

**POLITICAL
AND SOCIAL
MOVEMENTS
IN
ANCIENT PUNJAB**

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(From the Vedic Age upto the Maurya Period)

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CHAPTER I

GEOGRAPHY AND STRATEGY

1. *Geographical location of the Panjab.*

Nature has sedulously provided India with a unique system of physical defences. Her peninsular south is protected by vast seas, which had been deterring foreign invaders, until the rise of modern naval powers in the West, and its interior is ramparted with parallel chains of hills, which spread out eastwards from the Sahyadri Range and divide the plateau into a multitude of isolated valleys, washed by swift rivers, like the *sierras* of the Iberian Peninsula. Hence an invader from the north encounters the same ordeal of scaling the hills repeatedly, which faced the army of Napoleon in Spain. As regards the fertile plain of the Gangetic valley, stretching from the western borders of the modern province of Uttara Pradeśa to Bihar and Bengal, it is guarded in the north by the impregnable heights of the Himalayas and fortified in the south-west by the chain of the Aravalli hills, which end in the Ridge of Delhi on the Jumna river. To the west of these hills is the great Indian desert, prolonged seaward by the salty and partly tidal marsh of the Rann of Cutch. This waterless void, some 400 miles long and 150 miles wide, flanked by the Aravallis in the rear, has been an effective bulwark against the invaders from the north. Thus the ranges of the Himalayas in the north and the chain of the Aravallis in the south-west, bordered by a broad strip of desert, constitute a natural citadel of the Gangetic plain with the land between the north-eastern extremity of the desert and the foot of the Himalayas below Simla as a gateway, guarded by the defence-post of Delhi. No river flows through this gateway. Hence there is no problem of crossing or fording the rivers in spate. This gateway is littered with ancient battlefields like Kurukṣetra and Panipat, where the fate of India continued to be decided from ages immemorial. In the north-west this gateway opens out in the brown waste of the plains of the Panjab, which become a rippling ocean

of green wheat after the winter rains. This region has been acting as a glacis to the citadel of the Gangetic valley. It was repeatedly scaled by foreign invaders like the mythical Assyrians and the Dionysians and the historical Achaemenians and the Macedonians, but they produced no impression on the destiny of India, since the citadel remained in the strong hands of sturdy defenders, determined to repel them. Thus the Panjab bore the brunt of northern invaders more frequently and severely than the plains, ensconced in the citadel, described above.

2. *The north-western routes.*

✓ Though the Panjab is also shielded by huge mountain ranges, there are some passes in its north-west, through which the stream of invaders, immigrants, merchants, pilgrims and travellers has been incessantly trickling towards its attractive and fertile plain. Just north of the head of the Kabul river the mountains become narrow with the exception of the Hindu-Kush, that separates the valley of the Oxus from that of the Indus. In this mountain rivers have cut some defiles, which serve as pathways from the Oxus to the Indus. Descending down the course of the Balkh-ab, a route from Bactria passes through the Dandan-shikan and the Akrobat and Shibar passes and, moving along the curvilinear valley of the Surkhab and the Ghorband rivers, reaches Bamiyan and Kāpiśi. Another route, passing along the Kunduz and traversing the Murgh pass and the Khawak pass, courses along the united streams of the Andarab and the Panjashir and joins the first route at Kāpiśi. A third and straight route starts from Kāpiśi and moves through the Salang pass. From Kāpiśi the course of the Kabul provides a southern direction to the route. Passing by Nagalu, Mandrawar, Jalalabad, Hadda and Dakka, it enters the Michni pass and then, moving along Prang, Hotimardan, Shahbazgarhi and Swabi, reaches the famous ford of the Indus at Und. Under the Kuṣāṇas a sub-route branched off through the Khyber pass with Landi Kotal and Jamrud as its northern and southern out-posts and, going through Peshawar and Naoshera, debouched on the Indus at Attock. In later times this route became more important due to the rise of Peshawar. Similar routes marched along the Kuram and

Gomal rivers and reached the Indus near Mianwali and Dera Ismail Khan respectively. From the way, these rivers are mentioned in the *Rgveda*, it is apparent that their importance was due to the routes, which flanked them. Further south another route descends from Herat and Kandahar through the Bolan pass. In ancient times this route went further south over the Mūlā pass. The Khyber and the Bolan together with the three minor passes of the Kurram, the Tochi and Gomal comprise the well-known Five Fingers-natural routes of communication connecting Iran and Central Asia with India. Another highway, connecting the Indus region with Iran, runs through Makran in Baluchistan. Besides these routes, some important highways, connecting Kaśmīra with Central Asia also act as arteries of communication between the Panjab and the outside world. Two important routes across the Pamirs and the Karakoram mountains link Kaśmīra with the Chinese route, joining it at Kashghar and Khotan respectively. The route, passing through the Zogi-la pass in Ladakh, has maintained India's contact with Tibet and China from early times. Likewise, the highway through the Baramulla gateway and Gilgit, ascending the Pamirs and opening out at Kashghar, has played an important part in the history of India's relations with Asiatic countries. Through all these routes an unceasing stream of tribes and peoples has been flowing into the fertile land of the Five Rivers and mixing with its indigenous inhabitants from the very dawn of humanity.

3. *The mingling of peoples in the north-west.*

In the hills of Afghanistan the movements, migrations and mixtures of peoples are incessant and almost imperceptible. A large part of the population migrates to the open country during the summer. Among the nomads one comes across the black tents of Arab style as well as the round Mongol *khirga*. In the north of the Hindu Kush it is difficult to distinguish between the Aimak or Berberi and the diverse tribes of Mongols, Hazarah, Uzbegs, Turcomans etc., while in its south the principal Afghan or Pathan tribes, the Yusufzais, Mohmands, Afridis, Orakzais, Shinwaris, Waziris, Ghilzais, Abdalis etc. together with their infinite subdivisions of Khels or clans present a curious racial amalgam, which is hard

to analyse. In the Indo-Iranian populace, consisting of the Hindkis, Tājiks and Afghans, there is a queer sprinkling of the Turkish Qizil-bash, the Mongol Hazarah, the Khionite Hazarjat, the Jews and the Armenians. A Tibetan strain is often manifest among the mountaineers of this region and Chinese faces sometimes greet the eyes in the markets of Peshawar and Chinese blood flows in the veins of the Chin Jats of the Panjab. Hence Babur was right in remarking that in no other country of the world one finds such diversity of peoples and languages.¹

4. *The movements of the nomads*

Among the nomads of Central Asia the movements of peoples are marked by a rhythm and regularity, that characterise the periodic changes of climate and the consequent alternations of the cycles of vegetation and desiccation. In these wanderings the nomads assume the form of a caravan, which looks like an armed troop and easily becomes an army under a powerful chief. As Demolins has shown, the great invasions of Attila, Chingis Khan and other nomadic peoples represented nothing more than the great caravans of the Steppe nomads, turned into an army.² Formed from the whole people, including women, children and flocks, such caravans resulted in the movements of the whole populations, which assimilated much of the culture of the country, they conquered, and also contributed a lot to the racial formation of its inhabitants. Hence the social consequences of the invasions of the nomads often outweighed their political shocks or military brilliance. René Grousset has calculated that in China the razzias and raids of the Turco-Mongol nomads occurred almost every ten years except under the Han and T'ang dynasties.³ In fact, the *limes* of a sedentary community like China has been marked by an admixture of nomadic elements to such an extent that

1. Babur's Mémoires tr. by Pavet de Courteille Vol. I p. 237 Vide, M. Elphinston, *Account of the Kingdom of Caubul* (London 1819); H. W. Bellew, *The Races of Afghanistan*; A. Hamilton, *Afghanistan* ch. X; A. Burnes, *Travels into Bokhara* Vol. II pp. 415-416.

2. Edmond Demolins, *Comment la route crée le type social* Vol. I pp. 72-76.

3. René Grousset, *Bilan de l'histoire* pp. 284-285.

exchanges of blood and ideas between them become a regular feature of life.

5. *The regularity of migrations & invasions.*

In the Panjab also the infiltration of foreign elements, sedentary as well as nomadic, among the local peoples is a pronounced characteristic of daily life. History may keep a record of prominent invasions only, having political consequences, but they are preceded and followed by recurrent inroads, which almost pass unnoticed. As Jean Przyluski has observed, the Achaemenian and Macedonian invasions were not isolated incidents, but linking episodes in a long chain of raids or invasions. In his words: "La conquête du Penjab par Darius, au vie. siècle, et l'expédition d'Alexandre, deux siècles plus tard, sont des épisodes présents à toutes les mémoires. Mais ce ne sont pas des événements isolés. Ils s'enchaînent dans une longue série de raids, d'incursions et de conquêtes, qui, ont commencé dès l'époque préhistorique longtemps avant que la même route ait été suivie par les Aryens". This process of raids or razzias is also discernible in the Muslim conquest of the north-west. After the occupation of Kabul by the rulers of Gazni, raids and razzias into the interior of the plains became an annual autumnal feature like the military marches of local rajas on the eve of the Dasêhra festival. As Sir Jadunath Sarkar has put it, "from the first centre of Muslim power in India went forth year after year every autumn at first raiding and ultimately conquering parties to the Hindu kingdom next on its eastern frontier, which in the course of two or three years suffered the same fate. Lured by reports of fabulous wealth to be gained by plundering the Hindus, thousands of trans-frontier Turks and Pathans flocked to the conquering Sultan's banners every autumn, asking for no pay but only permission to plunder in his train. Thus the base of Muslim power in India was generation after generation shifted south-east-wards by the same process of raid, feudatory subordination and full annexation, till the Muslim advance dashed against the hills of Assam."⁵

4. Jean Przyluski, 'L' influence Iranienne en Grèce et dans l' Inde,' *Revue de l' Université de Bruxelles* Vol. 37 (1932) p. 286.

5. Jadunath Sarkar, *Military History of India* ch I 'How Geography dictates Strategy,' *The Hindustan Standard* August 10, 1952.

Quite similar in the regularity of infiltration and steadiness of advance were the earlier movements of the Indo-Mediterranean, Indo-Austroloid, Indo-European and Caucasian peoples, which are obscured by the mists of antiquity. The only difference in the migrations of these peoples seems to be that they were *völkerwanderungen* rather than mere invasions. In other words the tribes shifted bag and baggage and founded their settlements in their new habitat with the help of arms, if necessary. Foucher has imagined the advance of the Aryans as follows :—

“Far from being a unique phenomenon of history, the Aryan invasion, a simple episode in the periodic descents of the nomads of Central Asia in the Indian plains, has been subject to many misinterpretations.... It is not necessary to hold that there is a world of difference between a caravan with its escort, an Asiatic army with its followers and a people on march. In any case, there is only one mode of passing through the pathways of the passes, which is known as the Indian file. For all, the rhythm of the progress at best consists of short daily marches, marked at more or less short intervals by halt-posts of some days, some weeks for the caravans, some months or seasons for the armies, of lustra or rather generations for the peoples. Lastly, let us not forget that a migration of tribe with women, children and flocks, tents, arms and baggage, continues to be a fact of common occurrence on the routes of Afghanistan and is the most picturesque spectacle, which they offer to a stranger. Undoubtedly, it is no more than a seasonal movement of transhifting unrolling itself on a much less scale.

One day—it should be the beginning of autumn, the season most favourable for voyage, for it is when there is negligible snow on the earth, little water in the river and no storm in the sky—a tribe or a confederation of tribes, sufficiently powerful to impose itself by force, sets out on a march on the report of some enthusiastic explorer and under the leadership of an enterprising chief. The provisions had been made for traversing the mountains; on the other side, one would live on the country; the flocks would manage to graze throughout the route. It has become necessary to leave the chariots behind; but just as now, the little children, the lambs and the new-born, the tents, clothes, utensils, provisions are divided

and loaded on the backs of pack-animals, horses, mules and bullocks: of camels, there is little or no question, only the chiefs and the aged are mounted. The grown-up children and the women walk on foot with the men, leading by the strings the beasts, which bear their entire fortune. Of course, the parties of soldiers form the advance-guard and cover the flanks and rear of the interminable column for protecting it against the possible attacks of the mountaineers—among whom—let it be noted in passing, we see the same Tibetan population, which, pushed back to this or that side of the passes of the Hindu-Kush by the invaders, continue to occupy the mountains of Hazarjat as well as the Little Tibet of Kaśmira. Hard and perilous enterprise, dozens of fatigues and incessant dangers: but at last the tribe has passed, by a path or many at a time, and lo! “here is the valley of Kāpiśi.”⁶

In this way the tribes of migrants gradually advanced towards India. But when they tried to settle down in some green valley, other tribes, following in their footsteps, dislocated them and goaded them on a further march. Sometimes there were internecine conflicts among these invading tribes and sometimes one group of them allied itself with the native people to stem the advance of others. But the tide steadily moved and swept through the whole glacis of the Panjab. The *Rgveda* gives us a picture of the alliances and conflicts of Aryan tribes, forging their way through the Sapta Sindhu regions, to the realms of the Bharatas in the valley of the Yamunā and the Gaṅgā.

6. *The evolution of the culture of the glacis-region.*

Thus we observe that the Panjab and Gandhāra have developed a glacis-culture, which is characterised by an assimilative spirit, resilient outlook, bellicose temperament, practical standpoint, independent tendency and a somewhat liberal bent of mind. Their people shun the conservative, traditionalist and caste-ridden culture of the sedate land of the Gangetic citadel and reveal a broadness and elasticity in morals and ideas, which is an anathema to the peoples of the east.

6. A. Foucher, *La vieille route de l' Inde de Bactres à Taxila* Vol. II p. 184.

CHAPTER II

THE ERA OF ARYAN INVASIONS

1 *The dawn of history*

The dawn of history shimmers in the river-valleys of the Panjab about the same time as in the valleys of the Tigris-Euphrates and the Nile. Long ago, while wandering in search of game, man realised that the seeds and fruits, found at the tips of plants and trees, have nutritive properties, comparable to those of meat. He also felt that with a little labour and ingenuity he could improve the quality and increase the yield of these esculent substances. Soon the hunting stage changed into the food-gathering and corn-growing periods. Man gave up his wandering habit and settled down in fixed abodes. Villages¹ sprang up from the bosom of the earth, where man established a permanent connection with the soil. Russian scientists like Vasilov have demonstrated that bread-wheat originated from "a centre near the Panjab, the fold between the Hindu-Kush and the Himalayas". It was the original wheat, which was the source of the varieties, grown in Mesopotamia, Europe and North America. With the birth and growth of agriculture, the crystallisation of social relations and the specialisation of economic functions also proceeded and developed. A special class of artisans and craftsmen came into existence, whose function was to manufacture the implements, needed for agricultural operations. These persons used to barter their goods for corn and other things in the villages. In course of time the places for the meeting of the workmen and farmers became fixed. The periodical fairs and markets assumed the permanent form of towns. The towns were the centres of industry, trade and wealth, where the concept of private property assumed a unique significance and articulation. Artisans, traders and owners of property began to impress their special marks and signs on their goods to denote their

1. J. B. S. Haldane, *Inequality of Man and Other Essays*.

exclusive titles and claims. Exigencies of commerce also resulted in some sort of account-keeping through signs and symbols. Thus writing was born. These two interrelated and synchronous tendencies of urbanity and literacy became the keynotes of the genesis of human civilization.³

In Baluchistan and Sind we find traces of the peasant communities of the Bronze Age, which lead us to infer that similar settlements flourished in the Panjab also. Sir Aurel Stein has discovered a large series of artificial stone-built dams and terraces, designed for the irrigation of fields. In the Mashkai valley in Baluchistan a well-preserved pair of massive stone-faced dams was constructed to contain and direct flood-water issuing from the hills above. Further to the north, near the Lakorian pass the remains of a huge barrage of a length of 348 yards, intended to dam a vast volume of water, announce man's successful struggle with the problem of drought and flood. These early conquerors of nature established numerous settlements in the repelling and inhospitable regions of Makran, Kharan and Jhalawan in South Baluchistan. They developed their distinctive cultures, characterised by typical pottery and artifice. Archaeologists have divided these cultures into two groups after the colour of pottery, associated with them : buff-ware cultures and red-ware cultures. The former group comprises the Quetta culture, attested at sites in the Bolan pass, the Amri-Nal culture, found at Amri in Sind and the Nal valley in Baluchistan, and the Kulli culture, observed at Kolwa in South Baluchistan, and the latter consists of the Zhob cultures, discovered at several sites in the Zhob valley in North Baluchistan. These cultures developed in small peasant settlements, consisting of houses, built of stones or mud-bricks, which resemble the rural communities, known throughout the Ancient East in prehistoric times. In the early stages these cultures had a course parallel to those of Ancient Iran, but in later developments they underwent the influence of the prosperous cities of Harappa culture. The decoration of vessels with the designs of heart-shaped *pipal* leaves or figures of bull and cow

shows the inspiration of Harappa. On the other hand the Harappan bronze figure of a dancing girl, with a coiffure, prevalent in Kulli culture, proves that the merchants, returning from the Baluchi hills, brought back with them women, whose fashions were aped in the Panjab.³ These Baluchi merchants had also regular connections with Sumer. A scene of bull-worship, which is a typical Indian rite, on a red-ware pot, found in Sumer, the figure of a humped bull on a steatite cup, discovered at Tell Agrab in the Diyala region, and another on a cylinder-seal from Ur, and the clay-figurines of humped bulls, exhumed at Susa, point to the influence of Indian culture in the Middle East, which followed the regular exchanges and activities of merchants.

In course of time these cultures were engulfed in a current of standardisation and uniformity, which coursed from the Makran coast to Kathiawar in the south, Bikaner in the east and the Himalayan foothills in the north. Recent explorations have revealed that the Indus culture, which was maturing there, spread further to the east. At Alamgirpur (distt. Meerut), Bhatpura and Manpur (distt. Bulandshahar) and Bahadarabad (distt. Saharanpur) evidence of the existence of the Harappa culture, particularly thick red-ware, has been found.⁴ Recently Mr. D. K. Chakravarti, Superintendent, Museums and Archaeology, West Bengal, has informed the present author that Indus Valley objects have been found at Rajardhibi mound, six miles from Bhedia, in the Burdwan district. The present author has not, however, seen the exhibits or reports and is unable to testify to the correctness of the said report. In Rajasthan Kalibangam and in the Ahmedabad district Lothal as well as Bhagatrav on the Kim, a small river discharging into the Arabian sea between the Narmada and Tapti, provide southern landmarks of this culture. In this vast territory houses began to be built of baked bricks, according to standard dimensions, stamp-seals were engraved with similar scenes and a uniform script, weights and measures assumed a unique standardisation and pottery

3. Stuart Piggott, *Prehistoric India* p. 117.

4. Y. D. Sharma, 'Copper Hoards and Ochre-colour Ware in the Ganga Basin,' *International Conference on Asian Archaeology, Summaries of Papers* pp. 54-55.

vessels were decorated with identical designs and patterns. Among the numerous sites of this age, found in this vast area, some are villages, others are small towns, a few are large towns, as along the line of the now dry Ghaggar river in the desert areas of the Bahawalpur state and two are the big cities of Harappa and Mohenjodaro, laid out to a common ground plan, each with its defenced citadel, towering above the rest of the town, acting as twin capitals of one unified kingdom. The use of baked bricks of uniform types at these sites is a symbol of the urbanised and organised state of society. The laying of streets, designing of houses, canalisation of water and construction of baths and granaries imply a high degree of control and coordination.

In the cosmopolitan culture of Harappa and Mohenjodaro the Proto-Austroloids and the Mediterraneans seem to have mixed with the Alpines and the Mongoloids. These races had commingled in a social communion, which was characterised by economic distinctions. These people made great strides in agriculture, industry and art. Though bronze, copper, tin, lead, gold and silver were the only metals, they worked upon, they attained remarkable efficiency in making articles of art and utility. The bronze figurine of a dancing girl, referred to above, is a fine piece. Among sculptures the most notable are two male figures, one clad in a richly decorated cloak and the other nude. Stamp seals, decorated with the motifs of bulls, unicorns, buffaloes, tigers, goats, elephants and rhinoceroses, attest the artistic skill of these people. But most of the works of these people were of a utilitarian character. They cast tools in closed moulds and finished them by hammering and grinding. They cast the figurines by the *cire-perdu* process. A notable find is a bronze saw, that once had a wooden handle. Plates of copper and bronze were fastened together by rivets. Gold and silver were soldered. The metals were smelted in brick furnaces. Boat-building was a regular industry. Numerous spindle-whorls testify to the importance of the textile industry, which was famous far and wide. A fine wheel-turned pottery, both decorated and plain, was common. The outlook of the people was mainly commercial.

The religion of the people of the Harappa culture centred on the worship of Mother Goddess, to whom bloody sacrifices

were also often offered,⁵ and a three-faced male deity, believed to be the prototype of Śiva. Representation of the gods was both iconic and phallic. Several animals were also held sacred and tree-spirits were also venerated. The Great Bath at Mohenjodaro may have had some ritual significance, though its absence at Harappa throws doubt about its religious association. As a matter of fact, the precise character of the Harappan religion and culture can only be ascertained after the determination of the script and language of this age. Several attempts have been made to decipher this script, but all of them are hitherto conjectural and tentative and it is futile to enter into a detailed discussion of their pros and cons.

The Harappa culture had, however, far-flung contacts and relationships, which throw some light on its approximate age. A seal like those, confined to the Late Period at Mohenjodaro, has been found at Eshunna in layers, pertaining to 2600-2500 B.C. so that the early period at Mohenjodaro reaches back to about 2800 B.C. A similar seal has been found at Ur in a tomb, which is not older than 2150 B. C.⁶ Some cylinder seals of Indian inspiration have been discovered at Tell Asmar and a green steatite cup, depicting a Brāhmaṇī bull, has been unearthed at Tell Agrab, as noted above. A jar with a Sumero-Babylonian inscription has been found at Mohenjodaro, which suggests a period of 2800-2500 B.C.

5. Mr. K. N. Shastri holds that the principal deity of the Indus people was not the mother goddess, but a god residing in the sacred tree of pipal (*asvattha-deva*) and attended by seven subordinate male deities corresponding to the seven Maruts of the Vedic age. The Indus region was dominated not by the female but by the male element. [K. N. Shastri, *New Light on the Indus Civilization and Its Early Contact with Iraq and Iran*, International Conference on Asian Archaeology, *Summaries of Papers* p. 51] T. N. Ramachandran holds that the Harappan civilization is primarily Vedic. He explains the ritual objects, found there, in terms of Vedic data. The three-faced male-deity, according to him, is the *Mahodeva*, mentioned in the Veda. He goes to the extent of holding that this civilization represents an advanced stage of Vedic culture. It is difficult to pronounce any final opinion on this difficult subject until the Harappan script is satisfactorily deciphered. As is believed by a majority of scholars, the Vedic people came into close contact with the Harappan people. Hence it is no wonder that we find many features common to the Harappans and the Vedic people. The latter may have borrowed many of the ritualistic ideas of the former. However, final decision must be reserved on this subject. [T. N. Ramachandran, 'New light on Harappan seals', *Ibid* p. 44]

6. Carleton, *Buried Empires* p. 145.

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for the culture of this region.⁷ A comparison of the plain and painted ware in the Harappa culture area with similar specimens in Sumer, Elam and Egypt also vouchsafes almost the same date. This conclusion is corroborated by carbon-14 tests. In the uppermost four layers of Kot Diji, which represent a pure or mixed Indus civilization, the carbon-14 tests have revealed a date of 2463 B.C. with a possible error of about 140 years on either side.⁸ Recently, excavations at some ancient sites in the Bahrein Island in the Persian Gulf have revealed significant traces of Harappan civilization. At the site of Ras al-Qala'a round-bellied red pottery, decorated with chain-like applied ridges, round stamp seals with naturalistic representations of animals, including bulls, that are reminiscent of the square seal of the Harappa civilization, have been unearthed. Of special significance is a fragment bearing an Harappan inscription. The layers, where these objects have been found, are pre-Sargonid in date. They belonged to a few centuries prior to the beginning of the second millennium B. C. It appears that there was a brisk commercial contact between Bahrein and the seats of Harappan culture, possibly by sea routes. Bahrein must be an intermediate outpost in the transmission of Indian goods to Mesopotamia.

The culture of Harappa came to an end as a result of the advent of invaders, who killed and burnt and destroyed. In Baluchistan the third phase at Rana Ghundai ended with the sacking and burning of the settlement. The fourth phase, represented by a different type of pottery, met the same fate. In Nal the last phase of the Zhob-ware settlement also perished in a conflagration. Even at present the site is called *Sohr Damb* the Red Mound, because of its fire-reddened soil. At Dabar Kot the upper part of the tell shows no less than four thick ash-layers, implying repeated destruction by fire. To avoid the terrible catastrophe, the people of these regions rushed to the sheltered towns like Mohenjodaro with their belongings.

7. C. L. Fabri, 'A Sumero-Babylonian Inscription discovered at Mohenjodaro' *Indian Culture* Vol. II pp. 66-73.

8. Stuart Piggott, *The Dawn of Civilization* p. 230.

9. T. G. Bibby, 'Bronze Age Cultures of the Persian Gulf in the Light of Recent Excavation', *International Conference on Asian Archaeology, Summaries of papers* pp. 29-30.

This explains the abundance of the pottery and stone vessels of South Afghanistan types in the later levels of Mohenjodaro, which indicates a sudden strengthening of contact between the Harappa and Kulli cultures. But the hosts of invaders, which dislocated them from their homes, were presently on their heels. Streaming down the passes of the Bolan, Gomal, Lak Phusi and the Gaj valley and crossing the Kirthar Range, they pounced on the flourishing cities of the Indus valley. The remains of these cities are mute witnesses to the tragedy of destruction, which they underwent. At Chanhudaro a barbarian settlement appears in the deserted ruins of the old town, which is associated with a new culture known as Jhukar. Its seals and beads are manifestly foreign to the culture of Harappa. Heine-Geldern has shown that the objects, found at the uppermost levels of the sites of Harappan civilization, are entirely different from those, peculiar to it. The bronze axe-adze of Mohenjodaro resembles those of the long tubular collar type, discovered in Rumania, the Ukraine, northern Caucasus (Faskau), Assyria and Iran. It originated in Transylvania in the first half of the second millenium B.C. and spread towards Iran and India between 1200 and 1000 B.C. In Assyria some specimens of them are found in a temple of the ninth century B.C. A bronze male head from Chanhudaro of the Jhukar level is analogous to those from Luristan and Hissar III C. A copper rod from the uppermost level of Harappa with the top, shaped in the form of a dog attacking an antelope, corresponds to the bronze pins from Hissar III C, Koban and Luristan, having the motifs of a dog chasing a deer in the form of the head. A pin from the topmost level of Mohenjodaro, having a top, made of two deer heads, is modelled on the pins from Koban and the copper rods from Hissar III C with heads, made of two horse heads. The seals from the Jhukar level of Chanhudaro agree with those from Anatolia of the Hittite period in design and fabric and are fundamentally different from Harappan seals. Two large bronze daggers from Fort Munro in Sulaiman Range correspond to those from western Iran, on some of which there are inscriptions of the Babylonian king Marduk-nadin-akhe, who reigned from 1116 to 1101 B.C. A dozen and a half double-edged copper swords with antennae hilts from the Gangetic basin and Hyderabad

resemble those, associated with the Koban culture in Caucasus. B. B. Lal points out the differences in their designs, but Heine-Geldern holds that they are due to the diversity of metals and local variations in techniques. All these objects suggest that there was an invasion of the Panjab and Sind from the West and North-West, which put an end to Harappan culture.¹⁰

Fairservis has shown that in Baluchistan in the Quetta valley, a new type of pottery replaces the old, which is common to that of the Harappa culture sites. This new type is a heavy hand-made ware, decorated rather coarsely with simple designs sometimes in polychrome. The designs are of two types, simple geometric forms and curvilinear motifs, the latter sometimes having a tendril like appearance. This pottery type appears in Rana Ghundai IV phase. It is common on the surface of Dabar Kot, Periano Ghundai and Kaudain. Fairservis called it *Ghul* ware. In North Baluchistan at Rana Ghundai IV level we find a wheel-made ware, decorated in broad lines of black and red running horizontally around the body of the vessels. The rim is frequently decorated with loops and hatching. Various other geometric and curvilinear motifs now appear. This type of decoration suggests the Jhukar style. This ware is found at Dabar Kot, Moghul Kala and Kaudain. According to Fairservis, these new pottery types are good candidates for consideration as markers of the period of Aryan occupation.¹¹

At Mohenjodaro the outburst of invaders is manifest in the distraction of the people, who buried hoards of jewellery and precious objects in the latest strata, divided large houses into smaller rooms to make room for more persons and built pottery-kilns within the boundaries of the city. The invaders plunged into their streets and houses and killed them, wherever they stood. The skeletons of persons, found in the streets and staircases without any burial equipment, tell a tale of this invasion. In one house 13 skeletons, two having cuts on heads, and elsewhere 9 contorted skeletons have been found. In

10. R. Heine-Geldern, 'The Coming of the Aryans and the End of the Harappa Civilization', *Man* Vol 56 (1956) pp. 136-39.

11. Walter A. Fairservis, 'The Chronology of the Harappan Civilization and the Aryan Invasion—A Recent Archaeological Research', *Man* Vol. 56 (1956) pp. 153-156;

a well 2 skeletons and in the neighbouring lane 2 other skeletons lay. The advent of the invaders is also proved by the swords up to $1\frac{1}{2}$ feet long of the type, associated with the Hyksos in Palestine, found at these sites. Harappa also bore the brunt of foreign invaders. We learn from the rebuilding of the citadel walls of this city that the inhabitants were threatened by some invasion. But these measures proved futile before the invaders, who stormed the citadels and settled on their ruins in mud-huts. That the invaders swooped through the north-western passes is clear from the find of a curious type of flat coppr axe with lateral lugs, called 'trunnion-celt', in Kurram in the N.W.F.P. This axe resembles the type, found in Europe, Transcaucasia and northern Iran at Turang Tepe. These axes belong to the last centuries of the second millenium B. C. or beginning of the first millenium B. C. in the opinion of Heine-Geldern! Another important find is a bronze sword from Rajanpur in the Panjab, the hilt of which recalls those, discovered in the Luristan graves of Persia. Swords of such hilts also exist in the Late Bronze Age Talish graves of the Caucasus.

The collapse of the Harappa culture settlements and the rise of new peoples on their sites is almost contemporaneous with the intrusions and movements of invaders in the Middle East. After Naramsin the Kingdom of Akkad fell a prey to the Guti and other tribes. About two centuries later the Amurru "whose onslaught was like a hurricane and who had never known a city", fell upon Mesopotamia. The Hittite empire expanded in Anatolia and a *völkerwanderung* swept over Syria and Persia. At Hissar III, Giyan, Sialk, Turong Tepe and Shah Tepe we observe new types of tools, weapons and ornaments, based on those of Early Dynastic times in Sumer, which had come into vogue among the barbarians. This movement of war-bands can be traced from the Caspian as far eastwards as Anau in Russian Turkestan, Nad-i-Ali in Afghan Siestan, Moghul-ghundai in North Baluchistan and Jiwanry and Zangian in South Baluchistan. These archaeological traces¹² of the coming of war-bands in India assume a unique signi-

12. Robert Heine-Geldern, 'Archaeological Traces of the Vedic Aryans', *Journal of the Indian Society of Oriental Art* (1936) Vol. IV, fascicule 2; 'New Light on the Aryan Immigration to India', *Bulletin of the American Institute for Iranian Art and Archaeology* (1937) Vol. V no. 1.

ficance in the light of the literary data of the *Rgveda*. In fact, the Vedic literature is the first literary source for the reconstruction of the history of ancient Panjab and the understanding of the social system, that was maturing there.

2. *Archaeology and the Aryans.*

It is believed by archaeologists that the Aryans, coming from the North-West, put an end to the Harappan civilization of the Panjab and Sind. Indra, the fort-breaker (*Purandara*), "who rends forts as age consumes a garment," is taken to be a symbol of these Aryan invaders.¹³ According to Mortimer Wheeler, they represent the cemetery H culture at Harappa. B.B. Lal objects to this view on three grounds : (1) There is a clear hiatus between cemetery H culture and Harappa culture. In the cemetery area a five to seven feet thick debris layer intervened between the Harappan cemetery R 37 and the lower stratum of cemetery H itself and in the habitation area the rickety walls, associable with cemetery H culture, were separated from those of Harappa culture by a deposit of not less than four feet in thickness. This shows that the Harappa culture was not in existence when the people, represented by the cemetery H culture, came and settled at that site. (2) The cemetery H people have revealed the features of the Proto-Austroloids and the Armenoids, but not the northern Steppe folk, who are associated with the Aryans. (3) The ware, characteristic of cemetery H, namely a very distinctive black-on-red ware, is found only at two other sites in the Bahawalpur region, but not in the valleys of the Sarasvati, Gaṅgā and the Yamunā, where the Aryans are known to have played a major part.¹⁴

Lal believes that the Aryans were the people, represented by the painted grey ware culture. This ware has a fine to medium grained light grey core with the surface varying in shade from ashy to darkish grey. The grey colour of the pottery is apparently due to its being fired under reducing conditions in the kiln. The pots are usually wheel-turned,

13. Mortimer Wheeler in *The Dawn of Civilization* ed. Stuart Piggott, p. 249.

14. B. B. Lal, 'Protohistoric Investigation', *Ancient India Silver Jubilee Number* (1953) p. 88.; M. S. Vats *Excavations at Harappa* Vol. I pp. 203 ff.

but hand-made specimens are not wanting. The commoner type, represented in this ware, are bowls with slightly convex or, as in a few cases, round profile and shallow dishes with sagger or flat base as well as a vessel like *lota*. This ware has been found by Lal at about 30 sites including Panipat, Tilpat, Pehowa, Rajā Karan ka Kila, Mathura, Kurukṣetra, Inderpat, Kampil, Barnawa, Chhat, Baghpat, Rugar, Kotla Nihang, Ahicchatra etc. Ghosh has found it at 20 sites in the Ghaggar valley. This ware occurs up to Lakhiyo Pir (Pakistan) in the west, Vaiśāli in the east, Rugar in the north and Ujjain in the south. Similar ware is found at Seistan also. Wheeler has shown that it may be related, though links are not available, to the bowls, found in secondary burials at Shahi Tump in Baluchistan.¹⁵

Some of the places, where the painted grey ware is found, are those, associated with the Kurus in the *Mahābhārata*. The five villages, demanded by the Pāṇḍavas from the Kauravas, according to the Great Epic, were Hastināpura (Āsandi), Indraprastha (Inderpat or Purana Kila at Delhi), Vṛkasthalā (Baghpat, 20 miles north of Delhi) Vāraṇāvata (Barnawa, 19 miles north-west of Meerut) and Pāṇiprastha (Panipat) or Kurukṣetra). It is significant that painted grey ware is abundantly found at all these sites.¹⁶ At Hastinapur this ware is found in Period II, when the houses were made of mud or wattle-and-daub and agriculture and cattle-breeding as well as occasional hunting were the main occupations of the people. Among the domesticated animals the horse (*equus caballus*) occupied an important place in contrast to the Harappan culture.¹⁷ The tools and weapons were mostly of copper, though in the upper levels of the period iron slags are also met with. This period came to an end as the result of a flood in the Gaṅgā, which washed away a considerable portion of the settlement. The traces of this flood can be seen in the form of erosion-marks, left on the mound itself, as well as some of the washed-away material, encountered in the river bed as many as fifteen metres below the water-level. The occurrence of this flood is corro-

15. Stuart Piggott, *The Dawn of Civilization* p. 250.

16. B. B. Lal, 'The Painted Grey Ware of the Upper Gangetic Basin', *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society of Bengal* Vol. XVI, no. 1 (1950) pp. 89-102.

17. A. D. Pusalkar, 'Horse in Protohistoric India', *Munshi Indological Felicitation Volume* [Bombay 1963] pp. 237-241.

borated by the remark, made in the Purāṇas that Nicakṣu shifted the capital to Kauśāmbi after the sweeping away of Hastināpura by the Gaṅgā.¹⁸ After a lapse of time this site was again occupied by people, who used the northern black polished ware, which, on the basis of evidence from Kauśāmbi, Taxila etc., may be dated from *circa* sixth to second century B.C. The flood may, therefore, be dated to *cir.* eighth century B.C. and the beginning of the painted grey ware occupation to *cir.* 1100 B.C.

At Rugar and Alamgirpur, the painted grey ware is sandwiched between the Harappa culture ware, on the one hand, and the northern black polished ware, on the other, without any overlap on either side. At Kotla Nihang the ware was found strewn over the deserted ruins of the Harappan settlement. Thus it is clear that the painted grey ware culture succeeded at most of the sites, mentioned above, the Harappan culture.

Associated with the painted grey ware is at some places found a black slipped ware, which seems to have proved a forerunner of the northern black polished ware.

Fairservis,¹⁹ as seen above, considers the Ghul ware "as a good candidate for consideration as a marker of the period of Aryan occupation."

