially poetry, all over the country.

QUESTIONS

1. Study the causes that tended to bring the Hindus and the Muslims nearer each other.

2. What were the chief features of the Bhakti cult? Study the influence of this cult on subsequent history.

3. What was the difference in the religious revival movements in the North and the South?

4. Write short notes on :—

(*i*) Guru Nanak. (*ii*) Chaitanya. (*iii*) Bhakta Kabir.
(*iv*) Ramanuja. (*v*) Sufism.

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