Stuart Piggott holds that the resemblances among the copper tools, heads and personal and portable objects at Jhukar, Shahi Tump, last phase of Mohenjodaro, Anau III, Hissar III are "manifestations of a fairly homogenous semi-nomadic culture". There are, however, differences in the pottery types found at these places, which show that the nomadic peoples were accustomed to adopt the pottery of the local people. Thus he regards these sites as representatives of a diffuse movement of peoples eastwards in the first half of the second millennium B. C.²⁰ The cultural changes, represented at sites like Rana Ghundai IV-V, second and third occupation levels at Chanhudaro, called Jhukar and Jhangar, the burials at Moghul

18. B. B. Lal, 'Excavations since Independence', *Cultural Forum* (December 1961) p. 25.

19. Walter A. Fairservis, *Op. cit.* pp. 155-156.

20. Stuart Piggott, 'The Chronology of Prehistoric North-West India', *Ancient India*, (Jan. 1946) pp. 24-25.

Ghundai, Jiwanri, Zangian etc. are attributed to the invasions of the Aryan people.

Heine-Geldern thinks that the copper hoards of the Gangetic basin represent the advance of the Aryans. These copper objects include harpoons, antennae swords, shouldered axes, anthropomorphic figures etc. They are spread over a considerable area from Bahadarabad in the Saharanpur district, U.P. to Kallur in Andhra Pradesh. B. B. Lal has distinguished them from corresponding objects, found elsewhere in Eurasia.²¹ But, as Heine-Geldern has shown, these differences may be due to local variations in styles rather than fundamental distinctions in ideas and techniques.²²

Associated with the copper hoards at sites like Bisauli (distt. Badaun), Rajpur Parsu (distt. Bijnor) and Bahadarabad (distt. Saharanpur) is an ill-fired ochre-coloured pottery. This pottery is found in Period I at Hastinapur, just below period II, characterised by the painted grey ware. At several other sites also it is fairly wide-spread.

The above brief review of the various theories, associating different archaeological strata and objects with the Aryans, shows that their proponents believe that the Aryans came to India *en masse* in one particular period. Gordon thinks that they came in 1800-1600 B. C.;²³ Mackay holds that they migrated in the middle of the sixteenth century B.C.”;²⁴ Wheeler believes that they invaded about 1500 B. C.²⁵; Fairservis and Heine-Geldern opine that they moved between 1200 and 1000 B.C.²⁶ Fairservis also holds that they came through Baluchistan and the Gomal pass. “The evidence for a Jhukar occupation of Baluchistan in the Gomal pass area suggests,” he writes, “that that pass was used by invaders at the end of prehistoric times.

21. B. B. Lal, ‘Further Copper Hoards from the Gangetic Basin and a Review of the Problem’, *Ancient India* no. 7 (1951) p. 35.

22. Robert Heine Geldern, ‘The Coming of the Aryans and the End of the Harappan Civilization’, *Man*, Vol. 56 (1956) pp. 136-139.

23. D. H. Gordon, ‘The Early Use of Metals in India and Pakistan’, *Journal of Royal Anthropological Institute* Vol. 80 (1950) pp. 56-57

24. E. Mackay, *Ancient Indus Civilization*.

25. Mortimer Wheeler, ‘Harappa 1946 : The Defences and Cemetery R 37’ *Ancient India* (1957) pp. 81-83; *Five Thousand Years of Pakistan* (London 1950) pp. 31; *The Indus Civilization* (Cambridge 1953) pp. 90-93.

26. W. A. Fairservis, *op. cit*; R. Heine-Geldern ‘*Op. cit*’.

It is conceivable that the Jhukar people, pushed by militant pressures in eastern and southern Afghanistan, moved through the Gomal pass to the Derajat or to the Zhob valley and to Loralai and thus to Sind. The Ghul ware also follows this distribution in general. Therefore, it may well be that the Gomal pass was the critical pass, when the invasions of the Indus valley took place."²⁷ Heine-Geldern describes the Aryan movement as follows : "Some kind of migration from south-western Iran or Transcaucasia reached India between 1200 and 1000 B.C. This migration passed through the region south-east of the Caspian sea, where its traces can be recognized at Tepe Hissar near Damghan and at Turang Tepe near Asterabad. It came from the very area, where historians place the bulk of the Indo-Aryan people at the time—15th—14th century B.C.—when some of its more adventurous groups, swarming out towards the south and the south-west, had acquired the mastery over the kingdom of Mitanni and parts of Syria. Therefore, it seems reasonable to assume that the migration in question was that of the Aryans from the Near-East to India. They may have been driven from their homes by a branch of that powerful ethnic movement, which starting from the Balkans or from the lower Danube, destroyed the Hittite kingdom around 1200"²⁸ The discovery of a "trunnion-celt" at Kurram points to the passing of the invaders along these routes. Thus the difference of opinion about the date and route of the Aryan invasion is based on the supposition that they came in one mass and one attempt. Let us examine it in some detail.

The ethnic connotation of the term 'ārya is not clear. The word ārya is derived from the root *r* meaning 'to move'. It, therefore, signifies a nomad or a traveller. Some scholars hold that this term denotes a linguistic unit only. Hence it would be better if, instead of talking about the 'Aryan' invasion, we speak of the migration of specific tribes, speaking the languages of a group, which is called 'Aryan'. These tribes have been coming from time to time. In fact, the mountains of the north-west did not constitute a closed frontier, marked by political or ethnic limits. The routes and passes, piercing them, have

27. W. A. Fairservis, *Op. cit.*

28. Heine-Geldern, *Op. cit.*

been seeing the movements of peoples from time immemorial. Different tribes have been coming, going and mingling along them. About the seventeenth century or so a tribal grouping of Kassites, Śrñjayas, Kṛvis, Turvaśas and the pressers of Soma Somakas (Haumavargā) moved along them and settled in the Gangetic basin near Kampil and Ahicchatra. They were followed by the Bharatas and a large number of other tribes including the Purus. The Bharatas and Purus merged in the Kurus, who dominated the western Gangetic valley with their seat at Hastināpura. A flood in the Gaṅgā compelled their king Nicakṣu to shift the capital from Hastināpura to Kauśāmbi. We have seen that period II at Hastināpura just below the flood-level is characterised by the painted grey ware. Hence it is obvious that this culture, marked by this painted grey ware, is associated with the Kurus. From this it follows that the culture of the ochre-coloured ware and the copper hoards, which preceded the painted grey-ware-culture, was connected with the Puru-Bharatas and the Pañcālas—the Keśins, Śrñjayas, Kṛvis, Turvaśas and Somakas—who were settled in those region before the Kurus. As we shall see later, the Kurus were overthrown by another group of Irano-Scythian peoples, coming from the north-west. These people settled at some of the sites, destroyed by their predecessors. Harappa seems to have been sacked by these people. Then a hoar of earth accumulated on it, constituting the hiatus of 5 to 7 feet between Harappa proper and Cemetery H. The suggestion of Wheeler that Hariyūpiya, the scene of a battle between the Aryans and the non-Aryans, according to the *Rgveda*, seems to be plausible. But the victors, instead of settling there, passed on to the eastern regions, allowing a sheet of dust and earth to cover its ruins. Then a newly-arrived people made the mound its home. They made the black-on-red ware, having affinity to analogous ware at Kulli, found at Cemetery H. We propose to identify these people with the Irano-Scythian group of tribes, which brought about the fall of the Kuru kingdom of Hastināpura.

Iranian influences reached the Maheshwar-Navdatoli regions in western India also. There some pottery types like channel-spouted bowls, stemmed cups, vases with plattered mouth, high concave neck and bulging body etc. are compa-

rable to similar types in Iran. The people of Navdatoli lived in wattle-and-daub houses, oblong or circular in plan, domesticated animals, carried on fishing and agriculture and produced among other things wheat, rice, gram, peas, *mung*, *tivda*, *kultya*, *till* etc. Besides the earthen goblets, dishes-in-stands, the copper pots, particularly wine-cups, suggest Iranian and West Asian ideas. According to Sankalia, the pits in the floors of the houses signify the sacrificial altars. (*vedis*). Considering the striking parallelisms between the wares of this site and those of Iran, Sankalia holds that the people, associated with them, came from Iran.²⁹ It is likely that the same *völkerwanderung* of Irano-Scythian peoples, who put an end to the Kuru supremacy of the Gangetic region, carried a wing of those peoples to the south also.

Thus we observe that the ochre-coloured ware, painted grey ware, and black-on-red ware represent different tribal cultures, which came to northern India in cir 1700-1600, 1200-1100 and 900-800 B.C. respectively. We shall have occasion to discuss the advent of these tribes in detail later on in this book.

Let us now study the social and cultural consequences of the advent of these new tribes in the Panjab and the Gangetic valley.

3. *The Indra-Vṛtra myth.*

The Vedas, particularly the *Rgveda*, depicts a full picture of the conflicts and turmoils of the Sapta Sindhu region. Even a cursory perusal of the *Rks* reveals that the Ārya was hemmed in on all sides by powerful enemies. His activities, thoughts and prayers are concentrated on the extermination of his foes.³⁰ The rattle of the chariots and uproar of the horses din into his ears every moment.³¹ He implores his god Indra

29. H. D. Sankalia, B. Subbarao and S. B. Deo, *Excavations at Maheshwar and Navdatoli* (Poona and Baroda 1958); *Indian Archaeology* (1957-58) pp. 29-33 & *Ibid* (1958-59) pp. 30-31.

30. *Rgveda*, X, 159, 3 मम पुत्राः शत्रुहणः ; *Ibid* IX, 61, 23 सुवी-
रासो वयं जयेम ।

31. *Ibid* X, 103, 10 उद् वृत्रहन् वाजिनां वाजिनान्युद्रथानां जयतां यन्तु
घोषाः ।

to join him in the battle and destroy his rivals.³² He imbibes the fury and vigour of Indra to conquer his opponents.³³ He solicits the boon of being the enemy-killer and desires the honour of trampling his foes under foot.³⁴ This pervasive atmosphere of war, invasion and massacre broods over the Indra-Vṛtra myth, which is the dominant refrain of the *Rgveda*. Indra is the warrior and the hero, whose vajra thunders in the sky, tears the pall of clouds, shears the chains of mountains, quakes the mass of earth and smashes the hosts of enemies;³⁵ Vṛtra is the arch-enemy, the demon of drought and darkness, the master of charms and magic and the owner of forts and citadels. This antagonism of Indra and Vṛtra, representing the dualism of good and evil, finds expression in numerous imageries, which admit of various interpretations.

In Iran also this conception of the dualism of good and evil was predominant. The Vedic *Vṛtra* has its counterpart in the Avestan *Vrthra*, these words being derived from the root *var*, meaning 'to resist', as shown by Benveniste and Renou.³⁶ The etymologies of this word, suggested by Yāska, are quite conjectural. His derivation of *vṛtra* from the *vṛ* (to cover), *vrt* (to roll) or *vr̥dh* (to grow) is uncertain.³⁷ The original sense of *vṛtra* is 'resistance'. In the *Avesta*, *Vrthra* signifies 'resistance' in a defensive sense and is distinct from *ama* or the spirit of offence. The remover of resistance is *Vrthragna*. He is the symbol of

32. *Ibid* I, 8, 3 इन्द्र त्वोतास आ वयं वज्रं घना ददीमहि ।

जयेम सं युधि स्पृघः ॥

33. *Atharvaveda*, VII, 93, 1 इन्द्रेण मन्युना वयमभिष्याम पृतन्यतः ।

घ्नन्त्मे वृत्राप्यप्रति ॥

34. *Rgveda* X, 166, 2 अहसस्मि सपत्नहेन्द्र इवारिष्टो अक्षतः ।

अघः सपत्ना मे पदोरिमे सर्वे अभिष्टिताः ॥

35. *Ibid* II, 92, 13

द्यावा चिदस्मै पृथिवी नमेते शुष्मान्चिदस्य पर्वता भयन्ते ।

यः सोमपा चिनितो वज्रबाहुर्यो वज्रहस्तः स जनास इन्द्रः ॥

36. E. Benveniste and Louis Renou, *Vṛtra et Vrthragna: Étude de mythologie indo-iranienne* pp. 68 ff.

37. *Nirukta* II, 5 तद्वृत्रोवृणोतेर्वा वृत्ततेर्वा वर्धतेर्वा । यदवृणोतद्वृत्रस्य वृत्रत्वमिति विज्ञायते । यदवृत्तत तद्वृत्रस्य वृत्रत्वमिति विज्ञायते । यदवर्धत तद्वृत्रस्य वृत्रत्वमिति विज्ञायते ।

the spirit of victory.³⁸ Later on he became one of the two dread beings, who march before the chariot of Mithra. In Sassanian times he became the favourite god Varharān. Many of the Sassanian monarchs were named after him. One Varharān ruled in Iran from 273 A.D. to 276 A.D., another Varharān ruled there from 276 A.D. to 293 A.D.; a third Varharān fought a civil war for the throne with his grand uncle Nerseh in 293 A.D. and a fourth Varharān occupied the Iranian throne from 388 A.D. to 399 A.D. In Pehlavi traditions *Vrthragna* (Verethraghna) or Varharān figured as the angel Bahram.³⁹ Analogous to this Iranian conception of *Vrthragna* is the Hellenistic *Artagnes*, Armenian *Vahagn*, Chorasmian *Arthagn* and Sogdian *Vasagn*. In the Avesta, however, this deity is not associated with Andra, the Iranian form of Indra. The word *Vrthragna* is abundantly used in the earlier strata of the *Avesta*, such as the *Sirozāh*, the *Yasts* and the *Āfrigans*, while the word Andra, occurring as a demonisation of the Vedic god Indra, figures only twice in a casual manner in the later parts of this scripture. It appears that the application of the epithet *vṛtrahan* to Indra was primarily the work of the Indo-Aryans. It was also they, who identified *Vṛtrahan* with the striker of the thunderbolt and the bringer of rain. In Iran there is not the faintest trace of this association. The rain god of Iranian mythology is *Tistar*⁴⁰ and he has no connection with *Vrthraghna*. Thus the Indo-Iranian dualism of 'resistance' and its 'remover', *Vrthra-Vrthragna*, has evolved into the Indo-Aryan dualism of *Vṛtra-Vṛtrahan*, which became part and parcel of the conception of the distinctive Vedic god Indra.

In India there were several schools of Vedic interpretation. Yāska enumerates the four principal schools as the naturalists (*nairukta*), historians (*aitihāsika*), ritualists (*yājñika*) and the mythologists (*ākhyānika* or *ākhyānavādinah*). According to the first school, the Indra-Vṛtra myth is a figurative description of clouds, being pierced by thunder and lightning and pouring forth accumulated torrents of rain, according to the second,

38. Moulton, *Early Zoroastrianism* p. 103 et seq.

39. I.J.S. Taraporewalla, 'Zoroastrianism', *Cultural Heritage of India* Vol. II p. 328.

40. Spiegel, *Arische Periode* p. 197.

it is the account of the killing of an Asura related to Tvaṣṭr,⁴¹ according to the third, it represents a peculiar ritualistic aspect of the hymns, which possess an inherent divine potentiality, irrespective of their linguistic significations⁴², and, according to the fourth, it is merely a myth, handed down by ancient tradition. Yāska was a follower of the *nairukta* school and Sāyaṇa also subscribed to the same.⁴³ In modern times Roth, Oldenberg Macdonell, Perry, Bloomfield, Muir, Magoun and a host of other scholars have associated themselves with this school and interpreted the Indra-Vṛtra myth in terms of the phenomenon of the thunderstorm, characterised by the piercing of clouds by lightning and the consequent coming of rain.⁴⁴

The historical or *aitihāsika* view of the Indra-Vṛtra myth is gaining in importance as a result of recent researches in the history, culture, linguistics and archaeology of the Aryan people. That this view loomed large in the eyes of ancient commentators is manifest from the fact that in many Rks Sāyaṇa takes the word *vṛtra* to denote an enemy in general and does not refer

41. *Nirukta* II; 5 तत्को वृत्रो मेघ इति नैरुक्तास्त्वाष्ट्रोऽसुर इत्यैतिहासिका अपां च ज्योतिषश्च मिश्रीभावकर्मणो वर्षकर्म जायते तत्रोपमार्थेन युद्धवर्णा भवन्त्यहिवत्तु खलु मंत्रवर्णा ब्राह्मणवादाश्च ।

42. *Nirukta* I, 15 अनर्थका हि मंत्राः *Āśvalāyana śrautasūtra* I, 1, 12 मंत्राश्च कर्मकरणाः

Pūrvamīmāṃsā I, 2, 1 आमनीयस्य क्रियार्थत्वात्

43. *Rgveda* III, 33, 6

इन्द्रो अस्मा अररद्धञ्जबाहुरपान्वृत्रं परिधिं नदीनाम् Sāyaṇa's comment: नदीरस्मानरदत् रदतिःखनति कर्मा । अस्नन्त् कथमस्नन्त् । उच्यते नदीनां शब्दकरिणीनामपां परिधिं परित्तो निहितमुदकमन्तः कृत्वा । परित्तो वर्तमानामित्यर्थः । तादृशं वृत्रं वृणोत्याकाशमिति वृत्रो मेघः । तं मेघमपाहन् जघान । तस्मिन् हत आपः पतिताः ताभिर्गच्छन्तीभिर्वयं खाताः । एवं मेघहननद्वारेण अस्नन्त् ।

Rgveda II, 12, 3 यो हत्वाहिमरिणात्सप्तसिन्धून् यो गा उदाजदपघा बलस्य ।

Sāyaṇa's comment

यः अहिं मेघं हत्वा मेघहननं कृत्वा सप्त सर्पणशीलाः सिन्धून् स्यन्दुनशीला अपः अरिणात् प्रैरयत् ।

44. G. Roth, *St. Petersburg Wörterbuch* s.v. Indra, H. Oldenberg, *Religion des Veda*, pp. 29, 51, 134, A. A. Macdonell, *Vedic Mythology* p. 54, E. D. Perry 'Indra in the Rgveda', *Journal of the American Oriental Society*, Vol. II p. 117, Bloomfield, *Journal of the American Oriental Society*, Vol. 15 p. 143, Muir, *Original Sanskrit Texts V*, p. 95; Magoun, *The Early Religion*, p. 106.

to its sense of cloud, as he usually does.⁴⁵ In these Rks the use of the word *vṛtra* in plural shows that it is a general designation of a class of people rather than the proper name of any particular person. As Prof. Macdonell writes, "the use of *vṛtra* in the plural, as it is then often neuter, can hardly be derived from a generalisation of the proper name *vṛtra*, but must be based on an earlier meaning, such as 'obstruction', then 'obstructor.'⁴⁶ Thus the *Vṛtras* mean the enemies of the *Āryas*. But in some Rks the *Vṛtras* are expressly distinguished from the generality of enemies, which comprises *Dāsas* or *Dasyus* as well as *Āryas*. In *Rgveda* VII, 83, 1,⁴⁷ for instance, the *Vṛtras* are distinctly mentioned along with *Dāsaḥ* and *Āryas*. Here, too, *Sāyaṇa* equates the word *vṛtra* with *śatru*⁴⁸ or enemy, which is evidently untenable in view of the aforesaid context of this passage. *Vṛtra*, here, should be taken to denote a particular class of people, distinct from the generality of the *Āryas* and *Dasyus*. Before ascertaining the precise character and historical connotation of *Vṛtra* let us examine the nature and significance of *Indra*.

45. (i) *Rgveda* VI, 56, 2 उत घा स रथीतमः सख्या सत्पतिर्युजा इन्द्रो वृत्राणि जिघ्नते ॥

Sāyaṇa's comment: शत्रूणां हन्तृत्वेन प्रसिद्धस्तादृशः रथीतमः अतिशयेन रथी महारथः सत्पतिः सतां पालयिता एवंगुण इन्द्रः सख्या मित्रभूतेन पूष्णा युजा सहायभूतेन युक्तः सन्वृत्राणि शत्रून् जिघ्नते हन्ति ।

(ii) *Rgveda* VI, 57, 3 अजा अन्यस्य बह्व्यो हरी अन्यस्य संभृताः ।
ताभ्यां वृत्राणि जिघ्नते ॥

Sāyaṇa's comment: स चेन्द्रस्ताभ्यां वृत्राणि शत्रून् जिघ्नते हन्ति ।

(iii) *Rgveda* VII, 83, 9 वृत्राप्यन्यः समिधेषु जिघ्नते वृतान्यन्यो अभिरक्षते सदा ।

Sāyaṇa's comment: हे इन्द्रावरुणौ युवयोरन्य एक इन्द्रः वृत्राणि शत्रून् समिधेषु संग्रामेषु जिघ्नते हन्ति ।

46. A.A. Macdonell, *Vedic Mythology*, p. 159.

47. *Rgveda* VII, 83, 1 दासा च वृत्रा हतमार्याणि च सुदासमिन्द्रावरुणावसावतम्

In this Rk it is noteworthy that the word *vṛtra* is used in masculine and *ārya* is used in neuter. As a matter of fact, gender has no significance in such cases in Vedic usage.

48. *Sāyaṇa's* comment : हे इन्द्रावरुणौ युवां दासा दासानि उपेक्षयित्वा च वृत्रा वृत्राणि आवरकानि शत्रुजातानि आर्याणि च कर्मानुष्ठानपराणि च शत्रुजातानि हतं हिस्तम् ।

4. *Indra, the symbol of the Aryans.*

Indra dominates the *Rgveda*. Out of 1023 *sūktas* about 250 are devoted to his glorification and a large number of the rest are meant for his praise and propitiation in association with other gods. His *nairukta* interpretation has assumed several forms and betrays diverse tendencies in modern times. Reference has been made above to his identification with the phenomenon of thunderstorm. This view is often stretched to conceive of Indra as the god of the bright vault of heaven analogous to Jupiter Pluvius.⁴⁹ As a logical corollary of this view, Indra is taken to be the chief solar deity.⁵⁰ His role as the conqueror of the demon of winter at the advent of spring and the releaser of the streams from the congealed mass of glaciers is emphasized by Hillebrandt. His achievement of overpowering the demon of darkness, who dominates the Arctic regions for months together, is stressed by Tilak and Apte.⁵¹ Barring the significance of light-giving sun in the Arctic regions, the daily feat of the conquest of darkness by the sun is no less vital and impressive.⁵² Thus Indra is looked upon as the deity of universal light and energy or the symbol of the triumph of *tejas* over *tamas*. Astronomically speaking, he is the sun, fighting with the eclipse-demon⁵³ or is the god of the summer solstice.⁵⁴ Another view of Indra is that he is a fertility god, associated with rich harvests.⁵⁵ All these views are fragmentary, segmental and one-sided. Hopkins has summed up these views as follows: "Indra has been identified with 'storm', with the 'sky', with the 'year', also with the 'sun' and with 'fire' in general. But if he be taken, as he is found in the hymns, it will be noticed at once that he is too 'stormy' to be the sun, too 'luminous' to be the

49. G. Roth, *Zellers Theologisches Jahrbuch* (1846) p. 352, C. Lassen, *Indische Altertumskunde* I p. 893 Max Müller *Letters on Science of Language* II, 470, Muir, *Original Sanskrit Texts* V, 77.

50. Max Müller, *Chips from a German Workshop* II p. 91.

51. Hillebrandt, *Vedische Mythologie* II pp. 155, 344.

52. B. G. Tilak, *Arctic Home in the Vedas* p. 233 V. M. Apte, 'The Name Indra—an Etymological Investigation' *Journal of the Bombay University* XIX, pp. 13-18.

53. Max Müller, *Contribution to the Science of Mythology* I pp. 141-142.

54. R. Shamasastri, 'Vedic Gods', *B.C. Law Volume Vol. I* pp. 277-281.

55. P. C. Sengupta, 'When Indra became Maghavan,' *Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal*, Vol. IV p. 445 ff.

56. E.W. Hopkins, *Religions of India* p. 91.

storm, too near to the phenomena of the monsoon to be the 'year' or the 'sky', too 'rainy' to be fire, too alien from every one thing to be any one thing".⁵⁷

As a matter of fact, the human features in Indra's personality are so realistic and life-like that it is difficult to confuse them with the vague naturalistic elements, that are often associated with him. His body, head, arms and hands are clearly mentioned.⁵⁸ His gigantic frame, mighty neck and brawny back are often referred to. He has handsome nose, lips and cheeks.⁵⁹ His complexion is golden⁶⁰ and his hair and beard are tawny.⁶¹ He agitates his jaws,⁶² puffs out his beautiful lips⁶³ and shakes off the drops of soma from his moustach.⁶⁴ His parents are referred to⁶⁵ and his wife is mentioned.⁶⁶ His intemperate fondness for soma is jeered at⁶⁷ and his amorous pursuits are also adverted to. He is an expert in female lore,⁶⁸ particularly interested in the children of unmarried girls.⁶⁹ He allows himself to be enticed away by an Asura woman and is said to have been enamoured of a Dānavī named Viliṣṭenga and gone to live among the Asuras on that account.⁷⁰ His exhaustion after excessive sensual indulgence is said to have been removed by the drug of a monkey.⁷¹ He regained his virility by using that medicine. Surrounded by the Maruts, he rolls his brilliant chariot,⁷² launches the terrible vajra⁷³ decimates his foes and destroys their citadels,⁷⁴ conquers their

57. F. W. Hopkins, op. cit. *American Oriental Society* Vol. 36 pp. 242 ff.

58. *Rgveda* VI, 47, 8 ऋष्वा त इन्द्र स्यविरस्य बाहू । Vide also II, 16, 2.

59. *Ibid* I, 29, 2; II, 12, 6; III, 36, 10; VI, 17, 2.

60. *Ibid*. I, 7, 2.

61. *Ibid*. X, 96, 5-8; X, 23, 4.

62. *Ibid*. VIII, 65, 10.

63. *Ibid*. III, 32, 1.

64. II, 11, 17.

65. *Ibid* IV, 18-1-2.

66. *Ibid*. III, 53, 6.

67. *Ibid*. V, 29, 7; X, 119 (*labas ūkta*).

68. *Ibid*. VIII, 33, 17.

69. *Ibid*. II, 15, 7.

70. *Aṣharvaveda* VII, 38, 2.

71. *Rgveda* X, 86 (*Vṛṣṭakapis ūkta*).

72. *Rgveda* VI, 56, 2.

73. *Ibid*, III, 33, 6; I, 80, 20; I, 101, 5; IV, 26, 2.

74. *Ibid* I, 51, 5; IV, 16, 13.

country and dispenses largesse with both hands.⁷⁵ On the basis of these intensely human and individual traits, Dandekar holds "that Indra must have been primarily a human-hero, indeed, essentially a historical personality, that, in course of time, he must have been elevated to the position, first, of a national war-god, and, then, of the supreme god and, that, later on, naturalistic or cosmic elements must have been surperimposed on his personality."⁷⁶ Similarly, Gordon Childe observes that in the concept of Indra "incidentally we see the earthly princes, whom Indra copies, generous to bards, bold to smite the dark-skinned Dasyus, lovers of strong drink, dicing and horse-racing, in a word, with all the characteristics of a Teutonic hero in the Norse epic."⁷⁷ In the description of the wars of Indra, preserved in the *Rgveda*, Prof. Childe sees "a picture of a young and vigorous race, fresh from the mountains, taking possession of the torrid plains of northern India."⁷⁸

The name of Indra has its analogues in several other Indo-European languages. Ludwig connects it with the Slavonic *jedru* (impetuous), Bezenberger equates it with the European words *giant* and *géant* (an enormous being)⁷⁹, Kretschmer derives it from the Hittite *innar* signifying 'might'⁸⁰ and Oldenberg holds that "Indra, the strongest of the Vedic divinities, who, hurling his weapon slays the dragon and liberates the imprisoned waters, is truly the same god as Thor in the Edda, the dragon-fighter, the hammer-hurler"⁸¹ Of special significance is the occurrence of the name of Indra among the gods, cited in a treaty, dated 1350 B. C., made between the Hittite king Suppiluliuma and the Mitanni king Mattiwaza, found on a tablet, unearthed at Boghaz-kui.⁸² Equally important is the discovery of the name *Indarota* (Ved. *Indrota*) on the

75. *Ibid* II, 19, 4; I, 30, 1; VII, 27, 3.

76. R. N. Dandekar 'Vṛtrahā Indra', *Annals of the Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute* Vol. XXI (1950) p. 25.

77. V. Gordon Childe, *The Aryans* p. 30.

78. *Ibid* p. 31; Stuart Piggott, *Prehistoric India*, p. 260.

79. Hillebrandt. *Vedische Mythologie*, op. cit.

80. Batakṛṣṇa Ghosh, 'Problems of Indian Linguistics', *B. M. Barua Commemoration Volume* (Indian Culture Vol. XV (1949) p. 153.

81. Hermann Oldenberg, *Ancient India, its Language and Religions* p. 60.

82. *Cambridge History of India I* p. 72; *Cambridge Ancient History II* p. 13.

cuneiform tablets of kings, found in the Middle and Near East.⁸³ It has been held that the prevalence of this name of Vedic affinity in these regions was the result of the advent of a section of the Indo-European peoples about 1500 B. C. Burrow thinks that this Aryan invasion of the Middle East came from the northern regions, that is, from the Indo-European *urheimat* in South Russia via the Caucasus.⁸⁴ This theory implies that the stock, from which an offshoot came to the Middle-East, knew and venerated Indra. But it is noteworthy that in the Iranian branch of this race Indra as a god is conspicuous by absence. This shows that the ascendancy of Indra dates from a period, when the Iranians had branched off from the parent stock and started developing their own mythology after the common racial notions. It is now mostly believed that the separation of the Iranians from the main body of Indo-European migrants took place in the Chorasmian and Oxus regions.⁸⁵ This territory is believed to be the secondary eastern *urheimat* of the Aryan people after their movement from their primary *urheimat* somewhere in the steppes between the Altai and the Urals, extending perhaps from Kirghizstan to South Russia.⁸⁶ After the migration of the Iranians, the remaining body split up into two branches, one moved to the south-east and reached India and the other wandered in the west, appeared at the head of a confederation of tribes and became known as Mitanni. It was in this period that the concept of Indra as a racial hero and a tribal war-god crystallised by incorporating the early Indo-European ideas of 'might', 'valour', 'enormity' and 'impetuosity', that are couched in the various words, cited above. That is how we find the Indra-cult in the Middle East in a form, akin to that of the Vedic Aryans and different from the notions of the Avestan Iranians. This also explains why the forms of this word current in these regions, are more archaic than in the Vedas, though they bear a greater affinity to

83. T. Burrow, *The Sanskrit Language* p. 27.

84. *Ibid* p. 30.

85. *Ibid* p. 3; R.N. Dandekar, 'The Antecedents and the Early Beginnings of the Vedic-Period, *Proceedings of the Indian History Congress* (Tenth Session, Bombay) p. 40.

86. Brandenstein, *Die erste indogermanische Wanderung*, summarised by Batakṛṇa Ghosh, 'The Aryan Problem', *The Vedic Age* pp. 210-211. Burrow prefers the view that South Russia was the *urheimat*.

them than to any other branch of the Indo-European language. The theory that these people migrated to the Middle East from India, though supported by authorities like Jacobi, Winternitz and Pargiter,⁸⁷ is not countenanced by linguistic considerations e.g. the occurrence of the spirant 'z', the change of *rt* into *art*, the assimilation of *pt* to *tt* etc.

According to Indian traditions, Indra belongs to a later and younger generation of gods. In the *Taittiriya Samhitā* (II, 3, 4, 2) Indra is described as *devānām anujāvara*. The *Taittiriya Brāhmaṇa* (II, 2, 3, 3; II, 2, 7, 2) also states that Prajāpati created all gods except Indra and that he was generated later. These traditions refer to the later development of the cult and concept of Indra. It is held that the pristine Indo-Iranian religion centred round the conception of Asura Varuṇa, the protector of the system of the cosmos.⁸⁸ The followers of this religion were the first to come and settle into India. Later on a second wave of immigrants swept in, carrying the Indra-cult on its crest and wiping out the adherents of Asura Varuṇa. This explains why Indra is implored to smite the Dāsas as well as the Āryas, who are arrayed as enemies. This fact of the plurality of Aryan settlements in India is borne out by linguistic data. It is well-known that certain features of the Kafiri languages of the North-West show significant divergences from the Indo-Aryan speech. They agree with Iranian in the treatment of the two palatal series, e.g. *zim* 'snow: Skt. *hima*; *ja* 'kill: Skt. *han*, preserve the very archaic 'c' which later on became *ś*, e. g. *cuna* 'dog', *duc* 'ten' and do not cerebralise 's' after 'u', as the Vedic does.⁸⁹ These traits show that these languages were brought by an earlier band of invaders, which was later overpowered and driven into the recesses of mountains by new immigrants, who spoke an altered form of language.

The substance of the above discussion is that Indra is a symbol of a later wave of Aryan invaders and immigrants

87. H. Jacobi, 'On the Antiquity of Vedic Culture', *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society* (1909) pp. 721-26; M. Winternitz, *A History of Indian Literature* Vol. I p. 306 F. E. Pargiter, *Ancient Indian Historical Traditions* p. 302.

88. R.N. Dandekar, 'Asura Varuṇa', *Annals of the Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute* Vol. XXI (1940) pp. 157-191.

89. T. Burrow, *The Sanskrit Language* p. 32.

which came into India, on one hand, and reached the Middle East, on the other. It was these Aryans, who put an end to the culture maturing in the Panjab.

5. *Vṛtra, the symbol of the Dasyus and Asuras.*

We have seen above that Vṛtra signifies the enemies of Indra. In order to ascertain the race and nationality of the enemies, designated by this Indo-Iranian word Vṛtra, meaning 'obstruction' and 'resistance', we have to examine those passages of the *Rgveda*, in which the synonym Dasyu is used for Vṛtra. In *Rgveda* (I, 100, 12).⁹⁰ Indra is called *Dasyuhan*, the killer of Dasyu, in place of *Vṛtrahan*, the killer of Vṛtra, and in *Rgveda* (I, 51, 5)⁹¹, the combat of Indra is said to have resulted in *Dasyuhatyā*. In the *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa* (I, 6, 3, 13) Vṛtra is expressly called a Dasyu. While Indra was moving in pursuit of Vṛtra, he addressed Agni and Soma "Ye belong to me and I belong to you. Why then do ye support that Dasyu against me? Come over to me."⁹² The Dasyus are described as noseless⁹³ (*anās, viśiṣipra*), as they had snubbed noses, which contrasted with the long and prominent noses of the Āryas,⁹⁴ and Vṛtra is also called broken-nosed (*rujānās*). This shows that the Vṛtras were Dasyus and that they had ethnic affinities with the snub-nosed people, who constituted a large part of the population of the Panjab. As Macdonell and Keith have observed: "that the Dasyus were real people is shown by the epithet 'anās' applied to them in one passage of the *Rgveda* V. 29, 10. The sense of this word is not absolutely certain.

90. यद्वा दिविपार्ये सुष्विमिन्द्र वृत्रहत्येऽवसि शूरसाती ।
यद्वा दक्षस्य बिभ्युषो अबिभ्यदरन्ध्रयः शर्घत इन्द्र दस्यून् ॥

91. स वज्रभृद् दस्युहा भीम उग्र सहस्रचेताः शतनीय ऋम्वा ।
त्वं पिप्रोर्नमणः प्रारुजः पुरः प्र ऋजिश्वानं दस्युहत्येष्वविष्य ॥

92. *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa* translated by Julius Eggeling (*Sacred Books of the East* Vol. XII) p. 166.

93. *Rgveda* V, 29, 10 अनासो दस्यूरमृणो वधेन निदुर्योण आवृणङ् मृध्र-

वाचः ।

94. *Rgveda* II, 12, 6 युक्तग्राव्णो योऽविता सुशिप्रः सुतसोमस्य स जनास इन्द्रः ।

The Āsvins are called Nāsatyas, which Yāska explains as *Nāsikāprabhavāḥ* indicating their prominent nasality.

The pada text and Sāyana both take it to mean without face (*an-ās*), but the other rendering noseless (*a-nās*) is quite possible and would accord well with the flat-nosed aboriginals of the Dravidian type, whose language still persists among the Brahuis, who are found in the North-West. This interpretation would receive some support from Vṛtra's being called 'broken-nosed', if this were the correct explanation of the obscure word (*rujā-nās*).⁹⁵

The word *dasyu* signified the aboriginal peoples, who inhabited the vast stretch of land from the Caspian Sea to the fringes of India. Meyer and Hillebrandt identified the *Dasyus* with the Dahae, "a tribe nearly akin to the Iranians in the Kirghiz-Turkman steppe, which extends from the Caspian Sea beyond the Jaxartes, now Syr Darya"⁹⁶ The *Dasyus* are also frequently mentioned in Avestan literature and Achaemenian inscriptions as *Dainyu*, *Dakhyu* and *Dapyu*. But no odium or bad sense is attached to this word in Iranian literature and inscriptions. About the use and meaning of the word *dasyu* in Zoroastrian books Prof. Jahangir S. Tevadia observes; "the suggestion that the original meaning of this term (*dasyu*) was enemy, from which was developed 'enemy people' or 'enemy country' is not convincing, for in such a case the phrase '*aryanam, dahyunam*' 'of the countries or peoples of the Āryas' would be very strange in the mouth of the Avestic adorers. I think that the word meant people or country without any bad connotation originally, but it got associated with this odium, when applied to the conquered people or natives by Vedic tribes."⁹⁷ This sense of the word *dasyu* is also preserved in the inscriptions of the Achaemenian emperors of Iran. There it denotes countries or peoples like *Pārs* or Persia and *Māda* or Media.⁹⁸ In modern Persian this word *dahyu* survives as *dih* and means

95. A. A. Macdonell and A. B. Keith, *Vedic Index*, Vol. I p. 347.

96. E. Meyer, *Geschichte des Altertums*, Vol I section 425 page 525; Hillebrandt, *Vedische Mythologie* I pp. 94-116.

97. *Viśvabhāratī Quarterly* Dec. 1940.

98. Sukumar Sen, *Old Persian Inscriptions* p. 12 'Pasāva dranga dahyu-vā vasaiyabavā utā pārsaiy utā mādaiy utā aniyāxuvā Dahyusuvā'. But in the Persepolis inscription of Xerxes *Dahyu* particularly signifies the Dahae of Transcaspians. According to R. G. Kent, this name survived in Dahistan of medieval times, which was situated to the east of the Caspian Sea (Roland G. Kent, *Language* Vol. XII p. 298).

a 'village'. From modern Persian this word has entered in the vernaculars of North India in its plural form *dehat* meaning "countryside."

Analogous to the word *dasyu* is the word *dāsa*. This word has entered into the Finno-Ugrian languages as a result of the contact of their speakers with the Indo-Iranians. In the Vogul speech, belonging to this group, the word *dāsa* has become *tās* meaning 'stranger'.⁹⁹ Thus it is clear that the word *dāsa-dasyu* existed in the Indo-Iranian language in an early period and signified 'people'. When these Indo-European tribes came into contact with other tribes, they called them by this name. In course of time, this word became conventionalised in the sense of a stranger or foreigner. Some tribes like the Dahas retained this name for good. Later on, the Āryas transferred this name to the aboriginal people of India, whom they encountered in this country. The *Aitareya Brāhmaṇa* (VII, 18) plainly and distinctly understands by the word *dasyu*, the aboriginal tribes, among which it includes the Āndhras, Puṇḍras, Śabarās, Pulindas and Muṭibās. This *Brāhmaṇa* refers to the curse of Viśvāmitra on his disobedient sons that they would become of low castes such as the Āndhras, Śabarās etc., who, in consequence, became the Dasyus. Keith has translated this passage as follows :

"Viśvāmitra had a hundred and one sons, fifty older than Madhuchandas, fifty younger. (He loved the younger sons). Those, that were older, did not think this right. Them he cursed saying, 'your offspring shall inherit the ends of the earth.' These are the (people) the Āndhras, Puṇḍras, Śabarās, Pulindas and Muṭibās, who live in large number beyond the borders; most of the Dasyus are the descendants of Viśvāmitra."¹⁰⁰

Thus it is clear that by *dasyu* the Āryas meant the people, whom they fought and vanquished in India. The physiology, religion and culture of these Dasyus are hinted at in several passages of the *Rgveda*. They are described as flat-nosed,¹⁰¹ dark-skinned¹⁰²

99. T. Burrow, *The Sanskrit Language* p. 25

100. A. B. Keith, *Rgveda Brāhmaṇas* (Harvard Oriental Series) p. 307.

101. *Rgveda* V, 29, 10, *Op. cit.*

102. *Rgveda* I, 130, 8 इन्द्रः समस्तु यजमानमार्यं ... मनवे शासद्व्रतान् त्वचं कृष्णामरन्धयत् ; *Ibid* II, 20, 7 स वृत्रहा इन्द्रः कृष्णयोनीः पुरन्दरो दासीरैरयत् ; *Ibid* II, 12, 4 यो दासं वर्णमधरं गुहाकः

and phallus-worshipping¹⁰³ people, who are irreligious¹⁰⁴ and devoid of rites¹⁰⁵ in the eyes of the Āryas.

The substance of the above discussion is that *dasyu* is a word of Indo-Iranian language like *vṛtra*, which was later on used to denote the people of India, whom the Āryas killed in tens of thousands. In *Rgveda* (IV, 30, 15)¹⁰⁶ Indra is said to have massacred thirty thousand Dasyus and in *Rgveda* (II, 13, 8, 9)¹⁰⁷ he is reported to have captured one thousand Dasyus. Thus the onset of the Āryas blazed a trail of bloodshed and devastation.

The Asuras were also prominent in the pre-Aryan population of India. In the *Rgveda* *Vṛtra* is often described as the 'shaker of the world' and the epithet 'dadhataḥ' is applied to him. In these passages Śāyaṇa interprets *Vṛtra* as *Asura*.¹⁰⁸ In some other passages the word *vṛtra* is used as a title of the *Asura* Śambara. In *Rgveda* II, 12, 11 Śambara is described as *ahi*¹⁰⁹ or serpent, which is, as we shall presently see, a famous

103. *Ibid* VII, 21, 5 सः शर्घदर्यो विषुणस्य जन्तोर्मा शिशुनदेवा बभ्रुवन्तं नः *Ibid* X, 99, 3 स वाजं यातापदुष्पदा यन्त्स्वर्षा ता परिषदत्सनिष्पन् । अगर्षा यच्छतदुरस्य वेदो घ्नञ्छिशुनदेवा अभिवर्षसाभूत ॥

104. *Ibid* I, 51, 1 विजानीह्यार्यान् ये च दस्यवो बहिष्मते रन्वया सासद-
व्रतान्, IX, 41, 2 साव्हांसो दस्युमव्रतम् ।

105. *Ibid* X, 22, 8 अकर्मा दस्युरस्मि नो अमन्तुरन्यव्रतो अमानुषः ।
त्वं तस्यामित्रहन् वधदासस्य दम्भय ।

106. उत् दासस्य वचिनः सहस्राणि षडावधीः ।
अधि पञ्च प्रधीरिव ॥

107. शतं वा यस्य दश साकमाद्य एकस्य श्रुष्ठौ यद्ध चोदमाविष ।
अरज्जौ दस्यून् त्समुनन्दभीतये सुप्राव्यो अभवः सास्युकथ्यः ॥

108. (i) *Rgveda* II, 21, 4 अनानुदो वृषभो दोघतः ।

Śāyaṇa's comment; दोघतः दुग्धिहिंसाकर्मा हिंसकस्यासुरस्य हन्ता

(ii) *Rgveda* VII, 6, 6 विचिद् वृत्रस्य दोघतो वज्रेण शतपर्वणा शिरो
विभेद वृष्णिना ।

Śāyaṇa's comment; वृत्रस्य चिदावरकस्याधिदोघतः अत्यर्थं
जगत्कम्पयतोऽसुरस्य

109. *Rgoeda* II, 12, 11 यः शम्बरं पर्वतेषु क्षियन्तं चत्वारिंश्यां शरद्यन्व
विन्दत् । ओजायमानं योर्हि जघान दानुं शयानं स जनास इन्द्रः ॥

Śāyaṇa's comment : बलमाचरन्तमहिमाहन्तारं दानुं दानवं शम्बरमसुरं
जघान हतवान् स इन्द्रो

epithet of Vṛtra. "Śambara is employed", as Prof. Roth writes, "at a later date to designate an enemy in general and in particular an enemy of Indra, Vṛtra.....In the passages, which speak of Divodāsa, mention is made of his deliverance by the aid of the gods from the oppressor Śambara."¹¹⁰ In epic literature also Vṛtra figures as an Asura or Vṛtrāsura.¹¹¹

In early Indian literature the word *asura* does not mean an evil being or enemy in general; it signifies a distinct and particular people having their own culture, religion, literature, science and language. The religion of the Asuras is described as consisting of charms, spells, exorcisms or *māyā* and *kṛtyā*.¹¹² Their magic is very often referred to in the Vedas. In the *Atharvaveda* in a hymn for curing penial debility, a person tied with rope is described as demonstrating the feat of Asura magic by expanding his body and changing his shapes like Proteus.¹¹³ The wisdom of the Asuras is famous in the Vedas. In the *Atharvaveda*, *Āsurīmedhā* or wisdom of the Asuras is put on a par with the wisdom of the R̥bbus and R̥sis.¹¹⁴ *Āsurīvidyā* or *Āsurī* science is also frequently mentioned in the *Sūtras*¹¹⁵ and the Vedas. The Asuras are described as highly proficient in the techniques and working of iron (*ayojālā*). Their characteristic feature is said to be the iron paraphernalia, that they possessed.¹¹⁶ Like their magic, their language possessed an individuality of its own and is noticed as such in Indian

110. G. Roth, *Über Litteratur und Geschichte des Vedas* p. 116.

111. *Mahābhārata* V, 10, 19

ऋषिनाक्यं निशम्याथ स वृत्रः सुमहाबलः ।
उवाच तांस्तदा सर्वान् प्रणम्य शिरसासुरः ॥

112. *Atharvaveda* VIII. 3, 5, 9 याः कत्या आसुरीः

R̥gveda X, 124, 5; *Ibid* X, 138, 3

113. *Atharvaveda*, 6, 72, 1

यथासितः प्रथयते वशां अनु वपूषि कृण्वन्नसुरस्य मायया ।
एवं ते शपः सहसायमर्कोऽङ्गेनाङ्गं संसमकं कृणोतु ॥

114. *Atharvaveda* VI, 11, 108.3

यां मेघामृभवो विदुर्यां मेघामसुराः विदुः ।
ऋषयो भद्रा मेघां यां विदुस्तां मय्यावेशयामसि ।

115. *Āśvalāyana-Śrauta-Sūtra*, X, 7, 7,

116. *Atharvaveda*, XIX, 7, 66, 1

अयोजाला असुरा मायिनोऽयस्मयैः पाशैरङ्घिनो ये चरन्ति ।

It is noteworthy that the modern tribe of Asurs in Chota Nagpur plateau are very good iron-smelters.

literature.¹¹⁷ Their marital custom of paying the bride's price is mentioned in Indian law-books.¹¹⁸ Their practice of adorning dead bodies, which was also prevalent among the Egyptians, is also mentioned in the *Chhândogya Upaniṣad* (VIII, 8, 5) and their custom of depositing them in closed cemeteries is referred to in the *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa* (XIII, 8). Their strategy of total-war, which consisted in robbing lands, goods, sons, wives etc. is implied in the conception of *Āsuravijaya*, set forth in the *Arthaśāstra* of Kauṭilya (XII, 1). Their priests are referred to in Brāhmaṇa sacerdotal books. The *Baudhāyana Dharmasūtra*¹¹⁹ speaks of the *Āsurāyana* branch of the Kaśyapa gotra. In the lists of Brāhmaṇa teachers, given at the end of the tenth book of the *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa* and the sixth chapter of the *Brhadāranyaka Upaniṣad*, we come across the names of *Asuri*, *Āsurāyana* and *Prāśniputra Āsurivāsuri*, which are reminiscent of Asura origins. Thus it is certain that the *Asuras* were a people having their own culture rather than a class of mythical demons.

The Asuras have been identified with the Assyrians with fair certainty.¹²⁰ The Assyrian monarchs attached the title (असुर) 'asura' or 'assura' to their names, as is known from such names as Assur-Bani-Pal, Assur-Nazir-Pal etc., found in Assyrian historical records. The greatest god of the Assyrians was 'Assur' and the city, in which the greatest temple of 'Assur' was situated, was also known as 'Assur'. These Assyrians rose to great eminence after the fall of Babylon and spread their sway over a large part of western Asia. Their

117. *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa* III, 2, 1, 18-24 असुर्या हेषा वाक् *Pātañjala Mahābhāṣya* (Kielhorn's edition) Vol. I p. 2.

हेलयो हेलय इति कुर्वन्तः पराबभूवुः । तस्माद् ब्राह्मणेन न म्लेच्छित्वै नापभाषितवै । म्लेच्छो ह वा एष यदपशब्दः । म्लेच्छा मा भूमेत्यध्ययं व्याकरणम्

In this passage 'helaya-helaya', corresponding to 'helavo-helavo' of *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa* (III: 2, 1, 24) is a Semetic word, whose forms are Hebrew 'loah', Babylonian-Assyrian *ilu-illu*, Phoenician *el*, Arabic *ilāh*. V. S. Agrawala, 'Some Foreign Words in Ancient Sanskrit Literature', *Indian Historical Quarterly* vol. XXVII (1951) p. 4. When Christ was going to be crucified he is said to have uttered 'eli eli lima saboqlani'.

118. *Āpastambya-Dharma-Sūtra* V, 12-1

शक्तिविषयेण द्रव्याणि दत्त्वा बहेरन् स आसुरः

119. *Baudhāyana-Dharma Sūtra* (*Bibliotheca Indica* Edition) Vol. III p. 450

120. R. G. Bhandarkar, 'The Aryans in the land of the Assurs' *Collected Works* vol I pp. 94-110.

inroads and expeditions reached up to Iran and India. Tilgath-Pilezar I annexed the Median Hills and Queen Semiramis is known in legends to have led an expedition in north-western India.¹²¹ The expansion of the Assyrians resulted in the sprinkling of Assyrian peoples in India. So far as the nomenclature 'asura' is concerned, it is noteworthy that the Aryans came into contact with the Semetic peoples and cultures of the Middle East in very early times in their Urheimat. The Semetic elements in their culture, e. g. the use of the axe (Skt *paraśu*=Assyrian *pilakku*), the technique of copper (IE *rondhos*=Sumerian *urud*), the vogue of the war-chariot (IA *marya*=Sumerian *mar*)¹²² and some other words (*Atharvaveda* I, 25, 2-3 *hṛūdu*=Semetic *harudu*) point to these contacts.¹²³

121. Arrian, *Indika* I, 3; *Anabasis* VI, 24, 2-3 Strabo, *Geography* XV, 1, 6.

122. Eduard Meyer's view that the word 'marya' is of Indo-European origin has now been refuted by Sydney Smith (*The Antiquaries Journal* Vol. XIX p. 43) and D. J. Weisman (*The Alalakh Tablets* pp. 9-10), who hold that this is a Semetic word derived from Sumerian 'mar' meaning a vehicle. *Maryannu* means one, who is entitled to the privilege of riding in a chariot i. e. an aristocrat.

123. Such other words are : (1) Arabic *ardun* (earth), German *erde* English, *earth*, sanskrit, *adri*; (2) Hebrew, *tab* (good) Sanskrit *tabuvā*, Persian *tobāh*; (3) Arabic *karnun* (horn) Latin *cornu*. Bedrich Hrozný, *Histoire de l'Asie Antérieure* p. 82. Some Vedic names, e. g. Apisala, Kavaṣa-Ailūsh, occurring in the Śāṅkhāyana and Aitareya Brāhmaṇas, are also said to be of Sumerian origin. Some Vedic words are alleged to have been found in the Assyrian records of the library of Assur-bani-pal (R. G. Harshe, 'Vedic Names in Assyrian Records' *Adyar Library Bulletin* (May 1957) Vol. XXI parts 1-2) R. G. Harshe has shown that many Vedic tribal names are the words of ancient Iraq. According to him, *ṛka* is based on *Warak* or *Uruk* and *Bauri* on *Babylon*. The name *Paijavana*, associated with *Sudās*, is connected with *Penjivan* in north-eastern Iraq and that of the *Pulastis* with *Palestine*. Of the sons of *Pulaha Kardama* is associated with the Delta of the Nile. He equates the name of *Ryabha* with the Phoenician god *Reshef*, whose bronze statue has been found in *Cyprus*, and that of *Aśvīya*, whose surnames are *Māna* and *Mandārya*, with the Median tribes bearing analogous names. He has shown that *Arāda-Dātreyā* has a name beginning with a word *Arād* found in many cuneiform tablets of the Kouyunjik Collection at the British Museum as well as the name of the Phoenician city of *Arād*. The names *Yahu*, *Yahva*, *Yahvat*, occurring in the Vedas, have an unmistakable resemblance with *Jehovah* or *Yahweh*. (R. G. Harshe, 'The Trails of the Vedic Civilization in the Middle-East, *Kalka Prasad Bhatnagar Commemoration Volume*, Kanpur 1961, pp. 165-176.)

In *Rigveda* (I, 123. 8) there is a reference to the residence of the goddess of dawn, *Uṣas*, in the realm of *Varuṇa* for a long time. सदृशीरद्य सदृशीरिदु श्वो दीर्घं सचन्ते बरुणस्य धाम. On the basis of this remark B.G. Tilak has thought that the Aryans lived in the Arctic regions. But the idea behind it seems to have been apparently derived from the Babylonian myth of *Ishtar* going to the nether world to bring nectar for revivifying her lover *Tammuz*, suffering there the torments, punishments and imprisonment,

They remembered these people as 'asuras'. Hence this word is widely found in Indo-European languages e. g. Sanskrit. *asura*, Iranian *ahura*. From these languages it has passed into the Finno-Ugrian languages : Mordvin *azoiu*, *azor*, Votyak *uzir* Zyryan *ozir*, Vogul *oter*, *äter*.¹²⁴ All these forms presuppose* *azur* with a palatal spirant. The modern Persian word *huzur* apparently seems to be connected with it. This word, denoting the Semetic people of Mesopotamia, which later on became a synonym for 'lord', was employed by the Āryas to mean all the peoples and cultures belonging to this stock or having affinities with it. Since it is believed that the Indus-Valley and Harappa culture with its use of building the internments of contracted bodies in brick-cist-graves, the shell-inlays, the mace-heads and pestles and the vogue of stamp-seals, engraved with the figures of *Bos primigenius* and unicorns and the clay-models of rams and the female figurines had marked affinities with the culture of the Tigris-Euphrates Valley, the Āryans were justified in calling the peoples of this culture **Asuras**. It is also noteworthy that according to Dr. Hall the Dravidians of India resemble in anthropological type the Sumerians of Mesopotamia. Hall even went to the extent of holding that the Sumerians came to the Middle-East from India.¹²⁵ To sum up, the use of the word *asura* with reference to the people, whom the Āryans met and fought, shows that they had ethnic and cultural connections with the people of the Middle-East. These people constituted a prominent element in the population of India in ancient times.

The wars of the Āryas and Asuras are referred to in several passages of the *Rgveda*.¹²⁶ Indra is said to have shattered the towns and forts (*pura*) and foiled the strategy and magic

inflicted by her sister Allatu, the presiding deity of that region, and after the painful stay of four to six months, coming back to the earth with the desired nectar. The idea of Uṣas remaining for a long time in the nether world and that of Ishtar living for four to six months in the realm of Allatu are very close to each other.

124. T. Burrow, *The Sanskrit Language* p. 24.

125. Hall, *Ancient History of the Near East* p. 173.

126. *Rgveda* VIII, 85, 9

तिग्मायुधं मरुतामनीकं कस्त इन्द्र प्रतिवज्रं दधर्ष ।

बनायुधासो असुरा अदेवाश्चक्रेण तां दधवप ऋजीषिन् ।

(*māyā*) of the Asuras Pipru and Varchin¹²⁷ and Varuṇa is reported to have baffled the Asuras by making their science ineffective.¹²⁸ An account of the war of the Āryas and the Asuras, *devāsurasangrāma*, is preserved in the *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa*.¹²⁹ It states that the Devas and Asuras both sprang from Prajāpati and entered on their father's inheritance. The gods obtained the mind and the Asuras the speech. Further the gods got the heaven and the Asuras the earth. Thereafter the Devas contrived to deprive the Asuras of their speech and earth and baffled and killed them. There is also a significant chapter in the *Mahābhārata*, which refers to the antagonism of Indra and Asuramada, who rushed forward to devour Indra at the instance of Cyavana, whom Indra had asked to refrain from offering soma to the Aśvins at the sacrifice of Śaryāti.¹³⁰

127. *Ibid*, X, 138, 3

दृहानि पिप्रोऽसुरस्य मायिनो इन्द्र व्यास्यच्चक्रिणां ऋजिश्वना ।

128. *Ibid*, X, 124, 5.

निर्माया उ त्पे असुरा अभूर्वेत्त्वं च मां हरुण कामयासे ।

ऋतेन राजन्नृतं विविञ्चन् मम राष्ट्रस्याधिपत्यमेहि ॥

129. *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa* III, 2, 1 Egglings translation (Sacred Books of the East) part II, p. 32

130. *Mahābhārata*, III, 124, 19-20

ततः कृत्याथ संजज्ञे मुनेस्तस्य तपोबलात् ।
मदो नाम महावीर्यो बृहत्कायो महासुरः ।
शरीरं तस्य निर्देष्टुमशक्यं तु सुरासुरैः ।
तस्यास्यमभवद् घोरं तीक्ष्णाग्रदशनं महत् ।

ibid III; 1-3

तं दृष्ट्वा घोरवदनं मदं देवः शतक्रतुः ।
आयान्तं भक्षयिष्यन्तं व्यात्ताननमिवान्तकम् ।
भयात् संस्तम्भितभुजः सुकिक्णी ललिहन् मुहुः ।
ततोऽब्रवीत् देवराजश्च्यवनं भयपीडितः ।
सोमार्हाविश्वनावेतावद्यप्रभृति भार्गव ।
भविष्यतः सत्यमेतद् वचो विप्र प्रसीद मे ॥

These chapters have a Mazdaian look and appear to have been based on some legends, in which Indra is degraded at the cost of Ahuramazdā. In the *Mahābhārata* Aburmazdā and his daughter Hverenāh, who lives in eternal light in the heaven, are also described as *Harimedhas* and his maiden daughter *Dhvajavati*. *Ibid.*, IV, 109, 13.

अत्र ह्वजवती नाम कुमारी हरिमेघसः ।

आकाशे तिष्ठति तिष्ठेति तस्थौ सूर्यस्य शासनात्

Harimedhas recalls Harnuz the Pahlavi form of the name of Ahuramazda. (V. S. Agrawala, 'Mahābhārata : A Cultural Commentary' *Annals of the Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute* vol. 37 (1956) p. 5).

Menaced by the cosmic figure and strength of Asuramada Indra implored Cyavana to rescue him and agreed to the offering of soma to the Aśvins. Here Asuramada clearly refers to the Iranian god Ahuramazda and his attack on Indra alludes to the wars of the Mazdayasnians and Daevayasnians, described in the gāthās of the *Zindavesta*. After the first wave of Aryan invasion, characterised by the cult of Asura Varuṇa,¹³¹ had subsided and merged itself in the culture of the Pre-Aryan people, the second wave rose and swamped the whole land, including the earlier Aryans of the first wave. In the eyes of these later Aryans the earlier Aryans were as much detestable as the Dasyus and Asuras themselves. The later Aryans, vilified as the Daevas in Iranian literature and glorified as Devas in Indian traditions, dominated the land and culture of India. Therefore, the Asuras were always looked down upon in India and the Aryan poets implored their gods to smite them along with the Dasyus.¹³² Vṛtra was a symbol of these people

6. *Vṛtra as master of Saptasindhu.*

Vṛtra is said to have controlled the waters of Saptasindhu and Indra is known to have wrested them from him.¹³³ Hillebrandt held that the waters, referred to in this account, were terrestrial rather than celestial.¹³⁴ As a matter of fact, the cloud

131. *Rgveda* VII, 65, 2.

ता हि देवानामसुराः

Ibid. V, 83, 6.

Here 'Asura' is an epithet of Parjanya and Sāyaṇa explains it as 'deva'.

132. *Atharvaveda* X, 3, X, 11.

स मे शत्रून्विबाधतामिन्द्रो दस्यूनिवासुरान् ।

Ibid. IX, 1, 2, 17

येन देवाः समुरान् प्राणुदन्त येनेन्द्रो दस्यूनधमं तमो निनाय ।

133. (i) *Rgveda*, II 12, 3

यो हत्वाहिमरिणात्सप्तसिन्धून्यो गा उदाजदपघा बलस्य ।

(ii) *Rgveda* II, 33, 6

इन्द्रो अस्माँ अरदद्वज्रबाहुरपान्वृत्रं परिधि नदीनाम

(iii) *Ibid.* X, 37, 7

अरन्न सिन्धून्

(iv) *Ibid.* VII, 49, 1

समुद्रज्येष्ठा सलिलस्य मध्यात्पुनाना यन्त्यनिविशमानाः ।

इन्द्रो या वज्री बृषभो रराद ता आपो देवीरिह मामवन्तु ।

134. Hillebrandt, *Vedische Mythologie* III pp. 155-344.

is a bringer of rain rather than its obstructor. Hence the view that Vṛtra as a cloud-demon obstructed the rain water, which Indra released, does not carry conviction. Even Sāyana interprets the Sapta-sindhus as earthly rivers like Gāṅgā and the Yamunā.¹³⁵ But this commentator was probably unaware of the fact that in ancient terminology the Seven Rivers particularly signified the rivers of the Indus system. Ptolemy understands by the seven confluents of the Indus, the Koe, (Skt. *Kubhā*, modern *Kabul*), the Svasto (Skt. *Suvāstu*, modern *Swat*), the upper part of the Indus (Skt. *Sindhu* modern *Sindh*), Vipaspi (Skt. *Vitastā*, modern *Jhelum*), Sandaval (Skt. *Asikni* modern *Chenab*), Adris (Skt. *Paruṣṇi*, modern *Ravi*) and Bioasis (Skt. *Vipaś*, modern *Beas*).¹³⁶ These seven rivers of the Indus system are called the 'seven mouths' of the Indus in the inscriptions of the classical period.¹³⁷ Thus it is certain that the Sapta-sindhavah referred to the aforesaid rivers of Gandhāra and the Panjab. The myth of the wresting and releasing of these seven rivers from the hold of Vṛtra by Indra refers to the conquest of these regions by the Āryas having Indra as their god and hero.

It is noteworthy that Vṛtra is associated with the mountains. In *Rgveda* VIII, 3, 19 he is described as lying on a summit whence Indra cast him down.¹³⁸ In some *ṛks* the mountain is said to be within the belly of Vṛtra. This shows that Vṛtras lived on or near some mountain. These mountains refer to those of Gandhāra, where the Aryans, subscribing

135. Sāyana on *Rgveda* II, 13, 3

सप्त सर्पणशीला = सिन्धून्

स्यन्दनशीला अपः अरिणात् प्रैरयत् । यद्वा । सप्त गंगायमुनाद्या
मुख्या नदीररिणात् ।

For other interpretations see B. G. Tilak, *Arctic Home in the Vedas* ch IX pp. 232-296. A. A. Macdonnell, *Vedic Mythology* p. 159; Bloomfield, *Religion of the Vedas* pp. 173-81. Max Müller, *India—What it can teach us?* p. 122.

136. J. W. McGrindle, *Ancient India as Described by Ptolemy* p. 81.

137. Mehrauli Iron-Pillar Inscription of Candara line 2.

तांत्वा सप्तमुखानि येन समरे सिन्धोजिता बाह्लीकाः । J.F.Fleet

Corpus Inscriptionum Indicarum Vol. III no. 31

138. *Rgveda* VIII, 3, 19.

निरिन्द्र बृहतीम्यो वृत्रं धनुम्यो अस्फुरः ।

to the Indra-cult, fought some of their bitter contests. It is significant that Indra is said to have searched out Śambara after forty years of hot pursuit in the mountains. He also killed Rauhiṇa as he tried to climb up the mountains to heaven.¹³⁹ In *Rgveda* I, 154, I Viṣṇu is said to have conquered the northern homeland (*uttaram sadastham*) for the Āryas by encompassing the whole land in his three steps.¹⁴⁰ Here the three steps of Viṣṇu probably refer to the Völkerwanderung of the Aryans in the Parthian regions (*pārthivāni rajānsi*). From the mention of northern places, tribes and countries in Vedic hymns Brunnhofer infers that the *Rgveda* "is the work of poets of North Iran from Caspian Sea to the Panjab"¹⁴¹ and Hillebrandt holds that some hymns of the *Rgveda*, especially the sixth maṇḍala, were composed when the Aryans were occupying some parts of Iran.¹⁴² As a matter of fact, the reference to the northern tribes¹⁴³ like the *Paktha* (modern Pakhtoons), *Barys* (Barsacutus of Arrian), *Pārāvata* (Parautai of Ptolemy), *Pani* (Parnians of Strabo), *Prthus*, *Parśu* (Persians), *Miṣha* (Medians), *Kesin* (Kassites), *Synjaya* (Drangians), *Siva* (Siboi)

139. *Rgveda* II, 12, 11-12.

यः शम्बरं पर्वतेषु क्षियन्तं चत्वारिंश्यां शरच्चन्वविन्दत् ।

यो रौहिणमस्फुरद्ब्रह्मबाहुर्धामारोहन्तं स जनास इन्द्रः ॥

140. *Rgveda*, I, 154, 1.

विष्णोर्नु कं वीर्याणि प्रबोचं यः पार्थिवानि विममे रजांसि ।

योऽस्कमायदुत्तरं सघस्यं विचक्रमाणस्त्रेधोरुगायः ॥

The three steps of Viṣṇu are taken by the Nairuktas to mean the three periods of the sun's course—his rise, culmination and setting. (Wilson, *Introduction to the Rgveda Samhita* pp. 25, 26) This view is also expressed by Durgācārya in his commentary on the Nirukta of Yāska. But Aurnavābha, a predecessor of Yāska, held that Viṣṇu literally and physically stepped over the earth, horizon and sky in the past and in his ascent he stepped at the Viṣṇupāda on the Gayā-peak. (K. P. Jayaswal, *Indian Antiquary*, (1918) p. 94). In this connection it is significant to note that in the *Satapatha Brāhmaṇa* (V. 2, 5.2) it is stated that 'men are viṣṇus,' Thus it is certain that some Vedic traditions regarded Viṣṇu as a historical personage.

141. *Arische Urzeit* (1910). Brunnhofer sees in some passages of the *Rgveda* an echo of the Aryan invasion of Babylon. (H. Brunnhofer, *Iran und Turan* p. 221) Though his interpretations are forced and far-fetched, we have clear Vedic references to the Asuras, who were spread from Mesopotamia to India before the coming of the Aryans.

142. Hillebrandt, *Vedische Mythologie* I pp 97.

143. D. R. Bhandarkar, *Some Aspects of Ancient Indian Culture* pp. 2-3 This writer observes "It will thus be seen that the composers of the hymns were living side by side not only with the people of the Saptasindhus but also with those of Afghanistan, Arachosia and even Iran." (p. 3)

etc. and to the northern rivers *Kubhā* (Kabul), *Krumu* (Kuram), *Gomati* (Gomal), *Yavyāvati* (Jhob), *Sarasvati* (Haraqaiti) etc. lends colour to the remark of Max Müller that "in the Veda the stage, on which the life of the ancient kings and poets is acted, is the valley of the Indus and the Panjab, the Sapta-sindhavaḥ of the Vedic poets. The land, watered by the Ganges, is hardly known and the whole of the Deccan seems not to have been discovered"¹⁴⁴

Thus it is clear that the myth of releasing the waters of Saptasindhus from the hold of *Vṛtra* shows that he was in occupation of Gandhāra and the Panjab and the Aryans conquered these regions by defeating him.

7. *Vṛtra* as a serpent.

It is clear from the above discussion that *Vṛtra* is a symbol of the un-Aryan people of Gandhāra and the Panjab. We have now to study their religion and culture. In this connection it is noteworthy that in the *Rgveda* *Vṛtra* is often referred to by his epithet or synonym *Ahi* or serpent.¹⁴⁵ In Iranian traditions also *Vṛthra* is known as *Aji*, which is the same as *Ahi*. His role in the *Avesta* is almost analogous to that in the Veda. He guards the fastnesses, where the stolen cows or maidens are locked away. He represents the spirit of sin or evil and is, therefore, called *angra-mainyu*. In later Iranian traditions, embodied in the *Shāh Nāmā* of Firdausi, this dragon-king *Aji-Dahāk*, figures as the Turanian King Afrasiab. His shoulders are said to have been kissed by the evil one, as a result of which two living snakes sprang from them which had to be daily fed on human brains. This is a reminiscence of serpent-worship and human sacrifices that were prevalent among the ancient peoples of these countries. These traditions show that the serpent was the symbol of *Vṛtra*. This is why the Iranians hate the serpent so much as to include it among the *ahrimani* creatures and think it meritorious to kill it

144. Max Müller, *India-what it can teach us?* p. 122. Of course, there are solitary references to the Gangā and Yamuna in the *Nadisūkta* of the *Rgveda* (X, 75) but no particular significance is attached to them, while fully half of the hymn is devoted to the glorification of the Sindhu. In fact, the Sindhu is treated as a god on a footing of equality with *Mitra*, *Varuṇa* and *Dyaus* (*Rgveda* I, 115, 6).

145. *Rgveda* II, 12, 3, II, 12, 11. (*Op. cit.*)

with the Khrafstraghna, which forms part of the paraphernalia of an Athravan.

In India the people, having the serpent as their symbol, were called the serpents or Nāgas,¹⁴⁶ just as the southern wild tribes, having the monkey as their symbol, were called the monkeys or Vānaras.¹⁴⁷ According to the *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa* (XIII, 4, 3) the tale of Arbuda Kādraveya, who represented the serpents and the serpent-knowers, was to be recited to the king, who performed the Aśvamedha sacrifice, on the fifth day. The text to be recited on that day is called *Sarpa-vidyā-veda*. Thus, according to this Brāhmaṇa, the serpents were an old people with a scripture and tradition of their own. Legends point to the existence of a race of serpents (Nāgas) and their habitat, the Pātāloka. This place is the same as the maritime island of Pattala or Patalae, which Megasthenes and Arrian described as being situated at the mouth of the Indus and which Cunningham identified with Nirankol or Hyderabad in Sindh.¹⁴⁸ The location of Pātāla, the seat of the serpents, in the lower Indus valley shows that this place was the cradle of a culture and people, whose prominent and characteristic symbol was the serpent. We learn from the seals, exhumed at Mohenjodaro, that the serpent symbol was a dominant feature of the people, who developed this culture. A seal depicts the cross-legged figure of a deity with Nāga-worshippers to right and left and *Pipal* branches over the head.¹⁴⁹ This figure seems to be a representation of Śiva, who is associated with serpents in later Hindu religion and mythology. This view finds some support from the fact that the Nāgas, who ruled in northern India somewhat before the rise of the Guptas, worshipped Śiva as their iṣṭadeva and are described in epigraphic records as carrying the phallus of Śiva on their shoulders as their religious symbol.¹⁵⁰

146. A. Banerji-Śāstri, 'The Nāgas' *Annals of the Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute* Vol. XVIII pp. 338-350.

147. V. R. Ramachandra Dikshitar, 'Some Aspects of Vānara culture', *Indian Culture* Vol. XIII. P. 119.

148. J. W. McCrindle, *Ancient India as Described by Megasthenes and Arrian* P. 158. and p. 187.

149. S. V. Venkatesvara, 'Proto-Indian Culture : ' *Cultural Heritage of India* vol III p. 60.

150. J. F. Fleet, *Corpus Inscriptionum Indicarum* vol. III no. 55.

The serpent-symbol of the Proto-Indian people has its exact analogue in western and central Asia. In Turanian mythology the serpent is regarded as a symbol of the highest deity. The influence of serpent-symbology is still manifest on the religions, prevalent in Kurdistan these days. There is a sect of the Yezidis among the Kurds of Assyria, who worship the devil in the form of a serpent and dedicate temples to him.¹⁵¹ In Mesopotamia the Akkadian supreme god Ea was worshipped at his holiest shrine at Eridhu in the form of a serpent and, as Eridhu was the centre, from which Chaldean civilization started and spread, the serpent symbol was accepted as representing this race and its religion.¹⁵² An indication of the similarity of serpent symbols among the peoples of India and the Middle East is provided by the fact that the word *Svaja*, which is a snake-name in the fifth book of the *Atharvaveda*, occurs in the inscriptions of the Achaemenian emperors as *Xuja* and *Xuwaja*, which denotes Elam. Likewise *Taimāta*, occurring in the same book of this Veda, corresponds to "the well-known androgynous dragon Tiamat, whose fight with Markuk is the subject of some of the Cuneiform tablets of the creation legends".¹⁵³ In the charm against snake-poison,¹⁵⁴ in which the word *Taimata* occurs, there are some other significant snake-names of Chaldean derivation, as pointed out by Lokamānya Bal Gangadhar Tilak. *Urugulā* appears as *Urugala* or *Urugula* in the Akkadian language. As Tilak wrote "literally it means 'the great (gal-gula) city (uru)',

अंसभारसन्निवेशितशिवलिङ्गोद्बहनशिवसुपरितुष्टसमुत्पादितराजवंशानां
भारशिवानाम्

Chammak copper Plate Inscription of Mahārāja Pravarasena II.

151. Zénaide A. Ragozin, *Media, Babylon & Persia* p. 270.

152. Zénaide A. Ragozin, *Chaldea* pp. 215, 246, 287.

153. Balgangadhar Tilak, 'Chaldean and Indian Vedas', *R. G. Bhandarkar Commemoration Volume* pp. 32 ff.

154. *Atharvaveda*, V. 13, 6-8.

असितस्य तैमातस्य बभ्रोरपोदकस्य च ।

सात्रासाहस्याहं मन्योरिव ज्यामिव धन्वनो वि मुञ्चामि रथमिव ॥

आलिगी च विलिगी = पिता च माता च ।

विद्य वः सर्वतो बन्ध्वरसाः किं करिष्यथ ।

उरुगूलाया दुहिता जाता दाससिकन्या ॥

प्रतंकं दद्रुषीणां सर्वासामरसं विसम् ॥

but is generally used to denote the great nether world, the abode of the dead, a place visited by Ishtar in her search for her lover Dumuzi or Tamuz. Personified, it means the deity of the nether world and a female snake can be fitly described as Urugula's daughter."¹⁵⁵ As regards Āligī and Viligī, the father and mother of a snake, they appear to be Akkadian words connected with the name of the Assyrian gods *Bil* and *Bil-gi*.¹⁵⁶ In India these words are still prevalent as *alāy-balāy*, which denote the evil and malevolent spirits. Besides the Akkadian names in this hymn, there are some words in the *Rgveda*, which betray the influence of Mesopotamian serpent-mythology. Bhandarkar has shown that *apsu* in the name *apsujit*, given to Indra in *Rgveda* (VIII, 12, 3; IX, 106, 3), is based upon the Chaldean word *abzu*, which is the name of the husband of Tiamat and denotes the primeval chaos of watery abyss. "It is because Indra released the waters enveloped and hemmed in by *Ahi*, the Vedic Tiamat, that the former has been styled *Apsujit*"¹⁵⁷. Bhandarkar points out a much closer resemblance between the legends about the Vedic Indra and the Chaldean Marduk. The serpent Tiamat, killed by Markuk, is sometimes represented as having seven heads, while Indra is called *sapta-han* or the 'killer of seven' in the Vedas (*Rgveda* X, 49, 8), and the closed watery ocean, the doors which Indra and Agni opened by their prowess, is described as *sapta-budhna* (seven-bottomed) in *Rgveda* VIII, 40, 5. It is well-known that the name of *Vāsuki*, the younger brother of Śeṣanāga, agrees with that of the Semetic serpent *Basku*.¹⁵⁸ This similarity of serpent symbols among the un-Aryan peoples of India and the Middle East strengthens the view of their having belonged to a common racial and cultural stock.

Thus we find that the religion of the Vṛtras centered round a sort of serpent symbology, because of which they came to be known as serpents, *Ahi*, in Vedic literature. Kasten Rönnow has emphasized the contrast of Aryan beliefs with the fetishes of the serpent-worshipping aboriginals.¹⁵⁹ In view

155. B. G. Tilak, *Op. cit.*

156. A.S. Altekar, *Presidential Address to the Delhi Session of the All-India Oriental Conference 1957.*

157. D. R. Bhandarkar, *Some Aspects of Ancient Indian Culture* p. 32.

158. A. H. Sayce, *Records of the Past* (New series) vol VI page 122.

159. K. Rönnow, 'Vedic Krivi' *Acta Orientalia* Vol. XVI pp. 161-180.

of the widely prevalent mythic data relating to the hero-dragon-legends of ancient peoples, for instance, the myths of Zeus and Typhon, Hercules and the Hydra, Apollo and Python among the Greeks, the fable of Thor and the serpent among the Teutons, the tales of Marduk and Tiamat, Gilgamesh and Humbaba, Innara and the Dragon in the Middle-East and the dual of Thraetaona and Azi-Dahāka and Rustam and Afrasiab in ancient Iran, all of which correspond to the Indra-Vṛtra conflict, described in the Vedas, the theory of Siecke¹⁶⁰ that this contest of Indra and Ahi reflects lunar origins is not convincing.

8. *Vṛtra as a Brāhmaṇa.*

The above discussion shows that Vṛtra represents the Proto-Indian un-Aryan people, whom the Aryans met and conquered, as they advanced in India. But, as we have seen, the Vṛtras do not mean the entire body of the Dāsas and Dasyus. They are expressly distinguished from them.¹⁶¹ This shows that they constituted a particular class or caste among them. The *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa* contains an account of the origin of Vṛtra, which gives us very valuable information about the position of the Vṛtras in early Indian society. The narrative opens with a discussion of how Indra used to snatch and quaff off the tubs of soma juice belonging to Tvaṣṭṛ and killed his three-headed and six-eyed son Viśvarūpa. Thereupon, Tvaṣṭṛ collected what remained of soma juice in a tub and excluded Indra from it. But, all of a sudden, Indra came uninvited and quaffed off almost the whole of soma juice, collected in that tub. Tvaṣṭṛ grew furious and poured what remained of soma in the tub into the fire saying, "Grow then having Indra for thy foe." The moment it reached the fire it developed into human shape and became possessed of Agni and Soma, of all sciences, of all glory, all nourishment, all prosperity and since it so developed whilst rolling onwards (*vṛt*) it became Vṛtra. But, because the incantation of Tvaṣṭṛ was misaccen-

160. E. Siecke, *Indra's Drachenkampf* 1905.

161. *Rgveda* VII, 83, 1.

दासा च वृत्रा हतमार्याणि च सुदासमिन्द्रावरुणावसावतम्

ted, it meant that Indra would be the foe of Vṛtra and consequently Indra killed Vṛtra.¹⁶²

Plainly interpreted this Brāhmaṇa means that the Aryans used to molest and kill the Dasyus and Asuras, who organised themselves for defence and protection under the leadership of Vṛtra.

Vṛtra, we further learn from the *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa*, was the product and repository of Agni and Soma and was also adept in all sciences and humanities. He was also, as the same Brāhmaṇa informs at another place,¹⁶³ the receptacle of the knowledge (Veda) of the *ṛks*, *yajus* and *sāmans*. His popularity and respect among the people is hinted at by the statement of the Brāhmaṇa that in the forenoon the gods offered him food, at midday the men and in the afternoon the fathers. Thus Vṛtra, according to this Brāhmaṇa, possessed the rights to sacrifice to gods and propitiate them, to invoke their blessings and bring prosperity to the people, to learn, teach, preserve and practise the sacred lore, as enshrined in the *ṛks*, *yajus* and *sāmans*, and to accept charities and offerings from the people. He, thus, performed the functions of sacrificers, magicians and fortune-bringers and represented the priestly class among the Proto-Indian people. The *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa* (I, 2., 3,) clearly states that the assassination of Viśvarūpa amounted to brahmanicide or *brahmahatyā*. Hence Indra was at his wits' end as to how to remove this sin. Seeing no other way out, he transferred this sin to the Āptyas, who attended on him and were, in consequence, regarded as the abettors of the crime. The Āptyas, in turn, transferred the sin, wantonly trumped upon them, to all those, who would make an offering without a gift to the priest. Therefore, the making of an offering without giving the fees to the officiating priest amounts to brahmanicide or Vṛtrahatyā.¹⁶⁴

That the Vṛtras were the priests of the Proto-Indian people is conclusively established by Indian historical traditions of later times. According to the *Mahābhārata*, Vṛtra is identical

162. *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa* I, 6, 4; Eggelings' translation *Sacred Books of the East* Vol. XII pp. 164-165.

163. *Ibid.* V, 5, 5, Eggeling's translation SBE vol xli p. 138.

164. *Ibid.* I, 2, 3 तस्मान्नादक्षिणेन हविषा यजेत् आप्त्य उ ह तस्मिन् मृजते अदक्षिणेन हविषा जयते

with Viśvarūpa Tvāṣṭra and, according to the *Taittirīya Samhitā* of the *Yajurveda* (II, 5, 1,1), Viśvarūpa-Tvāṣṭra was the sister's son of the Asuras and acted as the Purohita of the gods. Therefore, by killing him, Indra became guilty of the most heinous offence of Brahmahatyā, as the *Taittirīya Samhitā* observes. This crime figures prominently in the record of sins, which was attached to the name of Indra by reason of his enmity towards the Brāhmaṇas. The *Aitareya Brāhmaṇa* observes that Indra was looked down upon in consequence of his conduct towards the Brāhmaṇas and was excluded from soma-drinking. Keith renders this passage as follows :

“When the gods excluded Indra saying ‘he hath misused Viśvarūpa, son of Tvāṣṭra, he hath laid low Vṛtra, he hath given the Yatis to the hyaenas, he hath killed Arūramaghas, he hath contended with Bṛhaspati’, then Indra was deprived of soma-drinking and in accordance with the deprivation of Indra, the lordly power was deprived of soma-drinking.”¹⁶⁵

The epics also repeatedly state that Indra incurred the sin of Brahmanicide by killing Vṛtra and Namuci.¹⁶⁶ In chapters 282-287 of the *Śāntiparvan* of the *Mahābhārata* Bhīṣma narrates the story of the killing of Vṛtra by Indra and clearly says that the killing of Vṛtra amounted to the murder of a Brāhmaṇa. In the initial stages of his fight with Vṛtra Indra suffered some set-backs for, as Bhīṣma says, Vṛtra practised penances for 60,000 years in order to obtain strength; Brahman had given him the boons, he had solicited viz, the greatness of Yogins, extensive powers of illusion, excess of might etc. Indra, then, sought the aid of Śiva, who imparted to him his own energy. The Devas, then, uttered loud cheers. Suddenly all the Asuras were afflicted with the loss of memory; in a trice their powers of illusion also disappeared and Vṛtra was overtaken by fever. Indra, then, hurled the thunderbolt

165. *Aitareya Brāhmaṇa* (XII, 28) A. B. Keith *Rgveda Brāhmaṇas* p. 314.

166. *Mahābhārata* XII, 344. 13209.

ततः प्रणष्टे देवेन्द्रे ब्रह्महत्याभयादिते ।

भूमिः प्रध्वस्तसंकाशा निर्वृक्षा शुष्ककानना ।

Rāmāyaṇa VII, 85, 19

हतश्चायं त्वया वृत्रो ब्रह्महत्या च वासव ।

बाधते सुरशार्दूल मोक्षं तस्य विनिर्दिश ॥

at him. It cut Vṛtra into two halves. Vṛtra then came to the highest regions of Viṣṇu, for it was by his devotion to Viṣṇu that he had overwhelmed the universe. Then Indra entered heaven with his vajra. Then Brahmavadhya (sin of brahmanicide) issued out of the slain Vṛtra. Sometime afterwards, when Indra was proceeding towards heaven, she seized him and stuck to him. Indra entered the fibres of a lotus-stalk and dwelt there for many years. But Brahmavadhya pursued him closely and deprived him of all his energy. At last, he repaired to Brahman, who made Brahmavadhya leave him by apportioning one quarter to Agni (whence it should enter him, who does not offer oblations of seed etc. to Agni), one quarter to the trees and grass (whence it should possess the man, who would cut or tear grass), one quarter to the apsarās (whence it should possess that man, who would cohabit with women during their monthly menstrual course) and one quarter to the waters (whence it should possess that man, who would cast phlegm, urine, excrements etc. into the water). With Brahman's permission, Indra, then, performed a horse sacrifice and thereby became cleansed of the sin, regained his prosperity and slew thousands of his foes.¹⁶⁷ Vṛtra left many of his descendants, who were, according to the Purāṇas *brahmanid* (knowers of Brahma or Brāhmaṇas) and *dhārmika* (of pious and religious character).¹⁶⁸

The account of Vṛtrahatyā, paraphrased from the *Mahābhārata*, above shows that (1) the Vṛtras used to practise arduous penances and were noted Tapasvins, (2) they were the favourites of gods, (3) they knew the science and art of magic very thoroughly and (4) used it to good purpose in resisting the invasions of the Aryans, (5) they were associated with the Asuras and (6) their assassination ranked as the murder of the Brāhmaṇas. The fact that the Vṛtras were the main targets of the wrath and avarice of the Aryans shows that all the prosperity of those times was concentrated in

167. *Mahābhārata* XII., 237 verses 58 ff-paraphrased in Sørensen, *Mahābhārata Index* p. 757.

168. *Vāyu Purāṇa* LXVIII, 34-36.

Brahmāṇḍa Purāṇa III, 6, 35, 37.

them and the recurring reference to their cities, forts, citadels¹⁶⁹ and fighting strength demonstrates that they possessed some sort of kingly status among the Proto-Indian people. Thus they constituted the head and front of that society as priest-kings and, when the invasions of the Aryans took place, they were called upon to fight in the vanguard of the armies to protect their life, country and culture.

After a consideration of the archaeological remains of Harappa, R. E. Mortimer Wheeler infers as follows :—

‘Whatever the source of their authority, and a dominant religious element may fairly be assumed, the lords of Harappa administered their cities in a fashion not removed from that of the priest-kings or governors of Sumer and Akkad. In Sumer, the wealth and discipline of the city-state were vested in the chief deity i.e. in the priesthood or a priest-king. The civic focus was an exalted temple, centre of an elaborate and carefully ordered secular administration under divine sanction.¹⁷⁰

These priest-kings of Harappa-culture are the Vṛtras, described in the Vedas.

169. *Rgveda* X. 89, 7 जघान वृत्रं स्वधितिर्वनेव हरोज पुरो अरदन्न
सिन्धून्

Ibid. VII, 19, 5

त्वं च्योत्नानि वज्रहस्त तानि नव यत्पुरो नवति च सद्य ।
निवेदने शततमाविवेशारिहन् च वृत्रं नमुचिमुताहन् ॥

Ibid. I, 32, 10

अतिष्ठन्तीनामनिवेशनानां काष्ठानां मध्ये निहितं शरीरम् ।
वृत्रं निष्यं विचरन्त्यापो दीर्घं तम आशयदिन्द्रशत्रुः ॥

Ibid. X, 76, 3

गोऽरणीसि त्वाष्ट्रे अश्वनिणिजि प्रेमध्वरेष्वध्वरां अशिश्त्रयुः ।

The reference to the *ninya*, of Vṛtra in the *pura* answers to what we observe at Harappa. “On the Western edge of this city rose an impressive citadel, an approximate rectangle or parallelogram with its long axis north and south and measuring about 400 by 200. This was lmed of an artificial platform over 30 feet high of mud brick faced with burnt brick revetments and strong defensive walls, carrying on its fortified summit a group of buildings which are not private houses but houses with a ceremonial or public character. To this high defended citadel belonged processional terraces and monumental gateways; below it lay the streets and houses of the town and the industrial quarters of a semi-servile labouring class” (Stuart Pigott, *Pre-historic India* p. 151.)

170. R. E. Mortimer Wheeler, ‘Harappa 1946: the Defences and Cemetery R. 37, *Ancient India* (1947) no. 3 pp. 58-130.

9. *The Impact of Vrtra-culture on the Aryans and the genesis of the Vedas.*

In the myth of Indra-Vrtra conflict we find a reference to the wars, which the Aryans proclaimed against the priest kings of the Panjab. But war alone is not an effective way of conquest. In order to make the military achievement abiding, it is necessary for the victors to win the allegiance of the vanquished people by convincing them of the wisdom of accepting the foreign sway as a beneficent thing. Hence the victors and conquerors usually pose as the protectors of the culture and religion of the defeated people. Besides this, the culture of the defeated people, if it is advanced, exercises a magnetic influence on uncouth invaders by holding out the prospect of pleasant, orderly and civilised life before them. Similarly their religion, if it possesses life and vitality, inspires in the hearts of the credulous incomers a sense of heavenly bliss and spiritual heatitude by promising them sumptuous rewards such as they cannot acquire by war and plunder. The Aryan invaders of Iran and India were no exception to this law. Let us first cast a glance at the history of Aryan culture in Iran.

The changes, which the Aryans underwent in Iran on account of their contact with aboriginal elements, had an important bearing on the subsequent development of Aryan culture. We have seen above that Vrtra is an object of hate and reproach in the Avesta. But in later Iranian mythology the personality of his counterpart Aji-Dahāk is somewhat whitewashed. In Persian epos he is said to have killed Yima, the first king of the golden age, as he faltered from the path of duty. He is also said to have reigned in Iran after King Jamshed.¹⁷¹ The traces of the influence of the culture of the vanquished people on the religion and literature of the Aryans are observable in a section of the Parsi scriptures, the *Vendidad*. In this book the use of the *Baresman*¹⁷² for divining gods, the treatment of the dead,

171. S.G.W. Benjamin, *Persia* p. 5.

172. *Baresman* was a bundle of sacred twigs, which were used as divining rods in ancient Sumer. The Iranians adopted their use. *Baresman* is mentioned several times in the Avesta. Its form in the inscription of erxes

the curing of diseases by conjuring spells, the exaggerated reverence paid to the elements of nature, the belief in numberless hosts of fiends, that are always on the watch to pounce on man, and draw him to perdition and the concentration on the dark, demonic and fiendish spirits, which are characteristic of the Chaldean world, are reminiscent of aboriginal practices and superstitions, which found their way in Persian religion. Gradually, sorcery, witchcraft and black magic became the distinguishing features of later Zoroastrianism. This magic was contained in a piece of literature, known as the *Angiras*, which, according to the *Viṣṇupurāṇa*, was the fourth Veda of the *magii* or the *Parsis*.¹⁷³ That the *Angiras* was associated with an egressive practice of spells or *kr̥tyā* is known from the *Atharvaveda* (VIII, 5, 9)¹⁷⁴ This Veda also informs us that *angiras-magic* originated in the West.¹⁷⁵ About the magic element in Iranian religion, the famous authority on the *Zindavesta* M. de Harlez writes as follows :—

“The incantations of which the *Vendidād* supplies a few specimens, assuredly have their origin in Shumir and Turanian Media. The multitude of *Daevas* in the Avestan world, the belief in their unremitting action, in their continual attacks, in the necessity of incantations and conjurations to defeat them, the superstitions such as that about the parings of nails, being turned into weapons for the *Devas*, all this dark and gruesome side of Zoroastrianism is certainly the product of Chaldean and Turanian habits of thought.....

in *brazman*. Its Indian form is *brahman*, which means a sacred wooden ladle meant for pouring oblations in the fire at sacrifices. It is also a symbol of divine power. Thus *Brahman* was invested with a spiritual significance. A person conversant with *brahman* is a *Brāhmaṇa*’ (Buddha Prakāsh’ A Study of the Word *Brahman*’ *Journal of the Bihar Research society* Vol. 35 (1949) pp. 93-96.

173. Reinaud, *Memoire sur l’ Inde* p. 344.

174. *Atharvaveda* VIII, 5, 9 कृत्या आगिरसी: Commenting on this passage Sāyaṇa writes that *Angiras magic* was contained in a treatise known as *Angiras-Kalpa-Sūtra* composed by *Angiras ṛṣi* अंगिरसो महर्षे कृत्या-प्रयोगविधातृत्वं आंगिरसकल्पसूत्रनिर्माणादेव प्रसिद्धम् ।

175. *Atharvaveda* X, 1, 1, 6.

प्रतीचीनं आंगिरसोऽध्यक्षो नः पुरोहितः ।

प्रतीचीः कृत्या आकृत्यामून् कृत्याकृतो जहि ॥

Zoroastrianism at first attempted a far more radical reform, of which the Gāthās give us the measure; but the reaction of the national spirit restored the worship of the ancient genii to its former splendour and revived early traditions. Later Mazdaism found nothing better than to force the genii into the heavenly hierarchy, proclaiming them to be the creatures of Mazda and the Iranian heroes into the dualistic order of things, rehandling the stories about them as needful.....

Three grades are distinguishable in this evolution. Iranian religion passed from polytheism to dualism, then rose towards monotheism to fall back again into spirit worship.....”¹⁷⁶

Like the Iranian Aryans the Indian Aryans also adopted a great deal of the culture of Gandhāra and the Panjab. In India the priests had a very prominent place in the society of the Pre-Aryan period. They were adepts in matters of magico-religious significance and as such they wielded a great influence over the peoples and kings of that age. It is remarkable that the leading Brāhmaṇa families are usually associated with un-Aryan and Pre-Aryan dynasties. The Bhārgavas were the priests of the Daitya Hiranyakaśipu and¹⁷⁷ Vaśiṣṭha was his sacrificer (hotṛ).¹⁷⁸ Another branch of the Bhārgavas, known as Uśanas Śukra’s branch, held the priesthood of the Daityas. The word *Bhrgu* has been equated with ‘Phrygian’. The Aryans acknowledged the religious power of these Brāhmaṇa families and appointed them as their priests and preceptors. Many Aryan chiefs established marital relations with the Daityas and Vṛtras. Āpnavān married Nahuṣa’s daughter Ruci and Yayāti, Uśana’s daughter Devayāni. Even Āyu, the son of Purūraṇas Aila, the inveterate enemy of the Brāhmaṇas, married the daughter of Sarvabhānu. The Aryans also began to give the hands of their daughters to the Vṛtras.

176. Harlez, *Les Origines du Zoroastrisme* pp. 317-319.

177. *Mahābhārata* III, 102, 8758.

178. *Ibid* XII, 344, 13209. The Vāsiṣṭhas in general were known as ‘*atharvānām nidhi*’ (the treasure of atharvans) ‘*śatayātu*’ possessing magic of hundred kinds) and ‘*brahmakōśa*’ (the store of Brahman). (*Bṛhannāradiya* VII, 63 *Rgveda* VII, 18, 21; *Nirukta* VI, 30, *Vāsiṣṭhasmṛti* XXX, 11, Macdonell and Keith, *Vedic Index* vol. I. p. 42; II p. 352; F. E. Pargiter, *Ancient Indian Historical Tradition* p.209) They became so notorious in their profession of magic that they took it as an offence to be called ‘*Yātudhāna*’. In *Rgveda* VII, 104, 15-16. Vaśiṣṭha laments that his adversaries wantonly call him ‘*yātudhāna*’.

The Ikṣvāku princess Reṇukā was married to Jamadagni-Bhārgava. Later on, it became a fashion to invite the Brāhmaṇas to impregnate the wives of Aryan kings, if they were impotent. When King Kalmāṣapāda became unfit for procreation on account of the curse of a Brāhmaṇa lady, Vaśiṣṭha was called upon to beget a son on his queen Madayanti in order to preserve the continuity of the royal lineage. Like marriage, adoption was an effective bond of unity among the Aryans and the Brāhmaṇas. Many Aryan kings are recorded to have adopted the scions of Brāhmaṇa families as their sons on the failure of direct male descent. Bharata is said to have adopted Bharadvāja, because of which the Bhāratas could regard themselves as Kṣatriyas or Brāhmaṇas or both. Thus the Aryans and the Vṛtras were firmly linked together in a blood relationship, which was the hall-mark of Indo-Aryan cultural synthesis.

The impact of Vṛtra culture on the Aryans gave a new orientation to their literary development. It is well-known that the boisterousness and buoyancy of a *Völkerwanderung* find their superb expression in epics and sagas. The stimulating experience of marching and migrating to new lands and conquering new countries and peoples gushes out in songs, lays and rhapsodies, which assume the form of epic narratives. As phillpotts put it, "drama develops in home country, epic among migrating peoples."¹⁷⁹ At first the narratives of contemporary events and personalities, recited at the *Althing*, constitute the kernel of the epic.¹⁸⁰ But, in course of time, as the storm and stress of the Heroic Age abates, people begin to take more interest in the tales of the older generation than the activities of their own leaders. Gradually, the old heroes are deified and pantheons and mythologies centre round them.¹⁸¹ The epic begins to assume a religious form and lose its secular character.

179. B. S. Phillpotts, *The Elder Edda and Ancient Scandinavian Drama* pp. 207.

180. A. Olrik, *Viking Civilization* (Eng. trans).

181. As Gilbert Murray has shown Zeus and his Olympian pantheon are derived from the bands of the barbarian war-lords of the Post-Minoan *Völkerwanderung*. (Gilbert Murray, *Five Stages of Greek Religion* pp. 66-69) Likewise, the Scandinavians conceived of their gods in the image of the warriors of the Viking age. (V. Grönbech, *The Culture of the Teutons* (Eng. trans) part II pp. 252-253.

Among the Indo-Aryans also these three stages of literary evolution are clearly discernible. We have some hymns of the *Rgveda*, in which Indra is described as a contemporary personality with his foibles and weaknesses. There are also some hymns, in which he is referred to as an ancient hero performing prodigies of valour and courage. Lastly, he is transformed into a god guiding and inspiring men on the earth. These three stages of the Indra-epic represent the three stages of the literary history of the *Rgveda*. Even the ancient commentator Yāska was aware of this historical development underlying the Veda. He states that in the beginning the ṛṣis directly experienced and visualised the truth (*sākṣātkṛtadharmāṇaḥ*), then came the ṛṣis, who indirectly learnt and conserved the tradition through oral transmission (*upadeśa*), lastly, followed the ṛṣis, who were not amenable to personal communion (*upadeśāya glāyanto*) and were instructed through texts and treatises, which assumed the form of the Veda and the Vedāṅga.¹⁸² Though Yāska was not conversant with the evolution of epic into scripture and the corresponding transition from secular to sacerdotal literature, he had the insight to discern that the Veda is not a static receptacle of knowledge, but a dynamic development of thought exhibiting a historical tendency. Even the hymns contain traces of the old and the new and expressly distinguish the new composition from the old tradition.¹⁸³ Often there are clear references to old and new ṛṣis and their works.¹⁸⁴ Thus the Veda had a history of its own.

Though the Vedic tradition is oblivious of the evolution from epic to scripture, the Paurāṇika tradition is conscious of

182. *Nirukta* I, 20 साक्षात्कृतधर्माण ऋषयो बभूवुः । तेऽवरेभ्योऽसाक्षात्कृतधर्मभ्य उपदेशेन मंत्रान् संप्रादुः । उपदेशाय ग्लायन्तोऽवरे बिल्मगृहणायेमं ग्रंथं समाम्नासिषुः वेदं च वेदाङ्गानि च ।

Ibid II, 17, 1, नव्यं आंगिरस्वद् अर्चत

Ibid II, 18, 3 सूक्तेन वचसा नवेन

Ibid III, 31, 19 नव्यं कृणोमि सन्वसे पराजम्

183. *Rgveda* X, 91, 13 इमां प्रत्नाय सुष्टुतिं नवीयसीं वोचेयम्

Ibid I, 62, 13 नव्यं अताक्षद् ब्रह्म

Ibid I, 101, 2 स्तोमं जनयामि नव्यम्

184. *Ibid* I, 1, 2 अग्निः पूर्वेभि ऋषिभिरीड्यो नूतनैरुत

Ibid VI, 18, 15 उक्थं नवीयो जनयस्व यज्ञैः ।

the priority of the epic lore to Vedic texts. The *Vāyu Purāna* states that the Purāna was the first text to emerge from the mouth of Brahman and the Vedas issued from his mouths later on.¹⁸⁵ The *Bhāgavata Purāna* shows that originally there was one Veda, but, later on, it was split up into the four texts for purposes of sacrificial ritual.¹⁸⁶ In this literary transition and transformation the influence of the Proto-Indian priests, symbolised by Vṛtra, played a significantly formative part. The evidence of the *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa* is of paramount importance in this connection. Let us study the following passages :

“Now, while Indra was, thus, moving on in pursuit of Vṛtra, he addressed Agni and Soma ‘ye belong to me and I belong to you, that one is nothing to you; Why then do ye support that Dasyu against me? Come over to me.’

They replied, ‘what is to be our reward in that case?’ He offered them that Agniṣṭoma cake on eleven potshreds.

They went over to him and after them went forth all the gods, all the sciences, all glory, all nourishment, all prosperity : Thus by offering that cake to Agni and Soma Indra became what Indra now is.”¹⁸⁷

185. *Vāyu Purāna* I, 58; *Ibid* VI, 8,1 वैश्वानराय मतिर्नव्यसी शुचिः सोम इव पवते चारुग्नये ।

प्रथमं सर्वशास्त्राणां पुराणं ब्रह्मणा स्मृतम् ।
अनन्तरं च वक्त्रेभ्यो वेदास्तस्य विनिसृता ॥

186. *Bhāgavata Purāna* I, 4, 19-20

व्यदधात् यज्ञसंतत्यै वेदमेकं चतुर्विधम् ।
ऋग्यजुःसामाथर्वाख्या वेदाश्चत्वार उद्धृता ॥

187. *Śatapatha-Brāhmaṇa* Eggeling's translation, *Sacred Books of the East* vol. XII pp. 166-167.

Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa I, 6, 3, 12.15.

तस्मै ह स्म पूर्वाह्णे देवा अशनमभिहरन्ति मध्यन्दिने मनुष्यापराह्णेपितरः ।

स वा इन्द्रस्तथैव नुत्तश्चरन् (न्न) अग्नीषोमा उपमन्त्रायाम्चक्रेऽग्नीषोमौ युवं वै मम स्थो युवयोरेहमस्मि न युवयोरेष किञ्चन कं म इमं दस्युं बद्धयथ उप मा वर्तेथामिति ।

तौ होचतुः । किमावयोस्ततः स्यादिति ताम्यामेतमग्नीषोमीयमेकादशकपालं पुरोडाशं निरवपत्तस्मादग्नीषोमीय एकादशकपलः पुरोडाशो भवति ।

तावेनमुपाववतुः । तावन्नु सर्वे देवा प्रेयुः सर्वा विद्याः सर्वं यशः सर्वमन्नाद्यं ॐ सर्वा श्रीस्तेनेष्ट्वेन्द्र एतदभवद्यदिदमिन्द्र एष उ पीर्णामासस्य बन्धुः स यो हैवं विद्वान् पीर्णामासेन यजत एता ॐ हैव श्रियं गच्छस्येव यशो भवत्येवमन्नादो भवति ।

The *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa* further observes: "Of old, everything here was within Vṛtra, to wit, the ṛks, the yajus and the sāman. Indra wished to hurl the thunderbolt at him.

He said, 'There is here a (source of) strength : I will give that upto thee, but do not smite me.' and gave up to him the yajus formulae. He aimed at him a second time.

He said, 'There is here a (source of) strength : I will give that to thee, but do not smite me.' and gave up to him the ṛk verses. He aimed at him a third time.

He said, 'There is here a (source of) strength : I will give that up to thee, but do not smite me.' and gave up to him the sāman hymns."¹⁸⁸

These quotations show that the Proto-Indian un-Aryan people and their priests, cultivated a ritual lore, which was incorporated in the literature of the Aryans under the name of ṛk, yajus and sāman. The object of this lore was the invocation and propitiation of gods. Its form, content and language were originally different from Aryan literature; but, in course of time, it was rendered into Aryan terms, concepts and language. The *Pañcaviṃśa Brāhmaṇa* describes the Vrātyas or the un-Aryan people as learning the old Indo-Aryan language¹⁸⁹

188. *Ibid*, Eggeling's translation, *Sacred Books of the East* vol. XII *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa* V, 5, 5, 1-5.

एन्द्रावैष्णवं द्वादशकपालं पुरोडाशं निर्वपति । तद्यदेतया यजते वृत्रो ह वा इदमग्रे सर्वमास यदृचो यद्यजू ७ षि यत्सामानि तस्माऽइन्द्रो वज्रं प्राजिहीर्षत् ।

स ह विष्णुमुवाच । वत्रायवै वज्रं प्रहरिष्याम्यनुतिष्ठस्वेति तथेति विष्णुरुवाचानु त्वा स्थास्ये, प्रहरेति तस्मा इन्द्रो वज्रमुद्ययाम स उद्यताद्वज्राद्वृत्रो बिभयाञ्चकार । स होवाच । अस्ति वा इदं वीर्यं तन्नूते प्रयच्छामि मा नु मे प्रहार्षीरिति तस्मै यजू ७ षि प्रायच्छत्तस्मै द्वितीयमुद्ययाम ।

स होवाच । अस्ति वा इदं वीर्यं तन्नू ते प्रयच्छामि मा नु मे प्रहार्षीरिति तस्माऽऋचः प्रायच्छत्तस्मै तृतीयमुद्ययाम ।

स होवाच । अस्ति वा इदं वीर्यं तन्नू ते प्रयच्छामि मा नु मे प्रहार्षीरिति तस्मै सामानि प्रायच्छत्तस्मादप्येतहर्षेवमेवेतैर्वैदैर्यज्ञं तन्वते यजुभिरेवाग्नेऽथग्भिरथ सामभिरेव ७ ह्यस्मा एतत्प्रायच्छत् ।

189. *Pañcaviṃśa Brāhmaṇa* (XVII, 4)

वाक्यं दुरुक्तमाहुः

अदीक्षिता दीक्षितवाचं वदन्ति

Much matter of the Purāṇas also was likewise translated from the Pre-Aryan languages into the Aryan speech (S. K. Chatterji, *Indo-Aryan and Hindi* p. 52.)

This shows the process of translating the un-Aryan ritual lore into the Aryan idiom. Thus the old Aryan literature, centering round the Indra-epic, was transformed into the ritual codes of the ṛks, yajus and sāmans. The fact that Vṛtra imparted the knowledge of these codes of ṛks, yajus and sāmans to Indra and thereby transferred his strength to him clearly shows that the form, system and arrangement of these *samhitās* are manifestly un-Aryan.

After the ritualisation of Aryan literature in the form of the ṛks, yajus and the sāmans and the Aryanisation of Vṛtra scriptural lore, as a consequence, the tradition and remnants of old secular literature were incorporated in a separate corpus, known as the Purāṇa. We learn from the *Atharvaveda* that the ṛks, sāmans and chandasas and the Purāṇa together with the yajus originated from the residue of the sacrifice.¹⁹⁰ In the sacrifices, like the Aśvamedha, this distinction and articulation of the ṛks, yajus, sāmans and the verses of the *Atharvaveda*, on one hand, and the Itihāsa and Puraṇa, on the other, were brought into a bold relief. The hotṛ, while reciting the *Pāriplavākhyāna*, dwelt upon the epic aspects of this lore.¹⁹¹ He quoted the *Rgveda*, *Yajurveda*, *Sāmaveda* and *Atharvaveda*, while narrating the stories of the human beings (mānavas) the ancestors (pitṛs), the gods (devas) and the gandharvas respectively. For him, on that occasion, the aitiḥāsika aspect of the Vedas was more important than the Nairukta facet or the Yājñika purpose. But with the ascendancy of the Brāhmaṇas the practice of referring the Vedic hymns to the people, and their Kṣatriya rulers was disliked and the vogue of reciting the *Pāriplavākhyāna* was consequently discontinued. The Brāhmaṇas disowned the authority of Kṣatriya rulers and claimed to be the subjects of their own king Soma only.¹⁹² Hence the Vedas were completely isolated from Kṣatriya

190. *Atharvaveda* XI, 7, 24

ऋचः सामानिच्छन्दांसि पुराणं यजुषा सह ।
उच्छिष्टाञ्जज्ञिरे सर्वे दिवि देवा दिविश्रितः ।

191. Paul Emile Dumout, *L' Aśvamedha* pp. 44-49.

192. *Taittiriya-Brāhmaṇa* I, 7, 4-6.

एष वो भरता राजा सोमोऽस्माकं ब्राह्मणानां राजेत्याह । तस्मात् सोम-
राजानो ब्राह्मणाः ।

legends. This was the high water-mark of the complete ritualisation of the Vedas in accordance with Vṛtra tendencies.

We have referred to above to the view of several scholars that some parts of the *Rgveda* were composed in Afghanistan and even beyond that. As Dandekar observed : "the Veda was originally born in the Balkh region between 2400 and 2000 B.C., though its priestly revision, obscuration, division and arrangement into family-collections were accomplished later in the land of the Seven Rivers"¹⁹³. Considering the linguistic aspects of the Veda Edgerton has pointed out that the later hymn-makers, who revised the Veda, were members of a priestly guild and were very proud of their status. They purposely used an archaic-looking priestly artificial dialect, which was different from their vernacular.¹⁹⁴ In this process of revision a great deal of un-Aryan matter was introduced in the Veda. Przulski has identified three culture-complexes in Vedic thought. He calls them Austro-Asiatic, Mesopotamian and Aryan and ascribes to them the maritime, triadist and dualist conception of the cosmos respectively. When the sun is represented as a bird, the Austro-Asiatic complex becomes manifest, when he is described as a wheel, the urban Mesopotamian conception comes into play, when he is called a horse the (nomad) Aryan thought-picture comes to the forefront.¹⁹⁵ Ordinarily 'there is a synthesis of the nomadic cult of the open sky and the sedentary religion of the Mother Goddess¹⁹⁶ in the imageries of the Vedas. The solar deities are brought into harmony with the sons of the Mother Goddess Aditi, the Ādityas. The great god Daus Pitṛ (Zues or Jupiter) is thus connected with the First Āditya Asura Varuṇa. Even the typically Aryan god Indra is described as the son of the Dāsa Vyamisa, whom he killed.¹⁹⁷ Elsewhere the Asura-Tvaṣṭṛ is called the great father of Indra.¹⁹⁸ Indra is also said to

193. R. N. Dandekar, 'The Antecedents and the Early Beginnings of the Vedic Period', *Proceedings of the Indian History Congress* (1947) p. 49

194. Franklin Edgerton, 'The Indo-European Semi-vowels' *Language* vol. XIX part 2.

195. Jean Przulski, 'The Three Factors of Vedic culture' *Indian Culture* Vol. I p. 373.

196. Ralph Turner, *The Great Cultural Traditions* vol. I pp. 108-109.

197. *Rgveda*, IV, 18, 9.

198. *Ibid*, III 48, 4.

have gone to live among the Asuras being enamoured of a Dānavī Vilištengā.¹⁹⁹ All these syncretisms point to a calculated and concerted effort on the part of the priests to revise the Veda in the light of un-Aryan beliefs and conceptions.²⁰⁰ In the words of Przyluski, "the Veda is not a starting-point but rather a culmination. The syncretism, which appears in the hymns, is not merely a mēlange of heterogenous rites and beliefs. It is a learned artificial synthesis, the elements of which have been interpreted, elaborated or even radically transformed so as to reconcile dissimilar or even contradictory conceptions."²⁰¹

10. *The ascendancy of the Brāhmaṇas*

We have seen above that the Pre-Aryan and un-Aryan priestly class was symbolised by Vṛtra. It was through their effort, influence and inspiration that the literature of the *Rgveda*, *Yajurveda*, *Sāmaveda* and *Atharvaveda* came into being. In order to study the historical and social aspects of their ascendancy in Pre-Aryan and then in Aryan India it is necessary to hear in mind the social set-up of the Aryans.

The Aryan people were known as 'vis'. Analogous to this word was 'kṛṣṭi'. Among them the demarcation of castes had not appeared.²⁰² Although they elected their

199. *Atharvaveda* VII, 38, 2, *Kāthaka Samhitā* III, 47, 9

200. S. K. Chatterji, 'Kṛṣṇa Dvaipāyana Vyāsa and Kṛṣṇa Vāsudeva' *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society of Bengal* (letters) vol. XVI no 1 (1950)

Chatterji emphasises the fact that Kṛṣṇa Dvaipāyana Vyāsa, who gave the final touches to the Vedic canon had un-Aryan blood in his veins. Chatterji's following remarks are worth quoting :

"The service, rendered by Vyāsa to the Indian people at a crucial juncture in their formative stage, was analogous to that, performed by Homer, when the Greek people of history were similarly being formed through a fusion of the Indo-European speaking Hellenes, arrived from the North, and the Pre-Indo-European Aegean peoples. Of course, it is understood that Vyāsa Kṛṣṇa Dvaipāyana is probably only typical of a number of other Vyāsas, collectors, compilers and arrangers of oral literature and oral or written myths and legends, who doubtless ante-dated and post-dated him; just as Homer is only typical of the various poets and singers, who composed and sung lays about the heroes relating to the Trojan and other cycles." (pate 78).

201. Jean Przyluski, 'Op. cit' *Indian Culture* I p. 380.

202. *Yāyupurāṇa* I, 8, 60-62.

वर्णाश्रमव्यवस्थाश्च न तदासन्न संकरः ।
तुल्यरूपायुषः सर्वे अधमोत्तमवर्जिताः ।
सुखप्राया ह्यशोकाश्च उत्पद्यन्ते कृते युगे ।
नित्यप्रहृष्टमनसो महासत्त्वा महाबलाः ।

leaders,²⁰³ yet the latter did not form any closed caste. It is significant that in the early stages the word *kṣatra*, occurring in the neutre singular, denoted a function rather than a caste. Later on, the possessors of *kṣatra* grew into an aristocracy. They performed their own rites and ceremonies and knew and composed the recitations, meant for them. Nay, every householder was his own priest. The performance of the rites was his bounden duty. But in the Panjab the *Vṛtras*, the priest-kings, were in the ascendant. They had the monopoly of the sacerdotal lore and wielded a tremendous influence over the people. Hence the Aryans felt the necessity of winning them over to their side after the cooling of the passions of the initial encounter. Some of the Aryan kings took to the profession of priests and attained high proficiency in it. *Viśvāmitra* is a classic case of the adoption of the life of a *Brāhmaṇa* sage by a *Kṣatriya ārya*.²⁰⁴ Besides him, *Māndhātṛ*, *Yauvanāśvā*, *Jātukariya*, *Rathitara*, *Śaunaka*, *Ariṣṭasena*, *Ajamīḍha*, *Mudgala*, *Kāśya*, *Gṛtsamada* and many other reputed Aryan kings and chiefs showed a marked preference for the priestly profession and initiated highly respected *Brāhmaṇa* families. The *Puru-Bharata* family was known as the matrix of great kings (*kṣatra*) as well as noted *Brāhmaṇas* (*brahma*).²⁰⁵ The *Brāhmaṇa* families of *Urukṣaya*, *Kapi*, *Gārgya*, *Priyamedha* and *Maudgalya*, owed their origin to the *Paurava* family. *Atri* was the son-in-law of *Rceyu*, an early king of the *Paurava* dynasty. Likewise, the family of *Kāṇvāyana* *Brahmaṇas* sprang from king *Ajamīḍha* and his wife *Keśinī*.²⁰⁶ Another wife of king *Ajamīḍha* excelled her

203. *Atharvaveda* III, 4, 2.

Tajurveda XX, 9 .

Aitareya Brāhmaṇa VIII, 27.

204. In a verse, instinct with a deep introspective touch, *Viśvāmitra* observes : (*Rgveda* III, 43)

कुविन्मा गोपां करसे जनस्य कुविद्राजानं मघवन्नजीषिन्
कुविन्मा ऋषि पपिवान्सं सुतस्य कुविन्मे वस्वो अमृतस्य शिक्षाः ।

205. *Vāyu Purāṇa* 99, 278

ब्रह्मक्षत्रयोर्यो योनिर्वंशो देवर्षिसत्कृतः ।

206. *Matsya Purāṇa*, 49. 16

अजमीढस्य केशिन्यां कण्वः समभवत् किल ।

मेघातिथिः सुतस्तस्य तस्मात् काण्वायना द्विजाः ॥

husband in her interest in priestly work. She led the life of a Brāhmaṇa ascetic and spent all her time in sacrificial apartments busy in her religious observances.²⁰⁷ Even the ancient family of Āngirasa won many recruits from the Āryans.²⁰⁸ Thus the Brāhmaṇas and the Kṣatriya classes were mobile and inter-connected.²⁰⁹

In course of time, the Brahmāṇas began to arrogate to themselves the exclusive right to preserve the sacred lore and perform the ceremonious rites for propitiating the gods. They regarded themselves gods among men or gods in the guise of men.²¹⁰ It became obligatory for men to please the gods in heaven by oblations and the gods on earth in the guise of men by fees.²¹¹ The gods did not accept the oblations of a king, who did not engage a priest. Hence it was necessary to obtain the service of a Brāhmaṇa priest in order to make the gods accept the offerings.²¹² A Brāhmaṇa was an intermediary between earth and heaven and had the power to transport the whole realms including the kings, armies and peoples to heaven.²¹³ If displeased, the Brāhmaṇa could cause serious loss or damage

207. *Ibid* 50, 19, 20.

हुत्वाग्निं विधिवत्सा तु पवित्रा मितभोजना ।
अग्निहोत्रकुशेष्वेव सुष्वाप मुनिसत्तमा ॥
तस्यां वै धूम्रवर्णायां अजमीढः समेयिवान् ।

208. *Vāyu Purāṇa* 88, 73.

एते ह्यगिरसः पुत्राः क्षत्रोपेता द्विजातयः ।

209. *Aitareya Brāhmaṇa* VIII, 2

ब्रह्माण खलु वै क्षत्रं प्रतिष्ठितम् । क्षत्रे ब्रह्म ।

Ibid, III, 11

ब्रह्म च क्षत्रं च संश्रिते ।

210. *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa* II, 2, 2, 6

द्वया वै देवाः । देवा अह वै देवाः । अथ ये ब्राह्मणाः शुश्रुवांसोऽनूचानास्ते मनुष्यदेवाः ।

211. *Gopatha Brāhmaṇa* II, 1, 6.

आहुतिभिरेव देवान् हुतादः प्रीणाति दक्षिणाभिर्मुनुष्यदेवान् । तेऽस्मै प्रीता इषमूर्जं नियच्छन्ति ॥

212. *Aitareya Brāhmaṇa* VIII, 24.

न ह वा अपुरोहितस्य राज्ञो देवा अन्नमदन्ति तस्माद्राजा ।

यज्यमानो ब्राह्मणं पुरो दधीत देवा मेऽन्नमदन्निति ।

213. *Ibid*. VIII, 24.

अग्निर्वा एष वैश्वानरः पंचनेमिर्यत् पुरोहितः । स एवं (राजानं) शान्त-
तनुरभिहुतोऽभिप्रीतः स्वर्गं लोकमभिवहति क्षत्रं च बलं च राष्ट्रं च विशं च ।

to the sacrificer and even kill or blind him.²¹⁴ The purely professional attitude of the Brāhmaṇa is manifest from the fact that he was on a look-out for a yajamāna just as a craftman was eager for broken objects, which he could mend or a physician was desirous of patients, whom he could cure.²¹⁵ The Brāhmaṇa could only be pleased or propitiated with sumptuous gifts and opulent fees. A Yajña could not proceed without fees as a cart could not move without bullocks.²¹⁶ In an Agnihotra the fees must be in the shape of gold.²¹⁷ If the Yajamāna paid the fees in the form of silver, weeping and mourning was bound to occur in his house within an year.²¹⁸ Thus, rolling in wealth and riches, the Brahmana became lazy, sluggish and indolent and the poet ironically exhorted Indra not to slink into inertia like a sacrificing priest.²¹⁹

The ascendancy of the Brāhmaṇas resulted in the crystallisation of the four castes and the consequent loss of mobility and resiliency²²⁰ of early times. Later on, it became an offence for a Śūdra to learn, recite and even hear the Veda.²²¹ This hide-bound caste-system, which arose from the exigencies of

214. *Ibid* III, 3

यं कामयेत प्राणेनैतं व्यर्धयानीति वायव्यमस्य लुब्धं शंसेत्, ऋचं वा पदं वातीयात् । यं कामयेत चक्षुषेण व्यर्धयानीति मैत्रावरुणमस्य लुब्धं शंसेत्, ऋचं वा पदं वातीयात् ।

215. *Rgveda* IX, 112, 1

तक्षा रिष्टं रुतं भिषग् ब्रह्मा सुन्वन्तमिच्छति ।

216. *Aitareya-Brāhmaṇa* VI, 35.

दक्षिणा वै यज्ञानां पुरोगवी । यथा ह व इदमनोऽपुरोगवं रिष्यति, एवं हैव यज्ञोऽदक्षिणो रिष्यति ।

217. *Satapatha Brāhmaṇa* II, 2, 3, 28.

तस्य हिरण्यं दक्षिणा । आग्नेयो वा एष यज्ञो भवति ।

218. *Kātyāyana-Śrauta-Sūtra* X; 2, 34.

न रजतं दद्यात् बर्हिषि "पुरास्य संवत्सराद् गृहे रुदन्ती" ति श्रुतेः ।

212. *Rgveda* VIII, 92, 30.

मो षु ब्रह्म व तन्द्रयुर्भुवः ।

220. *Rgveda* IX, 112, 3

कारूरहं तातो भिषगुपलप्रक्षिणी नना ।

Yajurveda XVIII, p 9 .

सग्धिश्च मे सप्रीतिश्च मे

In this verse there is reference to common feasts, dinners and drinking

221. *Gautama Dharma Sūtra* II, 3, 4

अथ हास्य वेदमुपशृण्वतस्त्रपुजतुभ्यां श्रोत्रपरिपूरणमुदाहरणे जिह्वा-
च्छेदो धारणे शरीरभेदः ।

sacrificial ritual,²²² as it was monopolised by the Brāhmaṇas, had a logical corollary in the four-fold āśrama organisation. There is an old tradition that the old ācāryas observed only one āśrama and that it was Kapila, the son of the Asura Prahlāda, who inaugurated the four āśramas.²²³ In fact the perusal of the marriage hymns of the *R̥gveda* shows that the bridegroom expresses a desire to live happily with the bride amidst his sons and grandsons till the end of his life.²²⁴ There is no trace of the idea of renunciation or sanyāsa in these hymns. Rather the recluses and yatis are looked down upon.²²⁵ But, in course of time, these orders became prevalent among the Aryans also and thus the varṇāśrama dharma became the cornerstone of Indian culture. This social development was due to the influence of the Vṛtras or the un-Aryan people of the Panjab.

As a consequence of the crystallisation of the four castes and the four āśramas, which appear in very late strata of the Vedas²²⁶, the sacred lore was also viewed from the same social

222. *Viṣṇu Purāna* I, 6, 7

यज्ञनिष्पत्तये सर्वमेतद् ब्रह्मा चकार वै ।
चातुर्वर्ण्यं महाभाग यज्ञसाधनमुत्तमम् ।

223. *Bandhāyana Dharma Sūtra* II, 11, 29-30.

एकाश्रम्यं त्वाचार्याः तत्रोदाहरन्ति । प्राह्लादिर्ह वै कपिलो नामासुर
आस । स एतान् भेदाश्चकार तान् मनीषी नाद्रियेत ।

224. *R̥gveda* X, 85, 36.

गृण्णामि ते सौभगत्वाय हस्तं मया पत्या जरदष्टिर्यथासः ।

Ibid X, 85, 42 इहैव स्तं मा वि यौष्टं विश्वमायुर्व्यश्नुतम् । क्रीडन्तो
पुत्रैर्नृप्तृभिर्भोदमानौ स्वे गृहे ।

Atharva-veda XIV, 1, 52.

ममेयमस्तु पोष्या मह्यं त्वादात् बृहस्पतिः ।
मया पत्या प्रजावति संजीव शरदः शतम् ॥

225. The expressions 'mokṣa' 'sanyāsa' are conspicuous by absence in the *R̥gveda*. Indra is known as an enemy of the Yatis (*R̥gveda* X, 72, 7). In the *Pañcaviṃśa Brāhmaṇa* (XVII, 3, 2) the Arhantas are described as a class of the Vṛātyas. Another class of the Vṛātya is known as *sama-nīca-medhra* (those whose penis hangs low through control of passion. In *Atharvaveda* (Kāṇḍa XV) Vṛātya is associated with austerities.

226. In the early strata of the Veda the Śūdras are not referred to. There is reference to only Brahma & Kṣatra in the neuter denoting functions and to the Viśaḥ meaning the generality of the Aryan community. The dasyus, of course, stand on a different footing as racially foreign. *R̥gveda* VIII, 35.

ब्रह्म जिन्वतमुत् जिन्वतं धियो । क्षत्रं जिन्वतमुत् जिन्वतं नृन् ।
धेनुर्जिन्वतमुत् जिन्वतं विशो ।

standpoint. Castes were attributed to the gods also : Agni was Brāhmaṇa, Indra and Varuṇa were Kṣatriyas, the Marutas were Vaiśyas. Even metres were associated with castes : gāyatri with Brāhmaṇa, triṣṭubh with Kṣatriya and jagati with Vaiśya.²²⁸ It was held that the words of the hymns were instinct with a divine potency irrespective of their meaning. This doctrine was developed in the Pūrva-Mīmāṃsā school to its logical conclusion and it was believed that the mantras were the gods themselves. Yāska enunciated this view in his remark that, according to the Yājñīkī conception, the mantras had no meaning. By uttering a mantra to its proper accent one could perform miraculous feats. According to the *Aitareya Brāhmaṇa*, one could rout the armies of enemies by throwing at them a blade of grass, sanctified by the recitation of a mantra.²²⁹ Thus ritual became magic. Its efficacy consisted in the meticulous collection and cleaning of sacrificial vessels and materials.²³⁰ Even slight inaccuracies required expiations. The *Aitareya Brāhmaṇa* (ch. 32) prescribes expiations, if the cow, whose milk is to be used in the agnihotra, bellows or kicks or the milk oozes down while heating.

But in the famous *Puruṣa Sūkta* the Śūdras are mentioned as a social class. Thereafter they are regularly mentioned. *Yajurveda* (Vajasneyi Samhitā) XVIII, 48.

रुचं नो घेहि ब्राह्मणेषु रुचं राजसु नस्कृधि ।
रुचं विश्वेषु शूद्रेषु मयि घेहि रुचा रुचम् ।

In course of time the dichotomy of Ārya and Dāsa was replaced by that of Ārya and Śūdra : *Yajurveda* XXVI, 2

यथेमां वाचं कल्याणीमावदानि जनेभ्यः ।
ब्रह्मराजन्याभ्यां ७ शूद्राय चार्याय च ।

Atharvaveda XIX, 62, 1

प्रियं मा कृणु देवेषु प्रियं राजसु मा कृणु ।
प्रियं सर्वस्य पश्यत उत शूद्र उतार्ये ।

227. *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa* I, 3, 3, 19.

ब्रह्माग्निः *Ibid* II, 5, 2, 6 क्षत्रं वै वरुणो विशो मरुतः; II, 5, 2, 27
क्षत्रं वा इन्द्रो विशो मरुतः ।

228. *Aitareya Brāhmaṇa* I, 28.

गायत्रो वै ब्राह्मणः, त्रैष्टुभो वै राजन्यः, जागतो वै वैश्यः ।

229. *Aitareya-Brāhmaṇa* III, 22

सा सेना भज्यमाना निलीयमानैति यत्रैवं विद्रांस्तृणमुभयतः परिच्छिद्येतरां
सेनामभ्यस्यति ।

230. *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa* I, 3, 1, 9

People were named after sacrificial objects. Kūrca, Kuśa, Suhotra, Veṇuhotra, Vītihotra, Somaśravas, Sutapā, Mīdhavā, Marutta, Somadatta, Devarāta are typical personal names of this period. To sum up, the Vedic religion became a dry system of ritual accuracies and ceremonial intricacies in the hands of the Brāhmaṇas. The ordinary householder or sacrificer could not make head or tail of this ritual. He fell a prey to the priests. Therefore, it is stated in a passage of the *Aitareya-Brāhmaṇa* that the priests throw the yajmānas into the pits, snatch their money and make off just as the robbers or freebooters or niṣādas waylay the wealthy people in the forests, throw them into pits, appropriate their money and take to their heels.²³¹ According to Janamejaya Pārikṣita, who is said to have made the above remark, the tactics of these priests were no better than those of robbers. Hence he himself claimed to have performed his sacrifices.

11. *The conflict of the Kṣatriyas and the Brāhmaṇas.*

The above reference to the remark of Janamejaya Pārikṣita that the sacrificing priests (ṛtvijaḥ) are robbers relates to the estrangement and conflict of this king and the Brāhmaṇas.²³² It is well-known that he himself performed two Aśvamedha and one Vājasneya sacrifices.²³³ According to the *Vāyu Purāṇa*, he killed a Brāhmaṇa boy of the Gārgya family²³⁴ and his brothers killed a number of puffed up Brāhmaṇas and foiled their designs. Likewise, Viśvantara Sauśadmana quarrelled with the Śyāparṇas and excluded them from his sacrifices. In a passage of the *Aitareya Brāhmaṇa* the scene of this conflict is dramatically portrayed. Its brawl and scuffle, its noise and panic, its sharp tones and flashing retorts live forever in this narrative :

231. *Aitareya Brāhmaṇa* VIII, 11

यथा ह वा इदं निषादा वा सेलगा वा पापकृतो वा वित्तवन्तं पुरुषमरण्ये गृहीत्वा कर्तमन्वस्य वित्तमादाय द्रवन्ति, एवमेव त ऋत्विजो यजमानं कर्तमन्वस्य वित्तमादाय द्रवन्ति यमेवंविदो याजयन्ति । एतद्ध स्म वै तद्विदानाह जनमेजयः पारीक्षितः एवंविदं हि वै मामेवंविदो याजयन्ति तस्मादहं जयामि ।

232. *Kaṇṭhīya Arthaśāstra* I, 3 ed. R. shamarastri p. 11.

कोपाज्जनमेजयो ब्राह्मणेषु विक्रान्तः ।

233. *Matsya Purāṇa* I, 63, 64 *Aitareya Brāhmaṇa* VII, 27.

234. *Aitareya Brāhmaṇa* VII, 27 translated by A. B. Keith, *Rgveda Brāhmaṇas* p. 314.

“Viśvantara Sauśadmana, despising the Śyāparṇas, performed a sacrifice without them. Perceiving this, the Śyāparṇas went to the sacrifice and sat within the altar. Seeing this, he said, “There sit those of evil deed, speakers of impure speech, the Śyāparṇas; remove them, let them not sit within my altar.” They removed them. They cried aloud, “Heroes had the Kāśyapas among them in the Asitamṛgas, who at the sacrifice, from which Janamejaya Pārīkṣita excluded the Kāśyapas, won the soma-drink from the Bhūtavīras, what hero have we among us, who will win this soma-drinking?” “I am the hero for you”, said Rāma Mārgaveya. When they were rising up, he said, “can it be that they are removing, oh king ! from the altar one, who knows thus?” “What is that thou knowest, oh worthless brāhmaṇa.....”.....he replied.....”²³⁵

In this movement to foil the designs of the Brāhmaṇas to form an exclusive caste of their own and monopolise the sacerdotal lore, which they had ritualised, the celebrated Aryan family of the Ailas played a prominent part. Purūravas Aila was the son of a ruler, who had migrated from Bāhlika (Bactria) in central Asia to Mid-India, as we learn from the *Rāmāyaṇa* (VII, 90, 21-23). He could not brook the egotism and pretensions of the priestly class, which claimed superiority over others by reason of its religious attainments. A tradition, recorded in the *Arthaśāstra* of Kauṭilya, shows that he was deadly against the four-fold caste organisation or cāturvarṇya.²³⁶ We learn from the *Mahābhārata* that he made war on the Brahmaras and robbed them of their jewelry and wealth.²³⁷ Hence the Brāhmaṇas and those earlier Aryans, who had sided with them, like the Aikṣvākas, ostracised the Ailas, as is manifest from the fact that while eastern and southern kings and rulers of the distant Panjab were invited to Daśaratha's sacrifice at Ayodhyā, none of the neighbouring Paurava and Bharata kings was invited. Gradually, the resistance of the Brāhmaṇas stiffened and took an aggressive form under the leadership of the Bhārgavas and notably of Paraśurāma. They

235. *Kauṭilya Arthaśāstra* I, 3, (ed. R. Shamasastri) p. 11

लोभादैलश्चातुर्वर्ण्यमत्याहारयमाणः ।

236. *Mahābhārata* VII, 67.

237. Hemacandra., *Triṣaṣṭīśalākāpuruṣacarita* VI, 4

picked up a quarrel with the Ailas on a very ticklish issue. Arjuna Kārtavīrya, somehow, carried away a calf belonging to the hermitage of Jamadagni. Thereupon, Paraśurāma killed Arjuna Kārtavīrya. Arjuna's sons avenged the death of their father by murdering Jamadagni. Parasurama, then, launched a war of vengeance against the Haihayas and is said in the Purāṇas to have totally exterminated the Kṣatriya dynasties of North India. But the Kṣatriyas were not slow in their revenge. Their traditions, surviving in the fragmentary legends of the Jainas,²³⁸ show that Subhūma, the son of Arjuna Kārtavīrya killed Paraśurāma and exterminated the Brāhmaṇas of India twenty-one times. This legend may be a Kṣatriya form of the Brāhmaṇa tradition of the Purāṇas, but it hints at the offensive of the Kṣatriyas against the Brāhmaṇas. In the Cambodian and Siamese Rāmāyaṇa the conflict of Arjuna Kārtavīrya (Yarjuna) and Paraśurāma (Rāmāsura) centres round a jewel, possessed by the Sea-Goddess Manimekhalai. Though Paraśurāma is there described as the victor, yet he is viewed as an aggressor and hence looked down upon as a fiend. The sympathy of the poets of Greater India is with Arjuna.²³⁹ The stress of these wars destroyed the isolationism of the Brāhmaṇas and cast them in a progressive mould. F.E. Pargiter has described the influence of the Ailas on the Brāhmaṇas as follows :—

“The Aila kings appear to have been their own sacrificers and the Brāhmaṇas, on becoming established among them, assimilated Aila religious ideas and rituals and Aila princes also became Brāhmaṇa priests. Brahmanism, thus gradually changed its character and became the well-known system, priestly not magical, which took its great development among the Bharatas, as displayed especially in the R̥gvedic hymns of the times of Vṛdhyaśva, Divodāsa and their successors. The infusion of royal scions into the ranks of the Brāhmaṇas must have enhanced Brāhmanahood greatly and also, no doubt, modified it and therefrom arose a fresh, vigorous and

238. Sylvain Levi, 'On Manimekhalai, the Guardian Deity of the Sea' *Indian Historical Quarterly* vol VII (1931) pp. 173-175. Sylvain Levi, 'More on Manimekhalai', *Indian Historical Quarterly* VII (1931) pp. 371-376.

239. F. E. Pargiter, *Ancient Indian Historical Tradition* p. 340.

illustrious development of it with apparently a strong stimulus to sacrificial worship".²⁴⁰

Even in Brāhmaṇa circles there was a revolt against the strictly ritual and sacerdotal interpretation of the Veda. The Nairuktas registered their protest against this view of the Veda. Though they subscribed to naturalism, they also adhered to rationalism and insisted upon a correct and literal understanding of the hymns. Yāska, who enunciated the views of this school, stated that when the generation of the ṛṣis came to an end, men approached the gods and asked them as to who will be their ṛṣi in future, whereupon the latter gave the reasoning intellect to men to do duty for the ṛṣis.²⁴¹ Following the rationalist trend of thought it was necessary to conclude that "a person who studies the Vedas without knowing their meaning is like the trunk of a tree, which bears the burden of foliage for nothing."²⁴² Thus Yāska did not see eye to eye with the ritualists, who regarded the Vedas as devoid of any meaning.

Another attack on the ritualists came from the moralists, who emphasised moral virtues and self-discipline in preference to sacrificial rituals and outward observances. In the Āraṇyakas and the Upaniṣads this trend of thought became predominant. The Yajñas were regarded as frail boats, on which no reliance could be placed²⁴³ and the persons, who pinned their faith to them, were deemed to be immersed in ignorance and darkness like blindmen, led by those, who are themselves blind.²⁴⁴ Thus

240. *Nirukta*, Pariśiṣṭa

मनुष्या वा ऋषिषूक्तामत्सु देवानब्रुवन् को न ऋषिर्भविष्यतीति तेभ्य एत तर्कमृषिं प्रायच्छन् ।

241. *Nirukta* I, 18.

स्थाणुरयं भारहारः किलाभूदधीत्य वेदं न विजानाति योऽर्थम् ।
योऽर्थज्ञ इत्सकलं भद्रमश्नुते नाकमेति ज्ञानविधूतपाप्मा ॥

242. *Muṇḍakopaniṣad* I, 2, 7,

प्लवा ह्येतेऽदृढा यज्ञरूपा अष्टादशोक्तमवरं येषु कर्म ।
एतच्छ्रेयो येऽभिनन्दन्ति मूढा जरामृत्युं ते पुनरेवापि यान्ति ॥

243. *Katha Upaniṣad* I, 2, 5.

अविद्यायामन्तरे वर्तमानाः स्वयं धीराः पण्डितं मन्यमानाः ।
दन्द्रभ्यमाणाः परियान्ति मूढा अन्धेनैव नीयमाना यथान्धाः ॥

we observe that the Indra-Vṛtra dichotomy was transformed into a Kṣatriya-Brāhmaṇa antagonism.

After considering the social aspects of the history of the Panjab in the period of the coming of the Aryans we proceed to study the tribal grouping and fusion of this period in the next chapter.

CHAPTER III

THE FUSION OF INDO-IRANIAN TRIBES IN THE VEDIC AGE

1. *The advent of the Aryans.*

The *Rgveda* records the advent of the Aryans in the Land of the Seven Rivers (Saptasindhu).¹

These Aryans lived with their Iranian brethren in a common homeland, which is known as *Eranvej* in the *Avesta*. Eduard Meyer locates this region in the Pamirs and Ernst Herzfeld identifies it with the vast plains of the Oxus and Jaxartes, which represent the rivers Vahvī-datiyā and Ranhā of Eranvej.² From this homeland the cultured, settled and steady groups, characterized by the *Asura* religion, passed into Iran, and the uncouth, nomadic and predatory clans, practising the *Daiva* cult, glided through the north-western passes into the Panjab.³ Though there was an antagonism between these two branches of the Indo-Iranian peoples, symbolised in the denunciation of the, *Daivas* in Iran and the condemnation of the *Asuras* in India, the contacts between them were not altogether snapped and the migrations of tribes kept up the process of their fusion in the Panjab.

1. *Rgveda* II. 12, 3,

यो हत्वाहिरिणात्सप्तसिन्धून्यो गा उदाजत् अपघा बलस्य ।

The Land of Seven Rivers (Saptasindhu) of the Vedic Age has a unique resemblance with the 'Land of the Seven Rivers' (Jiti-Su), which denotes the basins of the lakes Issik-Kul and Balkash with some areas in the west. The Turkish name Jiti-Su (seven rivers) has been translated into Russian as Semirechye and the territory, included in it, is now divided between the Soviet Republics of Qazākastān and Kirghizistan. (V. V. Barthold, *Four Studies on the History of Central Asia* tr. by V. and T. Minorsky (Leiden) Vol. 1 p. XIII) Though it is conjectural to suggest that the Indian nomenclature Saptasindhu is derived from the Central Asiatic designation Jiti-Su, the resemblance of these names has some significance for the comprehension of the movements of the Aryan people. K.C. Chattopadhyaya thinks that Semirechye was the cradle of the Indra-Vṛtra myth being characterised by a cult based on serpent mythology. ('The Cradle of the Indra-Vṛtra Myth', *Proceedings of the Sixth All India Oriental Conference* pp. 529-533).

2. Ernst Herzfeld, *Iran in the Ancient East* p. 190.

3. A. Christensen, *Kulturgeschichte des Alten Orients* pp. 211-12.

2. *The round of invasions and the Battle of Ten Kings.*

Though the Aryan invaders sang some of the Vedic odes in praise of their heroic god Indra on the spurs of the mountains of Afghanistan and their priests composed and recited some invocations to gods in the fertile plains of the Panjab, it is almost certain that the poetry of the *Ṛgveda* crystallised in the lands of the Sarasvatī (Sarsuti between the Sutlej and the Jumna), Dṛṣadvatī (Chautang) and Apāyā (a river near Thanesar), which came to be known as Brahmāvarta.⁴ Hence this Veda has not preserved any reminiscence of earlier migrations save some stray hints about tribal conflicts, in which scholars have traced the references to the movements of some peoples.

In early times we come across a group of five tribes: Krivi, Turvaśa, Keśin, Sṛñjaya and Somaka. H. C. Raychaudhury has suggested their identification with the Pañcālas.⁵ In this grouping the Krivis appear to be an indigenous serpent-worshipping people of the Indo-Iranian borderlands, as shown by Kasten Rönnow.⁶ The Turvaśas seem to represent a confederacy of the Tur and the Vaśa, who were of foreign origin. It is significant that in the *Matsyapurāṇa* (ch. 35) and the *Mahābhārata* (I, 85) the Yavanas are said to be the descendants of Turvasu. H. K. Deb tries to identify the Turvaśas with the Teresh, one of the allied peoples, who fought against Mineptah and Rameses III about 1200 B. C.⁷ Breasted identifies the Teresh with the Etruscans.⁸ The Keśins are definitely the Kassites, who played a leading part in the history of Mesopotamia. According to Schafer, the Sṛñjayas are the Parthians, as is manifest from the fact that they were led by a prince, named Pārthava, mentioned in the *Mahābhārata*.⁹ But the Sṛñjayas are the same as the Sarañgai

4. A. B. Keith, 'The Age of the *Ṛgveda*' *Cambridge History of India* Vol. 1. p. 72.

5. H. C. Raychaudhury, *Political History of Ancient India* (5th edition) p. 71.

6. Kasten Rönnow, 'Vedic Krivi', *Acta Orientalia* Vol. XVI pp. 161-180.

7. H. K. Deb, 'Vedic India and the Middle East', *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society of Bengal* (1948) Vol. XIV (letters) pp. 138-139.

8. Breasted, *A History of Egypt* p. 467.

9. R. Schafer, *Ethnography of Ancient India* p. 138.

of Herodotus, Zrañka of the Achaemenian inscriptions, Sirre-an-ke of Elamite records, Saraggoi of Arrian and Draggiane of Strabo, whose name was borne by the region, called Seistan in later times. The Somakas are the people, practising the Soma ritual, like the Saka Haumavarga of Achaemenian records and Herodotus, the words *somaka* and *haumavarga* being synonymous. Thus we observe that the 'five tribes' included the Kassites, Drangians, Turas and Scyths in their confederacy.

We know that an Aryo-Kassite confederacy invaded Babylonia during the reign of Samsuiluna (1748-1711), the successor of Hammurabi (1792-1750). The Kassites had assimilated Aryan cultural elements, as the use of the word *Šurias*, current among them, shows.¹⁰ In fact, the white captives of Media, sold at Babylon, mentioned by Berosus, refer to the Aryan associates of the Kassites. In the round of invasions of Babylonia, which started in the eighteenth century B.C., quite a large number of races and tribes, including the Kassites, the Medes and the Aryans, participated.¹¹ It appears that a section of the Aryo-Kassite peoples, who invaded Babylonia in the eighteenth century, pressed into India, near about the same time. This is a plausible explanation of the inclusion of the Keśins among the Pañcālas. Later on, however, this history was forgotten and the constituents of the Pañcālas were differently mentioned in the Purāṇas as Mudgala, Śiñjaya, Brhadīṣu, Yavīnara and Kṛmilāśva.

We gather from Vedic literature that wave after wave of north-western peoples came and clashed with the people of the Panjab and the Gangetic valley. There are some references to such events in the Vedas. One episode of this type is the Battle of Ten Kings (dāśa-rājña-yuddha) on the Paruṣṇī (modern Ravi), alluded to in the seventh maṇḍala of the *Rgveda*.¹² The victory of the Bharata King Sudās in the regions

10. J. Kennedy, *The Early Commerce of Babylon with India* (1898) p. 262.

11. Hugo Winckler, *The World's History* ed. A. F. Helmott (Eng. tr.) Vol. III. p. 14. *Cambridge Ancient History*, Vol. I p. 552.

12. *Rgveda* VII, 83, 8,

दाशराज्ञे परियत्ताय विश्वतः सुदास इन्द्रावरुणावशिक्षतम् ।

श्वित्यञ्चो यत्र नमसा कर्पादनो धिया धीवन्तो असपन्त तृत्सवः ॥

Several attempts have been recently made to identify the Battle of Ten Kings with the war of the Pañcāla King Sudās and the Bharata King Samvarama, described in *Mahābhārata* (I, 89, 31-41) (F. E. Pargiter, *Ancient Indian Historical Tradition*, p. 281.

of Vipaś (Beas) and Śutudri (Sutlej) under the aegis of Viśvā-mitra and his later success against the ten tribes, Anu, Druhyu, Yadu, Turvaśa, Puru, Alina, Paktha, Bhalāṇa, Śiva and Viṣāṇin, under the guidance of Vaśiṣṭha, show that he had to deal with fresh invasions of Aryan hordes from the north-west. In this aggregation of tribes there was a significant admixture of Iranian elements. The Purus, who led this confederacy, had a name of Iranian affinity. The word 'puru' occurs in the Avesta as 'pouru' and in the Naksh-i-Rustam inscription of Darius I as 'paru'. It connotes the idea of abundance and multitudinousness. The clans of the Purus appear to have acquired this name by virtue of their overwhelming numbers and irresistible might, as I have suggested elsewhere.¹³ The Purus settled between the Aśikni and the Paruṣṇi, whence they launched their onslaught on the Bharatas, and, after the initial rebuff in the dāśarājña war, soon recouped and resumed their march on the Yamunā and the Sarasvatī and subsequently merged with the Bharatas. Some of their offshoots lingered on in the Panjab and one of their scions played a notable part in the events of the time of Alexander's invasion. They probably survive in the Panjab under the name of *Puri*, which is a sub-caste of the Khatris. As regards the Yadus they are intimately associated with the Parsus¹⁴ and are said to have come from a distant land together with their confrères, the Turvaśa.¹⁵ The Turvaśas were probably the same as the

Altekar, *Journal of the Banaras Hindu University* IV pp. 200-201; *Presidential Address to the Archaic Section of the Indian History Congress, Calcutta* (1939); A.D. Pusalkar, 'Dāśarājña: A New Approach', *Bhāratīya Vidyā* Vol. X, 1949 pp. 70-79; S. N. Pradhan, *Chronology of Ancient India* pp. 83-98). The mere similarity of the name of Vedic Sudās and his Pañcāla namesake does not warrant the identification of the two episodes. In fact, there are so many discrepancies between the respective accounts that one is at a loss to understand how they can be harmonized. The battle, mentioned in the Mahābhārata, took place somewhere near the Yamunā, whence the Bharata King had to flee in exile to the Indus, whereas the Vedic war occurred on the Paruṣṇi; the epic account knows nothing of the ten confederates prominent in the Veda; in the Vedic version Vaśiṣṭha is the Purohita of Sudās, whereas in the epic narrative he assumes the leadership of his rival Samvaraṇa; in the Mahābhārata Sudās is not mentioned by name, there being a reference to one Pāñcālya only; even Sudās of the Purāṇic tradition is the son of Cyavana Pañcajanya, whilst Ṛgvedic Sudās had one Pijavana for his father.

13. Buddha Prakash 'Poros', *Annals of the Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute* Vol. XXXII (1951) pp. 199-200.

14. *Rgveda* VIII, 6, 46.

15. *Rgveda* I, 36, 18; VI, 45, 1. Macdonell & Keith, *Vedic Index* Vol. 385.

Tūrā, who are mentioned with the Ariyā, Sairimā (Sarmatai), Sāinavā and Dahā in the Avesta. They are counted among the Iranian nomad peoples of the Central Asian Steppe, who gave Zarathustra a good reception.¹⁶ A district of Khwarazm bore the name Tūr in the Sassanian age.¹⁷ A section of the Tūrā accompanied the Sarmatians in their westward migration north of the Caspian Sea¹⁸ Another section of the Tūrā must have mounted the Iranian plateau and then moved south-east, for in the Abbasid period a district in eastern Baluchistan in the neighbourhood of the modern Khanate of Qalat bore the name Tūran.¹⁹ In the present century a community of Tūris lived near the Suleiman Mountains in the upper valley of the Kurram river, immediately to the south of the Kabul valley. These Tūris are said to have been pastoral nomads, who migrated twice a year between summer pastures in the Kurram valley and winter pastures round Qalabagh on the west bank of the Indus north of the Salt Range.²⁰ The Tūris have bequeathed their national legend to an epic poetry, current in those regions. These Tūris are the remnants of the ancient Turvaśas. The Druhyus also belonged to the North-West²¹ and the *Purāṇas* represent the Gandhāra princes as the descendants of their progenitor Druhyu.²² Thus it is clear that the five tribes (Pañcajanāḥ), comprising the Purus, Anu, Yadu, Turvaśa and Druhyu, contained prominent Iranian elements. As for the five other tribes, the Alinas may stand for the Alains or Sarmatians, who played a leading part in later times; the Pakthas are manifestly the Pakhtoons of the north-western regions; the Bhalāṇa are some people bearing a name akin to that of the Bolan pass, thereby suggesting that they belonged to that region or passed through it; the Śiva are the Siboi of Greek writers, who are connected with the Uśinara and whose town Śivapura, mentioned by Patañjali (IV, 2, 2), is identical with Sivipura,

16. H. S. Nyberg, *Die Religionen des alten Iran* (Leipzig 1938) pp. 237, 249-51.

17. *Ibid.* p. 251.

18. *Ibid.* pp. 237-251.

19. G. le Strange, *The Lands of the Eastern Caliphate* pp. 331-32.

20. T. L. Pennell, *Among the Wild Tribes of the Afghan Frontier* (London 1912) pp. 55-56.

21. *Vedic Index*. Vol. I p. 385.

22. *Matsyapurāṇa* 48, 6; *Vāyupurāṇa* 99, 9.

referred to in a Shorkot inscription, which shows that they inhabited this region in Jhang between the Irāvati and the Candrabhāgā;²³ and the Visāṇinas are probably the people, called Sṛngala in the *Harivaṃśapurāṇa* (Viṣṇuparvan 65, 15-20) and Sṛngin in the *Mahābhārata* (II, 47, 26). It is noteworthy that several persons, depicted in the art of Mathura, are shown as wearing headdresses, consisting of ram's horns. They are a foreign people of northern origin. Thus we observe that the tides of invasions and migrations in the Vedic period had strong Iranian and Bactrian currents, which merged in the multitudinous tribal confluence of the Panjab and thence rolled towards the East.

3. *The merger of the Puru-Bharatas in the Völkerwanderung of the Kurus.*

The Purus and the Bharatas gradually merged in the great complex of peoples, known as the Kurus. A Ṛgvedic hymn (x,33,4) refers to Kuru-Śravaṇa as a descendant of the formons Puru King Trāsadasyu. The merger of the Bharatas with the Kurus is proved by the expression reading *kuravo nāma bhāratāḥ* occurring in the *Mahābhārata* (XII, 349, 44). In the formation of the Kurus the Irāno-Bactrian elements played a notable part. The tradition of the branching off of the Kurus from their parent body, known as the Uttarakuru, located in the Himalayas, suggests that there was a Völkerwanderung of the Kurus through the North-West, which swept as far as the valley of the Yamunā.²⁴ It is significant that a town in Sogdiana still bears the name Kurkath and an Achaemenian

23. Cuuningham, *Ancient Geography of India* p. 669; B.C. Law, *Historical Geography of Ancient India*

24. In the *Papañcasūdanī* of Buddhaghosa, the Kurus are stated to have migrated from the Trans-Himlayan region known as Uttarakuru. (*Papañcasūdanī* Vol. 1 p. 434; *Dhammapada-aṭṭhakathā* Vol. 2. p. 482; G. P. Malalasekera, *Dictionary of Pāli Proper Names* Vol. 2 p. 236; B. C. Law, *Ancient Mid-Indian Kṣatriya Tribes* p. 16.) It is significant that the Kurus of the Madhyadeśa are called Dakṣiṇa-Kurus in the *Mahābhārata* (1,109,10), evidently in contradistinction to the Uttarakurus of the North.

उत्तरैः कुरुभिः, सार्धं दक्षिणाः कुरुवस्तथा ।
विस्पर्धमाना व्यचरंस्तथा देवर्षिचारणैः ॥

This shows that there was an interconnection between the Kurus of the North and the South. A Kuru ruler Prātipēya bore the suggestive surname Bālhika. The *Mahābhārata* associated the Prātipēyas of the Kuru assembly with the Bālhikas. According to the Rāmāyaṇa, Pururavas Aila, the proge-

emperor, who directed his arms towards the Panjab, was called Kurus (Cyrus). In fact, two kings of the Parsawaś-Anśan branch of the Achaemenians were named Kurus.²⁵ In view of these facts, it is likely that a people of Iranian affiliations migrated to the Panjab and the region of the Sarasvatī at a time, when the Purus and the Bharatas were mixing and merging with each other, and dominated this process of tribal fusion, resulting in the emergence of the Kurus. These Kurus of India were, perhaps, the left wing of an ex-Eurasian nomad people, whose right wing had given its name to the river *Kur* in Transcaucasia to the north-west of Panzis. The left wing of the Kurus came via Bactria to the Panjab and commanded the strategic plain between the Sarasvatī and the Yamunā near the north-eastern edge of the desert of Rajputana, giving it their name *Kuruksetra*, which gave them the key to the domination of the Gangetic plain; the right wing advanced beyond the river *Kur* and settled in western Anatolia round the confluence between the river Hermus and its right bank tributary, the Phrygius, just to the north of the city of Magnesia-under—Sipylyus, which came to be known as the *Koroupedion* or the 'Kuru-plain' like the Indian '*Kuruksetra*.²⁶ In Anatolia, as in India, 'the Kuru plain' was a battle field, on which the political fate of a sub-continent was repeatedly decided. This plain of the Kurus, Koroupedion, was the scene of the defeat of Lysimachus by Seleucos Nicator

nicator of the Ailas, whose branch the Kurus were, migrated to the middle country from Bālhi or Bactriana. *Rāmāyana* VII, 90, 21-22-23.

राजा तु बाल्हिमुत्सृज्य मध्यदेशे ह्यनुत्तमम् ।

निवेशयामास पुरं प्रतिष्ठानं यशस्करम् ॥

शशबिन्दुश्च राजर्षिर्बाल्हिं परपुरञ्जयः ।

प्रतिष्ठाने इलो राजा प्रजापतिसुतो बली ॥

स काले प्राप्तवांल्लोकमिलो ब्राह्ममनुत्तमम् ।

ऐलः पुरवा राजा प्रतिष्ठानमवाप्तवान् ॥

All these facts leave no room for doubt that the Kurus migrated into India from Bactriana.

25. F. H. Weissbach, *Kyros* in Pauly-Wissowa, *Reinencyclopadie der Classischen Altertumswissenschaft*, Supplement band IV Col. 1128. The association of the Kurus with the Bālhiikas is referred to in *Mahābhārata* 11, 63,2 Vide *Vedic Index* Vol. 11 p. 279.

26. K. J. Beloch, *Griechische Geschichte* (2nd. ed.) Vol. IV part II, pp. 458-71.

in 281 B.C. and of Antiochus III by the Romans in 190 B.C., just as Kurukṣetra was the stage of the famous battles of Panipat, which marked the changes in the destiny of India across the ages. These resemblances in the geographical nomenclature of the Kurus throw a flood of light on their Völkerwanderungen in a pincer-movement towards the settled and sedentary communities of the South-East and the North-West from the Central Asiatic heartland. But like all nomads, the Kurus were destined to merge in the racial and cultural complex of India, as of Iran, Transcaspiana and Anatolia.

4. *The culture of Sapta-sindhu.*

In this period of the invasions and migrations of the Purus and Kurus, the North-West and the Panjab were regarded as the home of Vedic culture. Hence we find the Vedic poets waxing eloquent in the praise of the Sapta-sindhu. In the famous hymn of rivers (*Nadistuti*), contained in *Rgveda* (X, 75), the ṛṣi Priyamedha Sindhuksit, who probably hailed from the Indus region, invokes the favour of Śutudri, (Sutlej), Paruṣṇi, (Ravi), Aśikni (Chenab), Vitastā (Jhelum) Marud-vṛdhā (the joint stream of Chenab and Ravi) Arjikiyā (Upper-Indus), Suṣomā (Suwān), Susartu, Rasā, Śvetyā (the tributaries of the Indus), Kubhā (Kabul), Gomati (Gomal), Krumu (Kurram) etc, among the rivers within his pur-view, and soars to a high pitch of exultation in his reference to the Sindhu. R. T. H. Griffith has translated these verses about the Indus as follows :

“Flashing and whitely gleaming in her mightiness, she moves along her ample volumes through the realms, most active of the active, Sindhu, unrestrained, like to a dappled mare, beautiful, fair to see.....Rich in good steeds is Sindhu, rich in cars and robes, rich in gold nobly fashioned, rich in vigorous mares, Blest Silamāvati and Young Urṇāvati increst themselves with raiment, rich in store of sweets.”²⁷

27. *Rgveda* (X. 75)

ऋजीत्येनी रुशती महित्वा परिजयांसि भरते रजांसि
अदब्धा सिन्धुरपसामपस्तमाश्वा न चित्रा वपुषीव दर्शता
स्वश्वा सिन्धुः सुरथा सुवासा हिरण्ययी सुकृता वाजिनीवती
उर्णावती युवतिःसीलमावत्युताधिवस्ते सुभगा मधुवृधम्

5. The glory Of Gandhāra.

In *R̥gveda* (1,126,7) the good wool of Gandhāra is mentioned. Gandhāra became a centre of culture and education in the period of the Brāhmaṇas and Upaniṣads. We learn from the *Kauṣītaki Brāhmaṇa* (VII, 6) that the Brāhmaṇas used to go to the north for purposes of study.²⁸ The *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa* (XI, 4, 1, 1) informs us that Uddālaka Āruṇi went among the people of the northern country.²⁹ According to the *Uddālaka Jātaka*, this scholar journeyed to Takṣaṣilā in quest of knowledge.³⁰ The truth of these traditions is avouched by the observations of Uddālaka Āruṇi himself regarding the desirability of going to Gandhāra and studying at the feet of a duly qualified teacher there for the acquisition of knowledge and attainment of liberation, that are recorded in the *Chāndogya Upaniṣad* (VI, 14). Uddālaka compares a man, who has strayed away from Gandhāra, to a blind-folded man, who clamours for light and finds it neither in the north or south nor in the west and east and at last, when the fold is removed from his eyes, proceeds from village to village, enquires the way and reaches Gandhāra. In his view the career of a man up to Gandhāra is analogous to the ascent of a seeker to spiritual liberation.³¹ Later on, Kauṭilya prescribed a fine for a person,

28. *Vedic Index* II, 276.

29. *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa* XI, 4, 1, 1.

उदीच्यान्वृतो धावयाञ्चकार

30. *Jātakas* ed Fausböll no 487.

31. *Chāndogya Upaniṣad* VI, 14; S. Radhakrishnan, *The Principal Upaniṣads* pp. 463-464.

यथा, सौम्य, पुरुषं गन्धारेभ्योऽभिनद्धाक्षमानीय तं ततोऽतिजने विसृजेत्, स यथा तत्र प्राङ् वा दक्षिणं वा पश्चिमं वा प्रत्यासीत् "अभिनद्धाक्ष आनीतोऽभिनद्धाक्षो विसृष्टः । तस्य यथाभिनहनं प्रमुच्य प्रब्रूयादेतां दिशं गन्धारा एतां दिशं व्रजेति । स ग्रामाद्ग्रामं पृच्छन् पण्डितो मेघावी गन्धारानेवोपसम्पद्येत एवमेवेहाचार्यवान् पुरुषो वेद । तस्य तावदेव चिरं यावन्न विमोक्ष्ये, अथ संपत्स्य इति ।

Radhakrishnan has translated this passage as follows :—

"Just as, my dear, one might lead a person away from the Gandhāras with his eyes bandaged and abandon him in a place where there are no human beings, and just as that person would shout towards the east or the north or the south or the west, 'I have been led here with my eyes bandaged, I have been left here with my eyes bandaged,' And as if one released his bandage and told him, 'In that direction are the Gandhāras, go in that direction; thereupon, being informed and capable of judgment, he would be, asking his way from village to village, arrive at Gandhāra; in exactly the same manner does one here, who has a teacher, know "I shall remain here only so long as I shall not be released (from ignorance). Then I shall reach perfection."

8. *The purity of Uśinara.*

To the south of the Madras were the Uśinaras, whose realm extended up to Uśinaragiri near Kanakhala near the famous pilgrimage Haradvāra, where the Ganges issues on the plains from the hills. We learn from the *Kaṣṭhīki Upaniṣad* (IV, 1, 1) that a scholar, named Gārgya Bālāki, who was a contemporary of Janaka of Videha, lived for sometime in the Uśinara country.³⁶ The *Mahābhārata* (111, 130, 21) represents Uśinara as sacrificing on two small streams near the Yamunā. Śibi, the king of the Uśinaras, is famous for his righteousness in the epic and the Jātakas.³⁷

Thus it is clear that in the Vedic and post-Vedic period the North-West and the Panjab were considered as the home of piety and learning, acted as the spring of sacred lore and ritual and provided the models of good morals and righteous conduct.

36. S. Radhakrishnan, *The Principal Upaniṣads* p. 784.

37. *Mahābhārata* XII, 29, 39; *Vedic Index* Vol. I p. 103 Fausböll, *Jātaka*, Mahākāṇḥa Jātaka no. 469, Nimi Jātaka, no. 541; Mahā-nārada-kassapa Jātaka, no. 544.

CHAPTER IV

THE FALL OF THE KURUS AND THE GENESIS OF THE MAHĀBHĀRATA

1. Current theories about the Mahābhārata.

The titanic tragedy of the Kurus forms the plot of the *Mahābhārata*. The Great War of Kurukṣetra, in which all the principal ruling houses and tribal groups of northern India participated, is sung with epic grandeur and heroic exuberance in this poem. Holtzmann's theory that this epic is a product of the middle ages¹ has been falsified by epigraphic evidence of the Gupta period.² Likewise, the view of Dahlmann that it was composed by one author as a treatise on law in the fifth-sixth centuries B.C. is belied by the heterogenous materials, reflecting different ages and epochs, incorporated in it.³ In the opinion of Lassen and Weber, the nucleus of the epic centres round the conflicts of the Kurus and the Pañcālas and the episode of the Pāṇḍus is a later addition.⁴ This view is endorsed by H. Bruce Hannah, who holds that Pāṇḍava is "a very transient designation, merely serving the purpose of the story, in which we see nothing but yet another of the various protean forms, in which from time to time the name pañcajanāḥ has masqueraded. The tale of the Kauravas and Pañcālas appears to be merely a poetical reminiscence of some more or less effective domination of Kuruland by the Pañcālas, the five

1. Adolf Holtzmann, *Das Mahābhārata und seine Teile* (1892-95)

2. J. F. Fleet, *Corpus Inscriptionum Indicarum* Vol. III no. 26. Karitalai Copper Plate inscription of Mahārāja Jayanātha of 174 G.E.—493 A.D. line 13 उक्तं च महाभारते गवता व्यासेन Cp. Khoh Copper Plate inscription of Jayanātha of 177 G. E.—493 A.D. (Fleet, no 27, line 15; Khoh Copper Plate inscription of Mahārāja Śarvanātha of 214 G.E. (Fleet, no. 31, line 19. उक्तं च महाभारते साहस्र्यां संहितायां परमर्षिणा पराशरमुतेन वेदव्यासेन संव्यासेन

3. J. Dahlmann, *Das Mahābhārata als Epos und Rechtsbuch* (1895); *Geneses des Mahābhārata* (1899).

4. Lassen, *Indische Altertumskunde* Vol. 1 p. 692; Weber, *History of Indian Literature* pp. 114, 186.

tribes.⁵ But, in the words of Hopkins, "a *Mahābhārata* without Pāṇḍus is like an Iliad without Achilles and Agememnon."⁶ Such a poem does not at all exist. Hopkins himself determined the chronology of the *Mahābhārata* as follows: the Bharata (Kuru) lays were pieced together before 400 B. C., the tale with the Pāṇḍava heroes was formed between 400 and 200 B.C., the epic of Bhāgavata religion with Kṛṣṇa as God grew from 200 B.C. to 200 A.D., the last books and the introduction to the first parvan were composed between 200-400 A.D. and the finishing touches, resulting in the modern amplified edition, were given after 400 A.D.⁷ His attempt at identifying a Kuru nucleus is adumbrated in some earlier papers.⁸ But his later observation that the *Mahābhārata* without the Pāṇḍus is unknown, cited above, nullifies his theory of the introduction of the Pāṇḍu episode at a later period. In fact, as we shall see, there was an attempt at rewriting the whole work from a Kuru angle of vision in later times, which resulted in the representation of the Pāṇḍavas as the brethren of the Kurus. This aspect became so prominent in the later epic that Raychaudhury subscribes to the fratricidal character of the Great War⁹ in utter forgetfulness of the significant absence of any reference to the Pāṇḍus in Vedic or Brāhmaṇa literature. Sylvain Lévi¹⁰ treats the *Māhābhārata* as a Bhāgavata scripture, written under the inspiration of the Buddhist encyclopaedic works, like the *Vinaya* of the Mūlasarvāstivādins. Recently Robert Schafer held that the Great Epic is "essentially the story of native rebellion against Aryan exploitation"¹¹, a view, which is too speculative to deserve to be examined at length. Equally

5. *Journal of the Department of Letters* (Calcutta University) Vol IX (1923) p. 152.

6. *Cambridge History of India* Vol. I p. 226.

7. E. W. Hopkins, *The Great Epic of India, Its Character and Origin* pp. 397-398.

8. E. W. Hopkins, 'The Social and Military Position of the Ruling Caste in Ancient India as represented by the Sanskrit Epic, *Journal of the American Oriental Society*. Vol. XIII, (1889) pp. 67-8; 'The Bhārata and the Great Bhārata,' *American Journal of Philology* Vol XIX (1898) pp. 1-24.

9. H. C. Raychaudhury, *Political History of Ancient India* (5th edition) pp. 40-41.

10. Sylvain Lévi, 'Tato Jayam Udīrayet', *Mémorial Sylvain Lévi* ed. Jacques Bacôt pp. 297-298.

11. Robert Schafer, *Ethnography of Ancient India*, pp. 1-5.

conjectural is the theory of Heras that the story of the Kauravas and Pāṇḍavas, narrated in the *Mahābhārata*, is not only pre-Vedic but also pre-Harappan.¹² Of similar nature is the conjecture of H. C. Seth that the account of the *Mahābhārata* Battle is based on the record of the invasion of Gandhāra by Cyrus the Great (c. 559 B. c.-529 B.C.)¹³

2. *The adventitious character of the Pāṇḍavas.*

The *Mahābhārata* is essentially a tale of the conflicts of the Kauravas and the Pāṇḍavas. We have seen above that the Kauravas emerged from a tribal fusion of the Purus and the Bharatas in the middle country, in which some intruding Iranian elements also played a notable part. As regards the Pāṇḍavas, the first thing, which strikes the eye, is their continuous antagonism and incessant struggle with the Kauravas. Whereas the Kurus are repeatedly mentioned in Vedic and post-Vedic Brāhmaṇa literature, there is not even the slightest hint to the Pāṇḍus in its vast expanse. Of course, we hear of Parīkṣita in the *Atharvaveda* (XX, 7-10), but he is associated with the Kurus; likewise, his son Janamejaya is spoken of in the *Aitareya* and *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇas*, but there is no suggestion that he was connected with the Pāṇḍavas.¹⁴ The significant reticence of this literature about the Pāṇḍavas and their epic achievements

12. H. Heras, 'The Age of the Mahabharata War'. *Journal of Indian History*. Vol. XXVI, (1948) pp. 19-20.

13. H. C. Seth, 'Cyrus the Great and the Mahābhārata Battle,' *Proceedings of the Indian History Congress* (Hyderabad) 1941 pp. 125-127.

14. H. C. Raychaudhury, *Political History of Ancient India* (5th edition) pp. 17-18.

Rev. Heras has published a letter of V. S. Sukthankar in support of his view. But Sukthankar has expressed no such view in his latest published work, entitled '*On the Meaning of the Mahābhārata*'. On the contrary, he has held that the Mahābhārata is a religious treatise. The battle of the Kauravas and the Pāṇḍavas is a symbol of the struggle of virtue and sin and the dualism of good and evil, which takes place in the soul of man. Thus Sukthankar, after opposing all the symbolic and figurative interpretations of the Great Epic, himself comes to interpret it in terms of symbols. Likewise, Thadani in *The Mystery of the Mahābhārata* regards this work as a symbol of the struggles and connections of the various systems of Indian philosophy. Kṛṣṇa is a symbol of Vedānta, Yoga and Vaiśeṣika philosophy and Drona is an emblem of Buddhism, Nyāya and Vaiśeṣika. Vikander holds that the Pāṇḍava heroes symbolise the natural myths of ancient Indo-European age. Bhīma represents the boisterous aspect of force and Arjuna stands for its placid and harmonious aspects (Vikander, 'Pāṇḍava sagan och Mahābhāratas mystiska förutsättningar' *Religionen och Bibelen* VI (1947) p. 27-39, translated in *Jupiter Mars Quirinus* IV (1948) pp. 37-65.).

cannot be explained away by the argument that it is sacerdotal and scholastic in character and is not expected to refer to political episodes. A perusal of the epic clearly bears out that Parīkṣita and Janamejaya, though important personages, were not of such momentous reputation as their so-called ancestors Arjuna and Karna. Yet their names ring in this literature and those of their illustrious predecessors are muffled in oblivion. The only inference that this silence suggests is that the Pāṇḍavas were unknown to the writers of this literature. Not only the Vedic works, but also the Purāṇic traditions are ignorant of the magnitude of the role of the Pāṇḍavas. The Purāṇas refer to the three sons of Kuru, Parīkṣita, Jahnu and Sudhanvan, and mention the former's son Janamejaya and his grandsons, Śrutasena, Ugrasena and Bhīmasena. The accounts then pass on to Jahnu's son Suratha and his descendants, who continued the main Kuru line. These narratives do not accord any significant part to the Pāṇḍavas. Thus the ubiquitous and unbroken silence of both Brāhmaṇa and Kṣatriya traditions about the Pāṇḍavas unmistakably shows that they were strange intruders, having their own legends, which developed into the *Mahābhārata*.

The reticence of the Brāhmaṇa and Kṣatriya traditions about the Pāṇḍavas is in contrast to the eloquence of Buddhist and grammatical works in regard to these heroes. In the *Dasabrāhmaṇa Jātaka* (no. 495) a king of the stock of Yuddhiṭṭhila is said to be reigning in the Kingdom of Kuru at Indapatta. Similarly the *Dhūmakārī Jātaka* (no. 413) speaks of Yuddhiṭṭhila gotta at Indapatta or Indapattana. According to the *Mahāsutasoma Jātaka* (No. 537), the Kuru country was three hundred leagues in extent. The *Kurudhamma Jātaka* (no. 276) *Sambhava Jātaka* (no. 515) and *Vidhurapaṇḍita Jātaka* (no. 545) allude to Dhanañjaya Koravya, which is a designation of Arjuna in the *Mahābhārata*. However, in the Jaina text *Uttarādhyayana Sūtra* the king of the Kuru country, named Isukāra, is not connected with any Pāṇḍava hero.¹⁵

In the time of the Jātakas the identification of the Pāṇḍavas with the Kurus, whose process is discernible in epic traditions, was an accomplished fact. However, in the *Kunālaka Jātaka*

15. H. Jacobi *Jaina Sūtras (Sacred Books of the East Vol. XLV)*, p. 62.

(no. 536) the Pāṇḍavas are distinctly mentioned as a hill tribe practising polyandry.¹⁶ In the Ceylonese chronicle *Mahāvamsa* the Pandyas of the South are represented as Pāṇḍus.¹⁷ In the Jaina work *Nāyādhammakahāo* also the Pāṇḍavas are asked by Kaṇha Vāsudeva to repair to Pāṇḍu Mahurā, which is identified with the Pandya country of the South.¹⁸ Similar confused traditions underlie the observations of the Greek envoy Megasthenes regarding the legend of Heracles and Pandaia and the endowment of the southernmost part of India, comprising 365 towns, by him to her.¹⁹

In grammatical literature, Pāṇḍu is referred to in a Vārtika of Kātyāyana on Pāṇini IV, 1,44. Pāṇini himself mentions Vāsudeva and Arjuna in a sūtra, explaining the addition of the suffix *vuñ* (aka) to these words and the formation of Vāsudevaka and Arjunaka in the sense of a worshipper of Vāsudeva and of Arjuna respectively.²⁰ He teaches the formation of the words Bhīma and Bhīṣma²¹, alludes to Yudhiṣṭhira²² and Kunti²³ and hints at Duryodhana and Duṣṣāsana.²⁴ His acquaintance with Kṛṣṇa Dvaipāyana and his pupils Paila and Vaiśampāyana²⁵ together with the references to the Kurus²⁶ and the aforesaid characters of the *Mahābhārata* shows that he was familiar with the main outline of the Great Epic.

16. B. C. Law, *India as described in the Early Texts of Buddhism and Jainism* p. 108.

17. *Mahāvamsa* VII, 50; *Dīpavamsa* IV, 41.

18. B. C. Law, *Some Jaina Canonical Sūtras* pp. 39, 52.

19. J. W. McCrindle, *Ancient India as described by Megasthenes and Arrian* pp. 33-35.

20. Pāṇini, *Aṣṭādhyāyī Sūtrapāṭha*. IV, 3, 98. वासुदेवार्जुनाभ्यां वुन्
For comments see R. G. Bhandarkar, *Collected Works* Vol. 1. pp. 214-216; *Vaiṣṇavism, Śaivism and Minor Religious Systems* pp. 4-5; V. S. Agrawala, *India as known to Pāṇini* pp. 359-360, 340.

21. *Ibid.* III, 4, 74 भीमादयोऽपादाने

22. *Ibid.* VIII, 3, 95. गवियुधिस्थिरः ।

23. *Ibid.* IV, 1, 176.

24. *Ibid.* III, 3, 130 स्त्रियामवन्तिकुरुम्यश्च

25. *Ibid.* II, 4, 59 अन्येभ्योऽपि दृश्यन्ते IV, 3, 104 कलापिवैशम्पाय-
नादिभ्यश्च

26. *Ibid.* IV 1, 114 पैलादिभ्यश्च

IV, 1, 169 ऋष्यन्वकवृष्णिकुरुम्यश्च

सात्येयगात्वारिभ्यां च

3. *The pale complexion of the Pāṇḍavas.*

The aforesaid references to the Pāṇḍus in Buddhist, Jaina and grammatical works in contrast to their absence in Vedic and post-Vedic Brāhmaṇa literature clearly prove that they emerged into the lime-light much later than the Kurus. Besides this, there are some other traits to distinguish them from the Kurus and mark them out as outlandish and adventitious. The very name Pāṇḍu, suggestive of a yellowish complexion, indicates the ethnic constitution of the Pāṇḍavas. Though a far-fetched explanation of the yellowish complexion of Pāṇḍu is sought to be given in the legend of the turning of his mother pale, when Vyāsa approached to impregnate her, the ethnic connotation of this term can hardly be doubted or disputed. In the epic the golden-hued Kirāta and Cīna, who formed the retinue of the king of Prāgjyotiṣa, named Bhagadatta, are depicted as a forest of karṇikāra flowers (कनेर) in virtue of their yellow complexion.²⁷ In fact, the Mongoloid peoples of the Himalayan regions were marked by yellow pigment and it is significant that the Pāṇḍavas are also represented as a mountainous tribe in Buddhist works. Thus it is clear that the complexion of Pāṇḍu accentuated the ethnic contrast of the Pāṇḍavas and the Kurus.

4. *The prevalence of polyandry.*

The marital and funeral customs of the Pāṇḍavas also show that they were different from the Kurus. The marriage of Draupadī with the five Pāṇḍava brothers is an evidence of the practice of polyandry among them. Indian law and custom abhor this practice right from the very outset. The *Taittirīya Saṃhitā* looks down upon this custom, though it approves of

27. *Mahābhārata* IV, 35, 2; *Ibid.* V, 584.

कैरातं वेशमास्थाय काञ्चनद्रुमसन्निभम् ।
भगदत्तो महीपालः सेनामक्षौहिणीं ददौ ।
तस्य चीनैः किरातैश्च काञ्चनैरिव संवृतम् ।
बभौ बलमनाघृष्यां कर्णिकारवनं यथा ॥

Cp. *Rāmāyaṇa*, *Kiṣkindhā-Kāṇḍa* 40, 27-28.

किराताश्च तीक्ष्णचूडाश्च हेमाभाः प्रियदर्शनाः ।
अन्तर्जलचरा घोरा नरव्याघ्रा इति श्रुताः ॥

polygamy.²⁸ Even the people of the Mahābhārata age were aghast at this polyandrous marriage; King Drupada expressed his dismay at this proposal, calling it illegal, contrary to moral conduct and unknown to both sacerdotal and secular usage.²⁹ But Yudhiṣṭhira defended it as his ancient tradition, which he had to follow, irrespective of the abstruse considerations of morality.³⁰ His argument leaves no room for doubt that polyandry was an established custom of the Pāṇḍavas and the attempt of the later editor of the epic to explain it away as a too literal interpretation of the injunction of Kunti to eat together what has been obtained wears thinner. We learn from Herodotus (1,216) that the Massagaetes (मशक) had a custom of holding their wives in common. The Hephthalites are also known to be practising polyandry. "They have a custom, by which elder and younger brother both marry one wife. If one has no elder or younger brother, his wife wears a one-horned hat. If one has brothers, horns are added to the hat, according to their number." (*Chou-shu* 50, 14 b) In Tokharistan, Kapiśa, Bamiyan and Zabulistan, countries with a large Hephthalite population, "ten, five, three or two brothers together marry one woman" [*Hui-ch'ao wang wu t'ien chu huo chuan* tr. W. Fuchs, cited by Otto Maenchen-Helfen, 'The Ethnic Name Hun', *Studia Serica Bernhard Karlgren Dedicata* [Copenhagen 1959] p. 234]. The fact that the Pāṇḍavas shared their custom shows that they also hailed from the same northern regions.

5. *The practice of sati.*

Like polyandry, the custom of *sati* among the Pāṇḍavas smacks of strangeness from the Indian standpoint. On the death of Pāṇḍu his wife Mādri ascended his funeral pyre and

28. *Yajurveda; Taittirīya Samhitā* (VI, 6, 4, 3)

यन्नैकां रशनां द्वयोर्यूपयोः परिव्ययति तस्मान्नैका द्वौ पती विन्दते ।

29. *Mahābhārata* 1,210,27

सोऽयं न लोके वेदे वा जातु धर्मः प्रशस्यते ।

लोकधर्मविरुद्धं तं नाधर्मं धर्मविच्छुचिः ॥

30. *Mahābhārata* ,210,29

सूक्ष्मो धर्मो महाराज नास्य विद्मो वयं गतिम् ।

पूर्वेषामनुपूर्वेण यातं वर्तमानियामहे ॥

Vide, Rāhula Sāṅkṛityāyana, *Madhya Asia kā Itihāsa* (in Hindi) Vol. I p. 68 for group marriages and polyandrous marriages among the Śakas.

became sati.³¹ On that occasion she was addressed by the significant epithet Bālhīki³², perhaps, to emphasize her adherence to a Bactrian rite. On the other hand, among the Kurus the widows did not burn themselves with the remains of their husbands, though weapons, costumes and chariots were consigned to the flames on their pyres. Rather the widows survived to offer them funeral oblations, as we learn from chapters 31-33 of the *Śrīparvan*. As for Gāndhārī and Dhṛtarāṣṭra, both of them were consumed by fire in the forest, there being no indication that the death of the former was by way of *sati*. Thus there is a marked difference between the Kurus and the Pāṇḍavas from this viewpoint.

6. *The ethnic distinction between the Kurus and the Pāṇḍavas.*

We have observed above that an ethnic and social difference underlies the Kurus and the Pāṇḍus despite the frantic effort of the epic editor to blanket it and represent them as branches of the same family. Let us now enquire as to who were the Pāṇḍavas and what tribal connotation and ethnic symbolism underlies the conception of the five brothers.

7. *Arjuna and the Central Asiatic states of Kuca and Karashahr.*

The hero of the Pāṇḍava saga is Arjuna. He dominates the whole narrative of the *Mahābhārata*. Being a constant associate of Kṛṣṇa Vāsudeva, he is identical with 'Nara' in the 'Nara-nārāyaṇa' conception and commands a pivotal position in the heroic cult of the Great Epic. We have seen above that Pāṇini refers to the worshipper of Arjuna, called *Arjunaka*, together with the devotee of Vāsudeva, called *Vāsudevaka*³³. This remark

31. *Mahābhārata*, I. 125, 25-31

अहमेवानुयास्यामि भर्तारमपलायिनम् ।

न हि तृप्तास्मि कामानां ज्येष्ठा मामनुमन्यताम् ॥

इत्युक्त्वा तं चिताग्निस्थं घर्मपत्नि नरर्षभम् ।

मद्रराजसुता तूर्णमन्वारोहद्यशस्विनी ॥

घन्या त्वमसि बाल्हीकि मत्तो भाग्यतरा तथा ।

Among the Śakas the custom of Sati prevailed. In Russia it was followed up to the 8th century, as we learn from the account of an Arab traveller (R. Sānkṛityāyana, *Maahya Asia kā Itihāsa* I, p.68) The discovery of the Scythian burials at Pazirik and other places show that a large number of persons, including, of course, the wives, followed the dead into the grave. The dead man's wife was always provided with a tomb

32. *Mahābhārata*, I, 125, 21.

implies that Arjuna was treated as a deity at the time of Pāṇini and his followers occupied a prominent position. The *Arjunaka* of the sūtra of Pāṇini can be easily equated with the *Prājju-naka* (*Prārjunaka*) of Kauṭilya³⁴ and the *Prārjuna* and *Ārjunā-yana* of the Allahabad pillar inscription of Samudragupta.³⁵ The tribe, associated with the name of Arjuna, existed in the Panjab and the North-West up to the advent of Gupta power in the fourth century A.D. In this connection it is significant to note that some oases-states of the Tarim basin, dotting the northern trade route, running from Kashghar to Tun-huang, were constantly associated with the name of Arjuna in ancient times. The founder of the state of Yen K'i (*Agnideśa*), modern Karashahr, is called *Shoen*, whose name is a Chinese transcription of *Arjuna*. A later king of Karashahr was known as *Li Po-shoen*, whose name is conserved in the *Tseu-che-t'ong-kien* 62A in the form of *Sien-shoen*, which represents *Senārjuna*. Lüdgers has discovered a fragment of a Sanskrit work in this region, which records the reception, given to the Buddhist fraternity by a king of Karashahr (*Agniśvara*), named *Indr-ārjuna*, for the spiritual benefit of the line of his ancestors beginning with *Candrārjuna*.³⁶ In fact, the word *Arjuna* is a regular component of the names of the kings of Karashahr. Like Karashahr, Kucā was also ruled by a line of kings, bearing the surname *Po* (white), which stands for '*Arjuna*' (also meaning 'white') in Chinese transcriptions. The king of Kucā, vanquished by Lu-Koang, is named *Po-Shoen* (Ch'o'en) in Chinese annals. In the narrative of the Chinese writer Yeu-yang-tsa-tsu, the

scarcely less sumptuous than that of her husband and sometimes a male attendant, possibly her groom, was chosen to accompany her. (T. Talbot Rice, *The Scythians* p. 100). Following the Scythians, the Slavs also buried their leaders in tombs, equipped with all the essentials of life, and placed the dead man's wife, decked in her wedding dress, in his burial chamber, but they led her into it alive, there to meet her death. (*Ibid* p. 181.)

33. *Pāṇini Sūtra* IV, 3, 98,

34. *Kauṭilya Arthasāstra* III, 72 (ed. R. Shamasastri) p. 194.

35. J. F. Fleet, *Corpus Inscriptionum Indicarum* III, no. 1

मालवार्जुनायनयोषेयमद्रकाभीरप्रार्जुनसनकानीककाकखरपरिकादिभिश्च

36. H. Lüdgers, *Weitere Beiträge zur Geschichte und Geographie von Ostturkestan* (1930) P. 28.

तदर्थं अबसम्बोधयामि यदयं महात्मा अपरिमितशुभमतिशुभरुचिरपुण्य
.....(प्र)(म) (हा) दानपतिअग्नीश्वरअग्निमहाराजइन्द्रार्जुन सार्
(घ) (म्) अ (ग्) निम (हा) (राज्ञि) या सूर्यप्रभा.....या.....तथा
पूर्ण अग्नीन्द्राणामादौ चन्द्रार्जुनस्या (म) यतित कालगतस्य उपपत्तिविशेषतायै ।

hero is named *A-chu-eul*, which is a variant of *Arjuna*, and in a manuscript of Tokharian B dialect, preserved in the Leningrad Museum, there is a reference to a king *Kṣemārcuma* or *Kṣemārjuna*. The literature and traditions, connected with the name of *Arjuna*, were so widely prevalent in these regions that the Turks also incorporated them in their lore after settling there. In the Uighur redaction of the *Hidimbāvadha*, a part of which has been published and translated by F.W.K. Müller, the name of *Arjuna* occurs in the form of *Arcum*.³⁷ According to Sylvain Lévi, this episode of the *Mahābhārata* owed the privilege of entering into the Turkish world to the presence of the name of *Arjuna* in it, who was regarded as the eponymous founder of the dynasties of some Central Asiatic oases-states.³⁸ Thus it is clear that the tribe, bearing the name of *Arjuna*, was connected with some people of Chinese Turkestan, whose heroes and kings had this designation.³⁹

8. *Arjuna, Rṣika and Yue-che.*

The word *arjuna* has an unmistakable resemblance with the Śaka word *erzuna*, meaning a 'leader' or 'chief'. This word *erjuna* or *erjhuna* can be identified with the word *atysānai*, *eyśānai* i.e. *alzānai*, *ezānai*, which is used in the old Śaka language in the Khotan country for rendering the Sanskrit word *kumāra*. Śaka languages use both 'r' and 'l'. Therefore, Śaka *atysānai* presupposes an older *arzāna*, *arzānaka*, while the later form *eyśānai* shows that the initial vowel tended towards an 'e'. The word *erjhuna* is used in the sense of 'prince' in the Takht-i-Bahi inscription of the year 103. According to Konow, *kapa* stands for the Kuṣāṇa ruler Kuzula Kadphises and *erjhuna kapasya* means 'of the prince Kadphises' in this inscription.⁴⁰ The word *erjuna* or *erzuna* is derived from *arzi*. Analogous to it are the Śaka words *aljsā*, meaning 'silvery', and *āljsata*, meaning 'silver,' that are akin to the Avestan word *erezata* (silver),

37. F. W. K. Müller, *Uighurica* III, 1911 in *Abhandl. K. Pr. Ak. Wis.* (1910) p. 24.

38. Sylvain Lévi, 'Le Tokharien', *Journal Asiatique* (1933) reprinted in *Fragments de Textes Koutchéens* pp. 22-24.

39. Buddha Prakash, 'Central Asia, the Crucible of Cultures', *Journal of the Greater India Society* Vol. XV. (1956) p. 54.

40. Sten Konow, *Kharoṣṭhi Inscriptions* (*Corpus Inscriptionum Indicarum* Vol. II) p. 65, 61 *mira boyanasya erjhuna kapasya puyae madu pidu puyae.*

the Sanskrit word *rajata* (silver) and the Persian word *arziz* (tin).⁴¹ All these words have the original sense of whiteness and brightness, that are also connoted by the word *arjuna* in Sanskrit. It is highly significant that Arjuna, the hero of the *Mahābhārata*, is said to have borne this name, because he was 'white' and 'pure' in action.⁴² All over the Eurasian steppes the nobles were regarded as 'white' and the commoners were considered 'black'. Hence the word for white colour was employed to denote the idea of leadership. This is why *erzuna* was used in the sense of a 'leader' in Śaka languages.

The word *arjuna* occurs in Vedic literature also. [*Rgveda* I, 112, 23; IV, 26, 1; VIII, 1, 11; *Yajurveda* X, 21; *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa* II, 1, 2-11; V, 4, 3, 7). There it denotes 'white' and 'white leprosy' and is also an epithet of Indra. But it does not denote a tribe or a human hero. On the other hand, we come across the name of a northern tribe Arjunaka or Ārjunāyana or Prārjuna in the *Arthaśāstra* of Kautilya and the Allahabad pillar inscription of Samudragupta, as seen above. This tribe seems to be connected with the name *arjuna*. The use of this word in the sense of a tribe or a human hero is foreign to Vedic literature. But in Central Asia, among the states and principalities, which were founded by the Śakas, it invariably denoted an eponymous hero.

Vedic and Śaka both branched from the same parent Indo-European language. Hence many words were common to both. But whereas *arjuna* in Vedic lost its pristine sense and was only used as an adjective, signifying 'whiteness', in Śaka it meant a tribe and a human hero and later on this sense was imparted to this word in India as a result of the impact of the Śakas. (Buddha Prakash, *Studies in Indian History and Civilization*, pp. 248-249.)

Sten Konow has shown that the variants of *arzi*, underlying the word *erzuna*, are *ārśi-asii*, which become *ṛṣi-iṣi* in

41. Sten Konow, *Śaka Studies* p. 115; *Kharoṣṭhi Inscriptions* Introduction p. 61.

42. *Mahābhārata*, : Virāṭparvan IV, 39, 18.

पृथिव्यां चतुरन्तायां वर्णो मे दुर्लभः समः ।

करोमि कर्म शुक्लं च तेन मामर्जुनं विदुः ॥

Sanskrit and *asi-āsi-isi* in Prakrit.⁴³ In the *Mahābhārata* the

43. *Kārikā* on *Pāṇini Sūtra* IV, 2, 132.

ऋषिकेषु जातः आषिकः महिषकेषु जातः माहिषिकः

Rāmāyaṇa, (Kīṣkindhākāṇḍa, 41. 10,)

विदर्भानृषिकांश्चैव रम्यान्माहिषकानपि ।

Nāsik Cave inscription of Gautamīputra Śāta karti (R. G. Bhandarkar, *Collected Works* Vol. 1 p. 231).

असिक-असक-मुदक-सुरठ-कुकुरापरतानूप-विदर्भ-आकरवतिराजस ।

It is noteworthy that on the pedestal of a Bodhisattva image, found at Katra Kesavadeva in Mathura, a lady, named Abhohā, is called *āsi*, which shows her Śaka origin. The Greek forms of this word *ysi-isi-asi* are *asioi* and *asiani*, which are the names of the tribes, who invaded Bactria and overthrew the Greek kingdoms. (J. Junge *Saka Studien* (Leipzig 1939). pp. 96-97; W. W. Tarn *The Greeks in Bactria and India*, pp. 287 et seq; Ludwig Bachhofer, 'On the Greeks and Sakas in India', *Journal of the American Oriental Society* (1941) pp. 246-247) Wherever the Saka tribes went, they carried this name with them. The Siraci and the Aorsi, living on the shores of the Black Sea, were in relation with the Greeks since the middle of the first century B.C. Later, when the Alans occupied the region, inhabited by the Aorsi, the latter mixed up with them, and the tribal name *Alanorsi* recalls their merger. (J. Junge, *Saka Studien* pp. 54, 75). Later on, the Sakas seem to have merged in the confederacies of the Turks after their ascendancy in Central Asia. Among the five tribes of the Western Turks, who lived to the east of the river Chu and were known as Tu-lu, the Turgesh were composed of the Tukhshi and the *Azi* (*Az* of the Orkhon inscriptions). These *Azi* represent the *Asi* or *Rṣikas* and the Tukhshi seem to be the remnants of the Tukhāras. Under their ruler Sulu (d. 738) these Turgesh rose to power in Central Asia and eclipsed the might of the Western Turks, whose ruler A Shih-na married his daughter Huai-tao to this rising chief (V.V. Barthold, *Four Studies on the History of Central Asia* pp. 85, 87). In 766 the Qurluq ousted the Turgesh and adopted the old title of Jabghu (Yabghu). After the conquest of the Mongols some of the Saka tribes entered into their groupings also. The *Asud* and the *Tokhuraut*, the branches of the Dzhatair, were the *Rṣikas* and Tukharas, who mixed up with the Mongols. In the West the *Alans* are known as the *As* (*Asy* or *Iasy*). Pelliot has shown that 'Alan' represents the original name of the Iranian confederation. In the language of the northern Iranians *ry* becomes *l*, as shown by Gauthiot in his *Grammaire Sogdienne*. Thus the word *ārya*, whence *haraiwa*, *areioi* etc., normally becomes *ala*, plural *alani*. We know that the Caucasian Ossets call themselves *Iron*, i.e., Iranians, from the same root as 'Aryan'. It is only their neighbours, who call them Ossets. (Russianised Georgian *Ovs-et-i* (land of the Ovs) based on *As*). The fact that these people are called *As* also shows their affinity with the Scythian stock. (Paul Pelliot, *Notes on Marco Polo* I p. 18). Many toponyms in the steppes of northern Taurida bear the impress of this name. Several villages within the former Eupatoria and Perekop districts have *as* as their name or a part of it e.g. Biuk-as, Kuchuk-as, Terekhi-as etc. There is also a river *As* in the northern part of the Peninsula. The name of the Gothic city of Doras (dor-as) points to the same direction. Another group of the *As* lived on the Caucasian side of the Bosphorus, where the name of the hill *Asso-dag* (*As-Dag*) in the Kuban delta near Taman and the name of the town of Malorosa provide evidence of it. In the *Secret History of the Mongols* (sections 262, 270, 274) there are many references to *Asut*, a regular Mongol plural from *As*, and it is this *Asut*, which is correctly rendered by the Chinese transcription *A-su*, occurring hundreds of times in the Yuan Period. Accordingly, in Chinese texts, for instance, *Ching-shih-ta-tien*, we find the form *A-lan A-su*. (Buddha

Rṣika are a people of the northern regions, living beyond the land of the Kambojas, who inhabited the Badakshān region, and their king, who also bears this name, is mentioned with *Candra* (moon) and *Diti*.⁴⁴ According to Charpentier, the word "Yue-che" means "the moon people" in Chinese.⁴⁵ It is noteworthy that Kaniska, the greatest ruler of the Yue-che, bore the titles *chen-t'o* (t'sien-dā) and *chan-t'an* (t'sian-dan), as we gather from the Chinese translation of the *Sūtrāṅkāra*.⁴⁶ These titles are derived from the Sanskrit word for moon *candra* (*canda*). Thus it is clear that the Yue-che had a regular association with the 'moon'. It may be noted that Arjuna of the

Prakash, 'Śākadvīpa', *Purāna* Vol. III (1961) pp. 253-287.). This wide prevalence of the word *ās* shows how far and deeply the Scythian element had spread in ancient times. Rawlinson has shown that the names of the Scythian kings, Scopasis, Idanthrysus and Taxacis imply the Scythian root *asi* or *ārsi* (G. Rawlinson, *History of Herodotus* Vol. III p. 205. ; G. Vernadsky, *Ancient Russia* (1943) pp. 83-84; H.W. Bailey, 'Asica' *Transactions of the Philological Society* (1943) pp. 2-3). The westernmost branch of the Ossets, the Digor, living on the Uruk and its tributaries, speaks a dialect of its own and calls its country Digor, which is also known as Ashtigor or As-Digor or Arsi Tagare in the *Geography* of Moses of Khorene (*Grundriss der Iransischen Philologie*; Vladimir Minorsky, *Hudūd-al-Ālam* p. 445). The *As-Digor* are the descendants of the Yue-che, who crossed the Don in the second century B.C. and settled in the steppes north of the Caucasus and on the shores of the Black Sea in the first century B.C.

44. *Mahābhārata* I, 67, 31, 33.

प्रह्लादो नाम बाल्हीकः स बभूव नराधिपः ।
चन्द्रस्तु दितिजश्रेष्ठो लोके ताराधिपोपमः ॥
चन्द्रवर्मति विख्यातः काम्बोजानां नराधिपः ।
अर्कं इत्यभिविख्यातोऽयंस्तु दानवपुंगवः ।
ऋषिको नाम राजर्षिर्बभूव नृपसत्तमः ।
मृतपा इति विख्यातोऽयमासीदसुरोत्तमः ॥

Mahābhārata VI, 9, 64, 65.

ऋषिका विदर्भाः काकास्तंगणाः परतंगणाः ।
उत्तराश्चापरे म्लेच्छाः क्रूरा भरतसत्तम ॥
Mahābhārata 27, 25, 26.

लोहान्परमकाम्बोजान् ऋषिकानुत्तरानपि ।
सहितांस्तान् महाराज व्यजयत्पाकशासनिः ॥

45. Jarl Charpentier, 'Die Ethnographische Stellung der Tocharer', *Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft* (1917) pp. 347-388. Paul Pelliot rejects the equation *Rṣi*-Yue-che with the remark, "Les *Rṣika* du *Mahābhārata* resulteraient d'une etymologie de Pandit pour Arsi" ('Tokharien et Koutchéen', *Journal Asiatique* (1934) p. 27). But he does not appear to have attached due importance to Indian traditions, recorded in the *Mahābhārata*, and their equivalence and correspondence to those of Central Asia.

46. Sylvain Lévi, 'Kaniska et Satavahana', *Journal Asiatique* (1936) pp. 61-121

Mahābhārata also belonged to a family, which is traditionally connected with the moon (cāndravamaśa). This association may be based on the fact that the moon is marked by whiteness and brightness, which the word *arzi-ārśi-asi* connotes. Thus *arjuna* linguistically corresponds to *ṛṣika* or yue-che and semantically agrees with it as well, for both *arjuna* and *ārśi* mean 'white' in Sanskrit and Śaka respectively.⁴⁷ The Rṣika—Yue-che were a people of Śaka race and Kadphises and Kaniska considered themselves as the kinsmen of Caṣṭana, the son of Ysamotika, one of the Śaka satraps of Saurāṣṭra and Mālwa.⁴⁸ In this way, it is clear that Arjuna is the hero and symbol of a tribe of the Śaka stock, which came to be known as Ārjunāyana or Prārjuna after him.

9. *Arjuna, the symbol of the Śakas.*

We have seen above that Arjuna was the eponymous hero of the states of Kuca and Karashahr in Central Asia. These states were populated by the Śaka -Kuṣāṇas long before the Völkerwanderung of the Yue-che under the pressure of the Hiung-nu, reported by the Chinese envoy Chang-K'ien in the second century B.C. Pelliot has reconstructed the ancient name of Kuca as Kutsi.⁴⁹ Since the middle of the seventh century at the latest Kuca was known as Kushan-Kusan-Kūsān. Rashiduddin calls this place 'Kosān'. This state bespeaks the advent of the Kuṣāṇas in this region at an early date. In the Sanskrit documents, found in Central

47. A. J. Van Windekens, *Léxique étymologique des dialectes tokhariens* pp. 15-27.

48. The inclusion of the statue of Caṣṭana in the ancestral gallery (*devakula*) of the Kuṣāṇa kings, found at Māt near Mathurā, shows that the Yue-che (Rṣikas) considered the Śakas as their kith and kin (J. Ph. Vögel, *Explorations at Mathura*, Archaeological Survey of India (1911-12) p. 126). It should also be noted that in the same ancestral gallery a head wears a high Scythian cap with the tip tilted forward, which is reminiscent of Śaka Tigrakhauda (J. Ph. Vögel, 'La Sculpture de Mathura', *Ars Asiatica* (1930) p. 1. IV-a-b). The costumes and armaments of the Indian Śakas and Kuṣāṇas resembled those found in the graves of the Sarmatians. They used the long sword in place of the short *akinakes*; among them bow and arrow were not as important as in former times and the lance and heavy scale armour or ring armour came into vogue. (L. Bachhofer, 'On the Greeks and Sakas in India' *Journal of the American Oriental Society* (1941) pp. 247-249) R. Ghirshman, *Begram* p. X).

49. Paul Pelliot, 'Tokharien et Koutchéen' *Journal Asiatique* (1934) p. 88.

Asia, the word Kuca is used to denote the whole Turkestan.⁵⁰ In India Kuca is known as Kucāvāra in Pāṇini-Sūtra (IV, 3, 94) and the Kuceans are called Kūcikas, that are counted among the northern peoples in the *Brhatsamhitā* of Varāhamihira. Another state about thirty miles east of Turfan is named as Kao-ch'ang, present Qoco (Kara-Khojo). Pelliot has pointed out the analogy between the name Kao-ch'ang and the word Ku-shih (Chu-shih). But Maenchen-Helfen disputes this view and remarks that in the second half of the 8th century the Śakas spelled Kao-ch'ang as Kautañai.⁵¹ However, in the Sogdian letters of the second century A.D. Kao-ch'ang appears as Kc'an, read as K.chan.⁵² A few miles east of Turfan lay the capital of Ku-shih, the name of which very strikingly resembles the word Kusha. Besides these places, the tenth century Persian geography *Hudūd-al-Ālam* mentions a town Kuchan in the region of Lan-chou, where Tibetan and Chinese merchants resided and which is the same as Kushan on Kashgari's map,⁵³ and a city named K. san, lying probably west of the Nan-shan, between the Huaug-ho and the Hsi-ning-ho, which is identical with a place, called Kushai or Gushai west of Lan-chou.⁵⁴ Some place-names of Sogdiana also bore the impress of the Kuṣāṇas. An important and prosperous town of Sogdiana, where a Kushānisha is known to have reigned, was known to the Chinese as Chu-shuang-ni-chia or Kuei-shuang-ni and to the Mohemmadans as Kushaniya, modern Kushani.⁵⁵ It is the present Kashān-Atā, north-west of Samarkand. It is also likely that Kish, represented by the site of modern Shahrīsabz, was also named after the Kuṣāṇas.⁵⁶ Similarly Kuie-shan in Ferghana, that is the same as K'o-sai of the T'ang period,

50. H. Lüders, *Weitere Beiträge zur Geschichte und Geographie von Ost-turkestan* p. 246.

51. Otto Maenchen-Helfen, 'The Yueh-chih Problem Reexamined' *Journal of the American Oriental Society* (1945) p. 76.

52. H. Reichelt, *Die Soghdischen Handschriftenreste des Britischen Museums*, p. 5; W. B. Henning, 'The Date of the Sogdian Ancient Letters,' *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* (1948) pp. 601-615.

53. Vladimir Minorsky, *Hudūd-al-Ālam* p. 230.

54. *Ibid.* p. 233.

55. *Ibid.* p. 113; V. V. Barthold, *Turkestan down to the Mongol Invasion* Vol. I p. 96.

56. E. Chavannes, *Documents sur les Tou-Kiue Occidentaux* p. 146.

and is known as Kasan nowadays,⁵⁷ has a Kuṣāṇa appearance. On the basis of these facts Maenchen-Helfen argues that the Kusha people must have settled in Central Asia, especially the Tarim basin, long before the foundation of the Kuṣāṇa empire. The knowledge of the Chinese of the early Han period about Kutsi, Ku-shia, Kao-chang etc, is a clear pointer to the existence of the Kuṣāṇas in ancient Turkestan from before the rise of the Chinese empire⁵⁸ at the end of the 3rd and the beginning of the 2nd century B.C. This antiquity of the Śaka-Kuṣāṇas in Central Asia, especially the oases-states of Chinese Turkestan, like Kucā, explains the prevalence of the myth of Arjuna in those regions and gives a clue to the existence of a tribe, bearing the name of Arjuna in the Panjab, which is symbolised by the inclusion of Arjuna in the Śāṇḍava fraternity. We know that the tribe, called Ārjunāyana after the name of Arjuna, spread up to the Mathura region, where their coins have been discovered.⁵⁹ This spreading of the name of Arjuna on the crest of a wave of migration of the people, bearing it, suggests an intrusion of some Śaka tribes in India from Central Asiatic regions.

10. *Bhīma, the symbol of the Vṛkas.*

After studying the ethnic implications of Arjuna let us now approach the name of Bhīma, the famous wrestler and maceman. One of his favourite designations is Vṛkodara.⁶⁰ It is significant that Vṛka is the name of a tribe. Pāṇini refers to the Vṛkas as a Kṣatriya sangha (V, 3, 115).⁶¹ An individual member of this sangha was called Vārkeṇya and the whole sangha are known as Vṛka. This Vārkeṇya is the same as Vrkāna, mentioned with Pārthava in the Bahistun inscription of Darius. Darius complains that Pārthava and Vrkāna rebelled against him and sided with Phraotes, whom his father

57. *Ibid.* pp. 148, 273.

58. Otto Maenchen-Haelfen, 'The Yuch-chih Problem Reexamined', *Journal of the American Oriental Society* (1945) p. 77.

59. V. A. Smith, *Catalogue of Coins in the Indian Museum* p. 160.

60. *Bhagavadgītā* 1, 15; *Kirātārjuniya* 11, 1.

61. *Pāṇinisūtra* V, 3, 115. वृकाट्टेप्यण् Bhaṭṭoji explains

आयुधजीविसंघवाचकात्स्वार्थे । वार्केण्यः ।

Hystaspes subdued.⁶² In the Avesta the word *Vrkāna* occurs as *Vehrkāna*, in Armenian its form is *Vrkan*, in Greek it becomes *Urkania* and its modern variant is *Hyrkania*, which is the name of the region, lying to the north of Parthia, on the eastern corner of the Caspian Sea.⁶³ In Sanskrit the word *vṛka* means a wolf and in modern Persian *gurg* signifies this animal. Hence *Gurgan*, comprising the district of Astarabad, watered by the river of that name, is an exact translation of the old Indo-Iranian name *Vṛka-Vrkāna*. The derivatives of the word *Vṛka* are found in several languages of the North-West, e.g., *Ishkashmi werk*, *Udgha wurk wurg* etc. A Śaka official of Mathura, who was in charge of the repair and maintenance of the devakula of Wima Kadphises, uses the title *Bakanapati* or *Barkanapati*, which signifies that he was a chief of the *Vṛkas* and hailed from Hyrcania, as shown by K. P. Jayaswal.⁶⁴ In the *Mahābhārata* also we get references to this tribe though the readings of some names are corrupt.⁶⁵ According to V. S. Agrawala, the plural form *Vṛkāḥ* is equivalent to *varkā* in the name of the *Saka Haumavarkā* or *Haumavargā*, who were known as Amyrgians to Greek writers.⁶⁶ But some scholars equate the word *hauma* in *haumavarkā* with soma and locate the Śakas, bearing this name, in the territory of Farghanah on the Jaxartes. According to Kent, the old Persian root *varga* means 'pressing out' or 'drinking' as in *Aspavarga*, Gr. *Aspourgianoï*, a people, inhabiting the north-eastern coast of Black Sea at the mouth of the river Kuban, who derived their name from the fact that they milked mares and drank qumiz.⁶⁷ As will be seen later, the Śakas *Haumavargā* were identical with the Somakas, who were

62. Bisutun (Bahistun) Inscription of Darius, Column 11, line 91-96, Thātiy dārayava (h) uś xśāyathiya pārthava uta vrkāna (ham)j(ss)iyā (aba) va (hacā) ma pravṛ (taiś) (aga) u (ba) nta. Viśtāspa manā pitā hauv (parthavaïy) āha.....avadā hamaranam (a) kunan (ś) hadā parathavaibi(ś). Śukumar Sen, *Old Persian Inscriptions* p. 48.

63. *Ibid.* p. 49 note 92.

64. *Journal of the Bihar and Orissa Research Society* XVI p. 258.

65. *Mahābhārata*, VI, 10, 60; 1,176; IV, 58 Vide, Robert Schafer, *Ethnography of Ancient India* pp. 76-149.

66. V. S. Agrawala, *India as known to Pāṇini* pp. 443, 467.

67. S. Chattopadhyaya, 'The Tribal Immigrations in Achaemenid India, *Indian Historical Quarterly* (1949) p. 256-266 citing Aurel Stein, "On the Ephadra, Huma and Soma Plant, *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* (1931) pp. 501-514. vide, Roland G. Kent's note cited in A. J. Toynbee, *A Study of History* Vol. VII, p. 587.

a constituent tribe of the Pañcāla Confederacy. From their Sogdian habitat these Śakas seem to have come into Afghanistan, where their name survives in the locality called *Dasht-i-margo*, as shown by Foucher.⁶⁸ Wesendonk identifies them with the Sakaravaka⁶⁹ and Marquart with the Sacaraucae,⁷⁰ who invaded the kingdom of Bactria in association with the Asiani. Though the correct import of the expression *haumavarkā* is obscure and its equation with *vṛka* is conjectural and implausible, it is well-nigh certain that the Vṛkas were associated with the Śakas, as the epithet of the Kuṣāṇa official Barkanpati, referred to above, shows. As regards the name of these people, derived from the word for the wolf *vṛka*, it is significant to note that some tribes of Central Asia traced their ancestry to a wolf or she-wolf. In the famous tradition of the Turks, the ten girls, one of whom became the ancestor of their ruling clan, were the children of a prince and a she-wolf. After the destruction of all his people the said eponymous prince was saved by a she-wolf, whom he afterwards married. From this union of the prince and the she-wolf the ruling family of the Turks originated.⁷¹ Some such traditions seem to underly the name of the Vṛkas. This name shows that the people, bearing it, were of Central Asiatic affinity. In modern times the section of the Jats of the Panjab, called Virks, represents the remnants of these ancient Vṛkas of Central Asia. The name of the locality Verka, which is a famous junction on the Amritsar Pathankot Railway, perhaps, bears a reminiscence of the settlement of this tribe. Thus it becomes

68. A. Foucher, *La vieille route de l'Inde de Bactres à Taxila* Vol. II p. 190. F. N. 21.

69. O.G. Von Wesendonk, 'Kusān, Chioniten und Hephthaliten', *Klio* (1933) p. 337.

70. J. Marquart, *Das erste Kapitel des Gathā Ustavati* p. 43.

71. O. Maenchen-Helfen, 'The Yueh-chih Problem Reexamined' *Journal of the American Oriental Society* (1945) p. 74. Herodotus has noted a Scythian tribe called Neuri, living to the north of the Scythian Arotres. They lived in northern Padolia and Volynia, the cradle of the Proto-Slavs. They were believed to become *wolves* once a year. It appears that during winters they wore the skins of the wolves, which gave them the appearance of the wolves and was responsible for the aforesaid tradition about them. In Russian the word for the 'wolf' is *volka*, which, probably, underlies the name of the river Volga. This association of the wolf with a tribe of the Scythians is interesting in the context of the title *vṛkodara* applied to a member of the Pāṇḍava fraternity. Thus we observe that *Vṛkodara* enshrines the Scythian tradition of the wolf-ancestry of their kings (George Rawlinson, *History of Herodotus* Vol. III. p. 91).

crystal-clear that Vṛkodara or Bhīma, enshrining a reminiscence of the tradition of wolf-ancestry, current among the people of Central Asia, especially Hyrcania, known as Vṛkas, indicates the advent of these people into India and lends colour to the theory of the Śaka invasion, symbolised in the name of Arjuna.

11. *Yudhiṣṭhira, the symbol of the Yaudheyas.*

Like Arjuna and Bhīma the eldest Pāṇḍava brother Yudhiṣṭhira has a name of tribal significance. As seen above, Pāṇini derives the word Yudhiṣṭhira from 'yudha', meaning to fight.⁷² In ancient Panjab there was a famous tribe called Yaudheya, whose name was also based on the root 'yudh'. Pāṇini refers to them together with the Parśus or (Persians) in V. 3, 117 and counts them among the āyudhajīvi sanghas,⁷³ Elsewhere the Yaudheyas are referred to in IV, 1, 176 न प्राच्यभर्गादियौधेयादिभ्यः The word Yaudheya is evidently synonymous with āyudhajīvi and āyudhīya, mentioned by Pāṇini⁷⁴ and Kauṭilya⁷⁵ respectively as a warrior-clan of the Panjab. The Purāṇas connect the Yaudheyas with the Uśīnaras, who dominated eastern Panjab in the post-Vedic period.⁷⁶ On the basis of these traditions, Pargiter thinks that king Uśīnara established the kingdoms of the Yaudheyas, Ambaṣṭhas, Navarāṣṭras and Kṛmilas and his son Śīvi founded the town of Śivapura.⁷⁷ In the *Mahābhārata* also the Yaudheyas are associated with the Trigarttas, Mālavas Ambaṣṭhas and Śivis.⁷⁸ In the *Sabhāparvan* they are shown to have brought presents for Yudhiṣṭhira together with these people.⁷⁹ In the *Droṇaparvan* they are

72. Pāṇini, VIII, 3, 95. गवियुधिस्थिरः

73. Pāṇini, V, 3, 117 पश्वादियौधेयादिभ्योऽणञौ

74. Pāṇini, IV, 1, 17⁶ न प्राच्यभर्गादियौधेयादिभ्यः

75. *Kauṭilya Arthasāstra* (ed. R. Shamasastri) 11, 35, p. 142.

समाहर्ता चतुर्था जनपदं विभज्य ग्रामाग्रं परिहारकमायुधीयम् निबन्धयेत्

76. F. E. Pargiter, *Mārkaṇḍeya Purāna* p. 380.

77. F. E. Pargiter, *Ancient Indian Historical Tradition* p. 264.

78. *Mahābhārata*, VII (Droṇa), 18, 6; VIII (Karna) 5, 48.

79. *Mahābhārata*, 11 (Sabhā) 48, 14-15.

काश्मीराः कुन्दमानाश्च पौरका हंसकायनाः ।

शिबिन्निगर्तयौधेया राजन्या मदकेकयाः ॥

mentioned with the Adrijas, Madrakas and Mālavas.⁸⁰ Varāhamihira places them along with the Ārjunāyanas in the northern division of India.⁸¹ In the Allahabad stone pillar inscription of Samudragupta they are included in a list of northern peoples, consisting of the Ārjunāyanas, Madrakas, Mālavas, Ābhiras etc, who are alleged to have paid homage to the Gupta monarch.⁸² Their conflict with the Śakas is alluded to in the Junagarh rock inscription of Rudradāman, where the Śaka king claims to have rooted out the Yaudheyas.⁸³ On the eve of the rise of the Guptas, they widely extended their rule in eastern Panjab, as we gather from the finds of their coins between the Sutlej and the Jumna in the districts of Kangra, Ludhiana, Rohtak, Delhi, Dehradun and Saharanpur, and the discovery of their mint at Rohtak and their coin-moulds and sealings at Sunet. Their new currency, bearing the Brāhmī legend यौधेयगणस्य जयः and depicting their tutelary deity Kārtikeya, which replaced the Kuṣāṇa currency in these regions, shows that they played a leading part in the extermination of Śaka rule in India. One of their seals, found at Ludhiana, bearing the legend यौधेयानां जयमंत्रधराणाम्, indicates that they were held in high esteem among the warrior-clans of the Panjab. Gradually they spread in northern Rajputana and moved in the Bharatpur region, where we get an inscription of their chief, who bears the title of महाराज महासेनापति.⁸⁵ It is significant that the territory on the banks of the Sutlej right up to the borders of the Bahawalpur state is still called Johiyawar after the Yaudheyas. Cunningham identifies the Johiyā Rajputs of the Bahawalpur region with the descendants

80. *Mahābhārata* VII (Droṇa) 1 59, 5.

यौधेयानद्रिजान् राजन् मद्रकान् मालवानपि

81. *Bṛhatsamhitā* XIV, 28.

82. J. F. Fleet, *Corpus Inscriptionum Indicarum* no. 1 lines 22-23.

मालवार्जुनायनयौधेयमद्रकाभीरप्रार्जुनसनकानीककाकखरपरिकादिभिश्च

सर्वकरदानाज्ञाकरणप्रणामागमनपरितोषितप्रचण्डशासनस्य

83. *Epigraphia Indica* Vol. VIII pp. 36 ff.

सर्वक्षत्राविष्कृतवीरशब्दजातोत्सेकाविधेयानां यौधेयानाम्

84. Sir Alexander Cunningham, *Report on the Archaeological Survey of India* II, pp. 14-17.

84-A. *Proceedings of the Asiatic Society of Bengal* (1884) p. 139.

85. J. F. Fleet, *Corpus Inscriptionum Indicarum* III no. 1. line 1.

of the ancient Yaudheyas, whose three tribes correspond to the three clans, indicated on Yaudheya coins.⁸⁶ Thus we observe that the Yaudheyas occupied a prominent place in the Panjab. That their association with Yudhiṣṭhira is based not only on linguistic considerations, but is also founded on historical tradition, is manifest from the fact that Yaudheya is stated to be the son of Yudhiṣṭhira in the *Mahābhārata*.⁸⁷

12. *Yaudheya and Yautiyā.*

The clan of the Yaudheyas has an unmistakable resemblance with the Yautiyā of Laristan, the Ouitioi of Transcaucasia and the Jut nomads of Kirman. The Yautiyā figured in the *Völkerwanderung* of the Iranian-speaking peoples, which brought the Medes and Persians into Iran about the 8th century B.C. In this invasion the Yautiyā and the Maciyā formed the advance-guard, and the Pārsā proper, the main body, while the Asagartiyā were in the rear. Driven by the pressure of the Mādā (Medes), the movement of these peoples bifurcated into two wings, the right one pushing north—westwards up to Transcaucasia and the left one wheeling towards the south-east and penetrating into the Panjab, just as in earlier migration one wing of their forefathers had passed through northern Iran and Transcaucasia up to Anatolia and another descended down the north-western passes into the land of the Seven Rivers. Hence we find the Yautiyā, Maciyā and Asagartiyā living with the right wing of the Pārsā in Ardalān, Azerbaijān and still farther north and north-west in the lower basin of the rivers Aras and Kur. The settling of the Yautiyā in these regions is indicated by the Armenian name *Uti* (Greek *Utene*), given to a district between Qārābāgh and the south bank of the river Kur in Transcaucasia.⁸⁸ On the south-east flank the Yautiyā, settled in north-eastern Laristan, as the location of the capital of their chief Vahyazdāta, Tāravā, which is identical with Tārum, proves. These Yautiyā rose up in revolt against the

86. Sir Alexander Cunningham, *Ancient Geography of India* pp. 281-282.

87. *Mahābhārata* 1, 95, 76

युधिष्ठिरस्तु गोवासनस्य शैव्यस्य देविकां नाम कन्यां स्वयं वराल्लेभे ।

तस्यां पुत्रं जनयामास यौधेयं नाम

88. N. Adontz, *Histoire d'Arménie, les origines* p. 308; R. N. Frye, *The Heritage of Persia* (London 1962) p. 50.

Ariyaramnan branch of the Achaemenids and their chief Vahyazdāta impersonated Kurus II's son Bardiyā (Smerdis) and launched the war of the restoration of the legitimate line of (Cišpiš's) Teispes' elder son against the usurpation of Vištaspā's son Dārayavauš in 522-521 B. C.⁸⁹ Following a master strategy he occupied the basin of the Kabul river, in Gandhāra, where he aimed at cutting the communications between Darius' two principal supporters, the viceroys of Harahvatiš and Bākhtriš, and establishing his contact with the insurgents of Thataguš. This move towards Gandhāra had for its objective the establishment of a Yautiyā empire in the south-east of Iran and the strengthening of the hands of the Mede insurgent Fravrtiš in the west. But his plan was foiled by the governor of Harahvatiš, Vivāna, and Darius announced his victory over this formidable rival, making no secret of his prejudice against his clan of Yautiyā.⁹⁰ Subsequently, in order to weaken their integrity, he placed them in the satrapy of Harahvatiš and included them, together with the Maciyā (Mykoi), in the fourteenth taxation district of the gazetteer of Herodotus with a heavy penal assessment of six hundred talents.

Thus we observe that the Yautiyā were the Iranian-speaking participants in the Völkerwanderung of the Central Asiatic nomads in the ninth and eighth centuries B. C. One of their wings pushed forward into Iran and Transcaucasia and another swooped into Gandhāra and the Panjab.⁹¹ Almost in the proximity of the Yautiyā were the Kurus and the Kambojas and some tribes of the Śakas, who sided with Cišpiš (Teispes) (675-640 B.C.), the son and successor of Hakhāmaniš (Achaemenes) (700-675 B.C.), and consequently lent their names to the kings, Kuruš and Ka (m) bujiya, as we shall see later on.⁹² Thus the movements of the Yautiyā in Iran

89. Behistun Inscription of Darius, Column III lines 20-25 Sukumar Sen, *Old Persian Inscriptions* p. 53.

Thātiy dārayava (h) uš xsāyathiya i martiyā Vahyazdāta nāma tāravā nāma vrdanam yautiyā nāmā dahyāuš pārsaiy avadā adāraya hauv dūvitiyam udapatatā pārsaiy. Kārahya ava tha athaha adam bardiya ahmi hya kurauš pussa etc.

90. *Ibid.* pp. 54-60. It is significant that Vahyazdāta's people were not mentioned in the list of subject peoples, inscribed on the south tomb at Persepolis probably under Artaxerxes (Artaxayarša) II (404-359) B. C. (Sukumar Sen, *Op. cit.* p. 172).

91. Arnold J. Toynbee, *A Study of History* Vol. VII pp. 607-609.

92. G. G. Cameron, *A History of Early Iran* pp. 179-180.

and India were connected with the expansion of the Kurus. The name of Yudhiṣṭhira, associated with the Yaudheyas, as noted above, recalls the advent of these people in India in the age of the Kurus. A significant evidence of the connection of this Pāṇḍava hero with the Yautiyā-Yaudheya clan is, perhaps, afforded by the name of the Yautiyā chief Vahyazdāta, mentioned above. In this name *vahyas* is the comparative form of *vahu*, which means 'good'. In the *Avesta* Vohu-mano is the second Amesha-Spenta, which emanate from Ahura-Mazda. Vohu-mano is divine wisdom, "the strong son of God", who leads us into the path of Aśa.⁹³ He is also the guardian angel of animals. Thus Vohu-mano, associated with Aśa, corresponds to what the Indian term *dharma* connotes. Now, Yudhiṣṭhira is known to be the son of *dharma*, which is also the sense of Vahyazdāta. This analogy may be purely accidental, but against the background of the connection of Yudhiṣṭhira with the Yautiyā-Yaudheya, it has some significance in regard to the basic conceptions, which lie embedded in the names of eponymous heroes.

13. *Nakula and Sahadeva, the symbols of the Madras.*

We have so far been considering the tribal connotations of the three Pāṇḍava brothers Arjuna, Bhīma and Yudhiṣṭhira. Now let us study the ethnic implications of their younger consanguine brothers Nakula and Sahadeva. These two brothers were the sons of Pāṇḍu by his wife Mādrī. The name of their mother Mādrī suggests their connection with the clan of the Madras, that settled in the Panjab in the post-Vedic period and was associated with other peoples, inhabiting this region, in the texts, cited above. We have seen that the realm of the Madras, lying between the Chenab and the Ravi with its seat at Śākala (modern Sialkot), was an important centre of Vedic learning. Pāṇini mentions two divisions of the Madras, *Pūrva* (eastern) and *Apara* (western)⁹⁴. The *Aitareya Brāhmaṇa*⁹⁵ refers to their northern settlement under the name of *Uttaramadra*, which must have been somewhere in the vicinity of Uttarakuru.

93. I. J. S. Taraporewala, 'Zoroastrianism', *Cultural Heritage of India* Vol. 11. p. 331.

94. Pāṇini VII, 3; 13 दिशोऽमद्राणाम् IV, 2, 2, 108. मद्रेम्योऽञ्

95. *Aitareya Brāhmaṇa* VIII, 14, 3; Zimmer locates them in Kaśmīra (*Altindische Leben* p. 102).

14. *The Iranian affinity of the Madras.*

That the Madras were an Iranian people is manifest from the remark of the *Mahābhārata* that they were the offspring of King Vyūṣitāśva, which is a sanskritised form of Viśtāspa, a name borne by the father of Darius. This king suffered from pthisis, like Pāṇḍu, and died as a result of cohabiting with his wife Bhadrā Kākṣivati. Then, in consequence of divine favour, seven sons were born to her, three of whom were Sālva and four were Madra.⁹⁶ Madra was also known as Madrakāra, an Iranian compound, in which the word 'kāra' means an 'army' or a 'people'.⁹⁷ In Pushto the word 'kor' means a 'house' or a 'family'.⁹⁸ The word madra itself has been equated with the Iranian word *māda* or *mede*.⁹⁹ The name of Matienoi, which was a part of Media, according to Herodotus, seems also to be based on the word Māda, Mede, Madra. A parallelism has been traced in the legend of Bhadrā, the mother of the Madras, and that of the princess Media, the mother of the Medes.¹⁰⁰ Prof. Przyluski has drawn attention to the Siamese version of an Indian legend of north-western origin, in which a king was metamorphosed into the body of a stag, which he killed in a ritual, and his rival was also asked to enter the body of that animal, in order to cohabit with the queen, and pointed out that the significance of the stag in it is due to the influence of the Scythians, among whom the stag occupied an important position, as we learn from their art.¹⁰¹ According

96. *Mahābhārata* 1, 121, 7-19

व्युषिताश्व इति ख्यातो बभूव किल पार्थिवः ।

पुरापरमर्घमिष्टः पुरोर्वंशविवर्धनः ॥

आसीत्काक्षीवती चास्य भार्या परमसम्मता ।

भद्राणां मनुष्येन्द्र रूपेणासदृशी भुवि ॥

सा तेन सुषुवे देवी शवेन भरतर्षभ ।

त्रीन् शाल्वाश्चतुरो मद्रान् सुतान् भरतसत्तम ॥

97. Sukumar Sen, *Old Persian Inscriptions* p. 39. avathāśaiy aṭhabam paraidiy kārahya hamissiya manā naiy gaubataiy avam jadiy.98. G. Morgenstern, *Etymological Vocabulary of Pushto*; s. v. kor; J. Charpentier, 'Some Remarks on Pushto Etymology,' *Acta Orientalia*. VII. p. 188.99. Harit Krishna Deb, 'Mede and Madra,' *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society of Bengal* (1925) p. 205.100. Jean Przyluski, 'Nouveaux aspects de l'histoire des Scythes,' *Revue de l'Université de Bruxelles* Vol. 42 (1937) p. 218.101. Jean Przyluski, 'Un ancien peuple du Panjab, les Salva,' *Journal Asiatique* (1929) pp. 337.

to the *Śarabhaṅga-Jātaka* (483), Rājarsi Paurava was the incarnation of Śarabha. The legend of the sage Rīṣyaśṅga (man-stag) also betrays the influence of the stag myth. It is also noteworthy that Śākala, the capital of the Madras, is associated with a person, named Mendhaka, meaning 'ram' who owned rams of gold. This tradition of the golden ram recalls the legend of the mythical ram of golden fleece, which the Argonauts came to conquer in the north of Pont in the Scythian country, and accords with the sanctity attaching to the ram among the Central Asiatic nomads.¹⁰² According to the *Mahābhārata* 1,67, Sālva is an incarnation of Asura-Ajaka (the goat-demon) and we learn from coins that an Udumbata king was named as Ajamitra. It is also noteworthy that the presiding Yakṣa of Bhadrāśaila, which is identical with Bhadrānkara or Śākala, was called Kharposta, which is an Iranian word signifying a book on the skin of a donkey. These considerations vouch for the Iranian affinities of the Madras.

15. Madra and Sālva.

Initially the Madras appeared in the aggregation of Iranian peoples, called the Sālva, mentioned in the *Gopatha Brāhmaṇa* (1,2, 9) and the *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa* (X, 4,1,10) and the sūtras of Pāṇini (IV, 1, 167); (IV, 1, 167); (IV, 3, 166.)¹⁰³ Their advent on the Yamunā is implied in the Vedic text, referring to the turning of wheels of Śālva women on her banks.¹⁰⁴ The reference in question shows that the Sālvas sustained a crushing defeat on the bank of the Yamunā and had acknowledged Yaugandhari as their king. According to R. C. Hazra, the king of the Yugandharas had defeated the Sālvas.

102. Jean Przyluski, 'Un ancien peuple du Panjab, les Oudoumbara', *Journal Asiatique* (1926) pp. 4-8.

103. Pāṇini IV, 1, 167 साल्वेयगान्धारिम्यांच IV, 3, 166. लुप् च, ।

104. J. Przyluski, 'Un ancien peuple du Panjab, les Salva', *Journal Asiatique* (1929) p. 314; R. C. Hazra 'The Interpretation and History of Two Ancient Vedic Gāthās and their Social & Political Interest' A. B. O. R. I. (Poona) Vol. 37 (1956) pp. 144-173.

- *Āpastambīya Mantrapāṭha* II, 2, 12-13.

योगन्धरीरेव नो राजेति साल्वीस्त्रादिषुः ।
विवृत्तचक्रा आसीनास्तीरेण यमुने तव ॥
सोम एष नो राजेव्याहुर्ब्राह्मणीः प्रजाः ।
विवृत्तचक्रा आसीनास्तीरेणासी तव ॥

After that they assembled on the bank of that river and made Yaugandhari their king. But after this event they moved on further to the east and south. Their occupation of the territory round about Alwar is suggested by their proximity to the Matsyas in the *Mahābhārata*¹⁰⁵. According to the *Candrarvrtti* on *Candra* 11, 4, 103¹⁰⁶, Udumbara, living in the Kangra valley with their centre at Pathankot, Tilakhala or Tilabhara of *Mahābhārata* (VI, 10, 51), occupying the area south of Beas near the Hoshiarpur district, Madrakāra or Madra, inhabiting the territory between the Ravi and the Chenab with their capital at Sialkot, Yugandhara on the Yamunā near Jagādharī, perhaps, the site of the modern industrial town called Yamunānagara, Bhulinga, Bolingae of Ptolemy and Kulinga of *Mahābhārata*, (VI, 10, 38) in the north-west of the Aravallis on the main road connecting Sāketa and Kekaya, and Śaradaṇḍa near Sarasvatī, which formed the boundary between the Prācyā and the Udīcyā Pañcālas, formed the Sālva confederacy. In the opinion of Przyluski, who has studied the history of the Sālva in detail, the word *sālva* means an animal like stag or gazelle. From the root, underlying the word *sālva*, has also come the word śarabha, which is the name of a fabulous animal of the stag species. Among the Sālva the chase of the śarabha was a feature of the ceremony of the investiture of a universal monarch. This animal had a special sanctity among the nomadic peoples of the steppes chiefly the Scythians. The Russian scholar Nicholas Marr was of the view that the deer was used for riding before the horse in Central Asia. Recently M. P. Griaznov, excavating a large kurgan in the eastern Altai, known as the Pazirik kurgan, has found the bodies of ten horses each with saddle and trappings. The heads of two of these horses were covered with masks. One of them, made of leather, represents the head of a deer. The other, made of felt, has the shape of a griffin. In Griaznov's opinion the deer

105. *Mahābhārata*, Virāṭparvan 29, 2; Bhīṣmaparvan 10, 3; Udyogaparvan. 4, 24.

106. *Candravyākaraṇa* 11, 4, 103.

उदुम्बरास्तिलखला मद्रकारा युगन्धरा ।

भूलिङ्गाः शरदण्डाश्च सास्वावयवसंज्ञिताः ॥

mask is an evidence for Marr's theory, mentioned above.¹⁰⁷ Thus the very name of Sālva bespeaks a Scythian origin.¹⁰⁸ The modern sub-caste of *Salūjā* (Skt. Sālvaja) probably denotes the descendants of the ancient Sālva. In course of time, the Madras came to have an importance of their own in the Panjab.

16. *Madra, Bhadra, Mālava.*

In Prākṛit the word *madra* becomes *malla*, *dr* being changed into *ll*.¹⁰⁹ *Malla* is the same as *malloi* of the Greeks and *mālava* of the Epic. It is significant that the sons of Aśvapati, king of the Madras, were called Mālavas after their mother, according to a decree of Yama. This shows that Madra and Mālava represented the same people. In the Bhīṣmaparvan their western (*pratīcya*) and northern (*udīcya*) sections are distinctly mentioned. The Sikhs of the districts of Ferozpur, Ludhiana, Patiala, Jind and Malerkotala are still known as Mālava Sikhs, probably, because these regions were populated by the Mālavas in ancient times. About the beginning of the Christin era the Mālavas moved to the south and settled in central and south-eastern Rajputana. According to Przyluski, the Madras and Audumbaras, two important tribes of the Sālva confederacy, became known as Mālavas and Kṣudrakas, whose close association is indicated by the Greek historians and Pāṇini's commentators.

A variant of Madra was Bhadra. In the *Kāśikā* Madrakāra is replaced by Bhadrakāra. In the *Vinaya* of the Mūlasarvāstivādins¹¹⁰ the capital of the Madras, Śākala, is known as Bhadrakāra.¹¹¹ The famous physician Jīvaka is stated to have travelled from Takṣaśilā to Bhadrakāra, where he passed the summer, and thence repaired to Udumbara, where he cured a sickman; from there he reached Rohitaka

107. M. P. Giaznov, 'The Pazirik Burials of Altai' *American Journal of Archaeology* Vol. 37 (1933). pp. 30-44.

108. J. Przyluski, 'Les Sālvasa' *Journal Asiatique* (1929) pp. 312-325.

109. J. Przyluski, 'Les Oudoumbarasa' *Journal Asiatique* (1926) pp. 1-20; Pischel, *Grammatik der Prākṛit Sprachen* S. 294; J. Bloch, *La formation de la langue marathe* S. 141.

110. Jean Przyluski, 'Le Nord-Ouest de l' Inde dans le Vinaya des Mūlasarvāstivādins', *Journal Asiatique*, (1914) II pp. 493. et seq.

111. J. F. Floet, *Actes du XIVe Congrès des Orientalistes* (1905) p. 164.

and then went to Mathurā. In the *Mahāmāyūrī*¹¹² the Yakṣa Śaila is said to have been worshipped at Bhadrapura, which is a variant of Bhadrānkara and stands for Śākala. Bhadra becomes *bhalla* as Madra becomes *malla*. In the Gaṇapāṭha on Pāṇini-sūtra IV, 2, 75 *bhalla* comes before *malla* or *mala*. In Panjabi the sonant becomes mute and in the dialects of the Himalayan zone the aspiration is dropped. Thus *bha* is pronounced as *pa* and *bhalla* becomes *pahlava*, which denotes the Iranians. Another variant of these words is *bāhlika*, which stands for the Bactrians. To sum up, the facts that Mālavi was the wife of the Madra King Aśvapati, Bhadrā was the mother of the Madras, being the wife of Vyūṣitāśva, and Bālhikī was the title of Pāṇḍu's wife Mādri, the mother of Nakula and Sahadeva, show that the people, bearing these various names, were of Irano-Bactrian origin. In other words, the Pāṇḍava twins, Nakula and Sahadeva, being connected with the Madras, are symbolic of the Iranian tribes, Māda or Mede.

16. *The Madra women.*

The Madras were noted for feminine beauty. Their tall, pretty and fair women were famous far and wide.¹¹³ In the *Kaṇaparvan* a Madra, who had come to live among the Kurus, is represented as yearning for his return to his native place beyond the Śatadru and the Irāvatri to enjoy the company of charming women.¹¹⁴ In Pāli commentaries there is an interesting anecdote of Pippalī Māṇavaka of a village of the Brāhmaṇas, named Mahātitha, in Magadha, whose parents deputed eight emissaries to search a bride for him in the likeness of

112. Sylvain Lévi, Le catalogue géographique des Yakṣa dans a. *Mahāmāyūrī*, *Journal Asiatique* (1955) I p. 19.

ऋकुच्छन्दः पाटलिपुत्रे स्थूणायां चापराजितः ।
शैले भद्रपुरे यक्षः उत्तरायां च मानवः ॥

113. *Mahābhārata* VIII, 44, 18.

मनःशिलोज्ज्वलापांग्यो गौर्यस्त्रिककुदा जनाः ।
कम्बलाजिनसंवीताः क्रन्दन्त्यः प्रियदर्शनाः ॥

114. *Mahābhārata* VIII, 44, 17.

शतद्रुकामहं तीर्त्वा तां रम्यामिरावतीम् ।
गत्वा स्वदेशं द्रक्ष्यामि स्थूलशंखाः शुभाः स्त्रियः ॥

golden image of exceptional beauty, which he entrusted to them. Those persons, thinking that Madradeśa was the receptacle of women (*Maddaraṭṭham nāma itthāgāro*), repaired to its city, called Sāgala, and found Bhadrā Kāpilāyanī, who even excelled that image in brilliance and beauty. Subsequently their marriage was arranged and soon after the ceremony they embraced asceticism and joined the Buddhist order.¹¹⁵ This episode shows that the women of the Madra country were renowned even in distant Magadha in the time of Buddha. That the Madras had a custom of selling women and marrying them in consideration of the bride's price after the asura form is manifest from the insistence of Śalya before Bhīṣma on paying the same in lieu of the marriage of Mādri with Pāṇḍu. Śalya defended the demand of the bride's price on the ground that it was an established ancestral custom amongst them, which he could ill afford to violate.¹¹⁶ Thus it is clear that the marital and sexual laws of the Madras were different from those of the orthodox Brahmanical people and were in accord with those followed beyond the frontiers of their culture.

17. *The coming of the Jartas and the degeneration of the Madras.*

The Madras had come to settle in the region lying between the Ravi and the Chenab in ancient times. Their capital Śākala (Sāgala-nagara), mentioned in the *Mahābhārata*¹¹⁷ and the

115. *Samyutta-nikāya-aṭṭhakathā* XV, 1, 11;
Anguttara-nikāya-aṭṭhakathā 1, 1, 4;
Theragāthā-aṭṭhakathā 30; *Therīgāthā-aṭṭha-kathā* 68.

116. *Mahābhārata*. 1, 1229 ff.
 पूर्वेः प्रवर्तितं किञ्चित्कुलेऽस्मिन्नृपसत्तमैः ।
 साधु वा यदि वासाधु तन्नातिक्रान्तुमुत्सहे ॥
 कुलधर्मः स नो वीर प्रमाणं परमं च तत् ।
 तेन त्वां न ब्रवीम्येतदसंदिग्धं वचोऽरिहन् ॥
 तं भीष्मः प्रत्युवाचेदं मद्रराजं जनाधिपः ।
 धर्म एषः परो राजन् स्वयमुक्तः स्वयम्भुवा ॥
 नात्र कश्चन दोषोऽस्ति पूर्वेविधिरयं कृतः ।

117. *Mahābhārata*, 11, 32, 14-15.
 ततः शाकलमभ्येत्य भद्राणां पुटभेदनम् ।
 मातुलं प्रीतिपूर्वेण शल्यं चक्रे वशे बली ॥

Jātakas¹¹⁸, stood on the bank of the Āpagā in a tongue of land between two rivers, called the Śākaladvīpa, which corresponds to the Rechna doab. The early Madra kings like Aśvapati, whose daughter Śāvitri is famous in Hindu legends, were virtuous and good-natured. But it appears that the infiltration of fresh elements had accentuated their outlandish manners and customs. In the *Udyogaparvan* the camp of Śalya is described as full of warriors, whose strange armours, bows and banners, unfamiliar trappings, vehicles and equipment and local costumes, ornaments and deportment presented a unique spectacle in the country of the Kurus.¹¹⁹ It appears that the advent of the Jarttikas or Jartas, who are identical with the Iatioi, who, together with the Takhoroī, lived near the northern section of the Jaxartes around Taskend, according to Ptolemy, and whose modern descendants, called the Jats, are spread over the whole of the Panjab, and their occupation of the capital of the Madras, Śākkla, suggested in the *Mahābhārata*¹²⁰, was mainly responsible for the outlandish features of the Madras. These Jartas were alien to Indian culture, as is manifest from the tone of denunciation, in which their habit of drinking wine, fermented from jaggery and rice, and eating beef with garlic in the form of rolls and chops is referred to in the *Mahābhārata*.¹²¹ As a result of these tribal admixtures, the Madras suffered a setback in the estimation of the orthodox people.

118. *Kalingabodhi Jātaka* (Fausböll) no. 479
Kusa Jātaka (Fausböll) no. 531.

119. *Mahābhārata*, IV, 8, 3-4
अक्षौहिणीपतिराजन् महावीर्यपराक्रमः ।
विचित्रकवचाः शूरा विचित्रध्वजकार्मुकाः ।
विचित्राभरणाः सर्वे विचित्ररथवाहनाः ।
विचित्रस्त्रधराः सर्वे विचित्राम्बरभूषणाः ॥
स्वदेशवेशभरणा वीरा शतसहस्रशः ।

120. *Mahābhārata*, VIII (Karna) 44, 10 तस्य सेनाप्रणेतारो बभूवुः
क्षत्रियर्षभाः ।

शाकलं नाम नगरमापगा नाम निम्नगा ।
जर्तिका नाम वाहीकास्तेषां वृत्तं सुनिन्दितम् ॥

121. *Mahābhārata*, VIII, 44, 11.

धानागौड्यासवं पीत्वा गोमांसं लशुनैः सह ।
अपूपमांसवाद्यानामशिनः शीलव्रजिताः ॥

18. *Pāṇḍu and Pandoouoi.*

We have observed that the five Pāṇḍava brothers stand for a group of tribes known in Iran and India. Before considering other aspects of their history, it would be interesting to study the name Pāṇḍava, which they collectively bear. We have seen above that the name Pāṇḍu, borne by their father, indicates pale or yellow complexion, which characterised the Kirātas according to the Indian conception. We learn from Pali texts that King Pukkusāti of Gandhāra, who was a contemporary of King Bimbisāra of Magadha, was attacked by a tribe called Pāṇḍava.¹²² The Mārkaṇḍeya Purāṇa mentions the Pāṇḍavas together with the north-western peoples, the Kambojas, Pārśvas, Daradas etc. Ptolemy also locates a tribe, known as Pandoouoi,¹²³ in the Panjab and Raychoudhury identifies them with the Ārjunāyanas.¹²⁴ This identification may not be correct, but the fact that Pāṇḍu was also symbolic of a tribe admits of no doubt.

19. *The tribal symbology of the five Pāṇḍavas.*

The number five of the Pāṇḍava brothers is very significant. We know that a Eurasian nomad horde was usually an association of constituent tribes and styled itself as "the so-many--so--and--so" e.g., 'the ten (tribes of) Uigurs' (*onughur*), 'the nine (tribes of) Ārśi' (*Togūz Ārśiñ*), 'the four (tribes of) twghry' (*Cahār Toghrisān*) etc. The Pāṇḍavas were a group of five tribes, Ārjunayānas, Vṛkas, Yaudheyas and two tribes of the Madras, whose number has a great historical and geographical significance. We know that the country between Qazwin and Ardalān, south of the Caspian Sea, was called *Khamsāh*, which is the Arabic word for 'five'. In this region the Assyrians built a fortress on the border between the independent territory of Asagartā and the Assyrian protectorate, called Mannai, in the southern part of the Urmiyan Basin between the southern end

122. T.W. Rhys Davids, *Buddhist India* p. 28; G. P. Malalasekera, *Op. cit.* Vol. II p. 215; Félix Lacote, *Essay on Guṇādhya* English translation by Rev. A.M. Tabard p. 176 *Papañcasūdanī* 11, 982.

123. *Indian Antiquary* Vol. XIII pp. 331, 349.

124. H.C. Raychoudhury, *Political History of Ancient India* (5th. ed)

of the Lake (Urmiyāh) and Parsua, which they called *Panzis*.¹²⁵ Sargon refers to this *Panziś*, "the strong fortress, that lies over against the lands of Zikirtu and Andia" in the record of his eighth campaign of 714 B.C.¹²⁶ This word *panziś* is an Assyrian version of *panza*, meaning five in old Persian, and *pañca*, which is reminiscent of the *Völkerwanderung* of the five tribes, constituting the north-western branch of the *Asāgartiyā* in that region. It appears that the five tribes symbolised by the *Pāṇḍava* fraternity, were the left wing of an ex-Eurasian nomad people, whose right wing gave its name to *Panziś* or *Khamsāh* near Lake Urmiyah in the mountainous region between Qazwin and the lower valleys of the rivers Aras and Kur.

Our enquiry heretofore has led us to hold that the *Pāṇḍavas* signify a confederacy of five tribes, which moved into India from Central Asiatic regions. Some of the constituent tribes of this group entered into Iran also. In this group the *Ārjunāyanas* and *Vṛkas* had Scythian elements among them and the *Yaudheyans* and *Madras* were Iranian tribes. Thus the advent of these tribes signified a Scytho-Iranian invasion of northern India, with whom some Mongoloid tribes of the North-West also seem to have cooperated. Curiously enough, we have some facts to show that the Scythians invaded India and spread in her northern regions many centuries before the invasion of the *Śakas* about the dawn of the Christian era.

20. *The Saka invasion of India of the 9th century B.C.*

In the beginning of the first millenium B. C. there was one of those nomadic upsurges at the eastern extremity of the steppes, which touched off a vast *Völkerwanderung* over the Eurasian heartland. The hordes, living there, which the Chinese called *Hiung-nu*, began to expand and conquer all around and dislocated their western neighbours, who began to march westwards. By the ninth century B.C. they were causing such extensive damage that the Chinese Emperor Suan (27-781 B.C.) had to take military action against them. Beaten off in this way, the *Hiung-nu* dislodged their western neighbours. "These,

125. E. Forrer, *Die Provinzeinteilung des Assyrischen Reiches*, p. 75; N. Adontz, *Histoire d' Arménie, les origines* (Paris 1946) pp. 102, 367.

126. D.D. Luckenbill, *Ancient Records of Assyria and Babylonia* (Chicago 1926-27) Vol. 11 pp. 150-151.

in turn, cannoned into the next tribe, which duly lashed out against the tribe, living on its western flank, so that the entire steppe was soon in motion, each tribe attacking its western neighbour in an effort to secure new pastures" (T. Talbot Rice, *The Scythians* p. 43). About 800 A.D. a severe drought in the steppes accelerated this tribal flux and unrest. (Ellsworth Huntington, *The Pulse of Asia* p. ix) As a result, the Massagatae, living to the north of the Oxus, assaulted the Scythians, who lashed out against the Eastern Cimmerians and defeated them by reason of their superior strategy characterised by the use of saddles and probably thongs acting as leather stirrups and the practice of shooting arrows on horseback. (M. I. Rostovtzeff, *Iranians and Greeks* p. 40). The Cimmerians descended through the Dariel Pass into Urartu. The Scythians continued the march, one section crossing either the Jaxartes or the Volga and pressing into South Russia, and another turning aside from the Dariel Pass and swooping down the Derbend defile on the shores of Lake Urmia at the time of Sargon of Assyria.

The Cimmerians and Scythians figure in the *Genesis* in the famous Table of Nations, which "is derived largely from a document of the tenth century B. C. as references to Assyria and Arabia fit this general period better than any other" (W.F. Albright, *From the Stone Age to Christianity* p. 251). Albright holds that the movements of the Cimmerians and Scythians started at a considerably earlier date than is usually supposed. The cuneiform references point to this conclusion [J. Wiesner, *Der Alte Orient* Vol. 38 (1939) p. 75].

During these movements and migrations in the beginning of the first millennium B.C. the Scythians invaded India and Iran also.

Prof. Przyluski has pointed out that the name of the capital of the Madras, Śākala, and that of the region between the Ravi and the Chenab, Śākādvīpa, are based on the word śaka and are indicative of a Śaka invasion. Likewise, the name of the clan Śākya, to which Buddha belonged, enshrines a reminiscence of the word śaka. It is significant that in the grammar of Pāṇini the name Śākya is derived from the word śaka. In IV, 3 92 the formation of a group of words like शाण्डक्य with the addition of the suffix न्य् and the consequent वृद्धि of the initial vowel is taught शाण्डकादिभ्यो न्यः. In the Gaṇapāṭha,

appended to this sūtra, the word *śaka* also occurs, which leads to the formation of *śākya*, the name of the clan of Buddha. The name of the Śākya exile Śambaka, probably śyāmaka of the *Divyāvadāna* and Siauakos of the Greek writers, who is stated in the Tibetan *Dulva* to have been banished for killing persons during the attack of the Śākyas by the Kosalan King Viḍuḍabha and populated the country of Bakuḍa, where he preached the sanctity and inviolability of the stag, which is held sacred among the Scythians, is also taken to represent the Śakas.¹²⁷ Przyluski holds that the equality of men and women, preached by Buddha, and his first instruction to two persons of the clan of his mother and thereafter the initiation of three men of the clan of his father, showing his preference for his maternal clan, are in accord with the primacy of women among the Scythians, notably the Issedones.¹²⁸ He traces some features of the solar cult of royalty in ancient India to Central Asiatic influences. The horse-chariot race in the Vājapeya ritual and the horse-itinerary and sacrifice in the Aśvamedha are also equated with the practices of the Steppes noted by Chinese writers. The propagation of the use of iron, characteristic of the culture of Hallstatt in the valley of the Danube, is also held to be due to the movements of the Scythians. To quote Przyluski, "Il s'agissait de montrer l'importance de la route des steppes que nous apprâit maintenant comme le grand axe du continent formé par l'Europe et l'Asie. C'est le long de cette voie royale qu'au cours du premier millénaire se sont propagés la métallurgie du fer, et en même temps que ce procédé technique, des innovations décisives dans l'ordre politique et religieux; le culte du Soleil et la notion de la royauté universelle. Dans cette propagation d'éléments culturels, dont les civilisations les plus diverses se sont enrichies successivement, les Scythes ne paraissent pas avoir joué un rôle très personnel; ils ont surtout transmis ce que d'autres avaient créé; ils ont été comme l'insecte qui transporte le pollen d'une fleur à une autre."¹²⁹

127. Rockhill, *Life of the Buddha* p. 118; *Divyāvadāna* ed. Cowell p. 580; Sylvain Lévi, 'Catalogue géographique des Yaksa dans le Mahāmāyurī', *Journal Asiatique* (1915) pp. 61, 73, 97.

128. J. Przyluski 'Nouveaux aspects de l'histoire des Scythes' *Revue de l'université de Bruxelles* Vol. 42 (1937) pp. 209-223

129. J. Przyluski, 'Les Scythes et la propagation de la civilisation de Hallstatt,' *Revue de l'université de Bruxelles* Vol. 42 (1936-37) p. 307.

Some evidence of the advent of the Śakas into India before their contact with this country in the second century B.C. is afforded by the reference to some cities of the Panjab, whose names had the ending *Kanthā*. Such cities existed in the Varṇu (Bannu) country¹³⁰ and the region of the Uśīnaras¹³¹ extending from the Ravi up to Kankhala and even beyond that region.¹³² Instances of *Kanthā*-ending place-names are given in VI, 2, 125 and the gaṇas, appended thereto, as Cīhaṇakantha, Maḍarakantha, Vaitulakantha, Paṭatkakantha, Vaidālikarṇakantha, Kukkuṭakantha and Citkaṇakantha.¹³³ We learn from the *Vinaya* of the Mūlasārvāstivādins that Buddha visited a village called *Kanthā* (Tibetan, *Kantha*) in the North-West, where he converted a Yakṣī and her family.¹³⁴ *Kanthā* is a Śaka word for city¹³⁵ and is skin to *Kadhāvara* or *Kanthāvara* of Kharoṣṭhi inscriptions, *Kand* of Persian, *Kanthā* of Khotanese, *Kndh* of Sogdian, *Kandai* of Pushto, *Kanda* or *Koent* of the dialect of the Rṣikas or the Yue-che labelled as *Asica* by Bailey.¹³⁶ It is significant that the land beyond the Oxus, the Urheimat of the Śakas, abounds in *Kanthā*-ending place-names like Samarkand, Khokand, Chimkand, Tashkand, Panjkand, Yarkand etc.¹³⁷ The existence of place-names of Śaka appearance in the whole of the Panjab from the Bannu valley to the Kankhala region and even beyond suggests an intrusion of the Śakas long before the time of Pāṇini, who is known to have flourished one generation before the invasion of Alexander the Great.¹³⁸ The reference to the stepped-well, called Śakandhu after the Śakas, together with that worked by Persian wheel, known as Karkandhu

130. Pāṇini IV, 2, 103 वणौ वुक्, Ibid II, 4, 20 संज्ञायांकन्योशीनरेषु

131. Ibid II, 4, 20.

132. Ibid IV, 2, 142 कथापलदनगरग्रामहृदोत्तरपदात्, e.g, दाक्षिकन्धीयम्
see also IV, 2, 102, कन्थायाष्टक्; VI, 2, 124 कन्थाच

133. Pāṇini VI, 2, 125. आदिश्चिहणादीनाम्

134. J. Przyluski, 'Le Nord-Ouest de l' Inde' *Journal Asiatique*, 1914 p.513.

135. Sten Konow, *Corpus Inscriptionum Indicarum*, Vol II intro. p. 43;
Saka Studies pp. 42, 149.

136. H.W. Bailey, 'Asica', *Transactions of the Philological Society* (1945)
pp. 22-23.

137. V.S. Agrawala, *India as known to Pāṇini* p.68; 'Some Foreign Words in Ancient Sanskrit Literature', *Indian Historical Quarterly* (1951) pp. 10-11.

138. Sylvain Lévi, 'Notes sur l' Inde a l'époque d'Alexandre' *Journal Asiatique* (1890) I p. 234.

after the Karkians, in a *vārtika* of Kātyāyana also leads to the same conclusion.¹³⁹ According to Aesianus, the Śakas lived at the north-western Indian borders at the time of Alexander's invasion.¹⁴⁰ Tarn interprets a passage of Strabo to mean that in the seventh century the Śakas had occupied Bactria.¹⁴¹ That this tide of Śaka invasion, descending from the north-west, touched the eastern extremity of India, is manifest from the traditions of the Purāṇas that the Śakas advanced to Ayodhyā during the reign of King Bāhu and his son Sagara checked and repelled them.¹⁴²

Recent archaeological explorations, particularly in Seistan at the site of Nad-i-Ali, about 12 kilometres to the south of Qala-i-Kang, have thrown new light on the early movements of the Scythians. At this site there is a mound, called Surkh-Dagh, because of the masses of burnt bricks lying there, and at a distance of about 400 metres is the mound known as Safed-Dagh. Near these sites are the ruins of ancient habitations. René Ghirshman has found polychrome ceramic at Nad-i-Ali, which, in his opinion, seems to have some resemblance with that of South Russia. He has also picked up grey-black potshreds, which have affinities with those of Necropolis B at Sialk dated about tenth or ninth century B.C. The building processes at both the places are also more or less the same. The most significant finds at that site are the bronze arrowheads having triangular barbs. Such arrowheads are found in Cis, Transcaucasia, Bögaz-Kui, Gordion and Tepe Alishar. They are particularly associated with the Scythians and are called "Graeco-Scythian".¹⁴³ Their place of origin seems to be South Russia, which came under the influence of the Scythians very early. The discovery of Scythian arrowheads at a site of the beginning of the first millenium B.C., such as Nad-i-Ali, unmistakably indicate the *Völkerwanderung* of the Scythians

139. Kātyāyana's *Vārtika* on *Pāṇini* 1, 1, 64 शकन्ध्वादिषु पररूपं वाच्यम्

140. Flavius Arrianus, *Anabasis Alexandri* ed-E. Iliff Robson, in *The Loeb Classical library* Vol 11 p. 234.

141. W.W. Tarn, *The Greeks in Bactria and India* p. 283.

142. *Viṣṇupurāṇa* IV, 3; *Vāyupurāṇa* ch. 88; *Brahmāṇḍapurāṇa* ch 63.

143. René Ghirshman, 'Recherches prehistoriques dans la partie Afghane du Seistan', in Hackin, Carl et Meunié *Diverses Recherches Archeologiques en Afghanistan* (Paris 1959), p. 43, 47.

in these regions in that age. From Afghanistan (Seistan) it was natural and easy for the Scythians to invade north-western India also.

In southern Turkmenia Russian archaeologists have explored the sites of Namazga-Tepe and Kara-Tepe, which have revealed a civilization analogous to that of Mundigak in Afghanistan, Sadaat, Keshi-Beg and Kile-Gul-Mohammad near Quetta in Baluchistan and Kot-Diji and other sites in Sind. It is characterised by a bichrome pottery of one and the same style. Suddenly this pottery-tradition comes to an end and is replaced by another hand-made type having a violet decoration on a red background. The decorative motifs are mostly geometric. This change is accompanied by the sudden abandonment of the sites of Tchoust, Ashkal-Tépé etc. in Ferghana. It suggests an invasion of the regions from Ferghana and Turkmenia to Mundigak by a new people. The famous Russian archaeologist S.P. Tolstov is of the opinion that the invaders came from the Chinese territory. They occupied these regions and particularly the mines of lapis-lazuli in Badakhshan. This explains the sudden decrease in the supply of this material in Egypt as well as in Mesopotamia during the Akkadian period. Thus the Near-East and the East were cut off from each other and the vital links, later known as the Silk Route, were snapped.¹⁴⁴ This *Völkerwanderung* from the direction of China unmistakably seems to have included the Scythian or nomadic elements, which were found there, as shown by Otto Maenchen-Helfen. This movement had an inevitable repercussion in Afghanistan, Baluchistan and the Panjab, as the archaeological finds testify.

Considering the political situation in Eurasia in the beginning of the first millenium B.C., Arnold J. Toynbee has observed as follows:—

“It is tempting to conjecture that the warlike communities, that were encountered by Alexander the Great in the Indus Valley in 327-324 B.C., were the descendants of Eurasian nomads, who had been deposited there by a more recent

144. Jean Marie Casal, ‘Les débuts de la civilization de l’Indus à la lumière de fouille récentes’, *Academie des Inscriptions et Belles-letters, Comptes-rendus* 1960 pp. 312-314.

Völkerwanderung than that of the Aryas. The most recent period of aridity and effervescence on the Steppes may have run from about 825 to about 525 B.C., and this period partly coincides in date with both the Babylonian 'Time of Troubles' (1000-600 B.C.) and the Syriac 'Time of Troubles' (925-525 B.C.). In that age south-western Asia had been overrun by the Eurasian Nomad Cimmerians and Scyths. Did one wing of this invading horde turn south-eastward after breaking out of the Steppe between the Pamirs and the Caspian, as the Aryan conquerors of the Indus Valley had turned south-eastward in their day, when their Hyksos comrades had swept on across 'Iraq and Syria into Egypt? Perhaps the Pactyes on the Indo-Iranian border were part of the off-spring of this *apodasmós*, whatever we are to make of problemetical Pactyes in Cappadocia....."¹⁴⁵

In fact, as seen above, there are definite, though scanty, evidences of the Scythian invasion of Afghanistan and North India in the age under consideration. Toynbee's question, suggested by a strong probability of historical situations, can now be answered in the affirmative on the basis of the evidence, legendary, linguistic and archaeological at our disposal.

21. *The Śaka invasion of Iran in the ninth and eighth centuries B.C.*

This early Völkerwanderung of the Śakas not only engulfed Northern India but also swept through Iran and flooded Seistan. Cišpiš, the son of Hakhāmaniš, has a name resembling that of the Cimmerian worlord Teušpu, who fought with the Assyrian monarch Esarhaddon (681-668 B.C.).¹⁴⁶ It is significant that Herodotus calls Cišpiš's wife, the mother of Cyrus I, Spako-

¹⁴⁵. Arnold J. Toynbee, *A Study of History* Vol. V p. 274 Olaf Caroe also holds that the language of the Pathans is a Śaka dialect introduced from the north. In Pushtu, for example 'd' is changed into 'l' [Persian pidar (father) = Pushtu *pilar*; Persian *didan* (to see) = Pushtu *eidal*; Persian *dukhtar* (daughter) = Pushtu *lur*]. Likewise in the name Spalagadama and Spalahora *spala* stands for *spada* meaning an army. [Olaf Caroe, *The Pathans* pp. 65-66]

¹⁴⁶. D.D. Luckenbill, *Ancient Records of Assyria and Babylonia* Vol II pp. 516, 530, 546.

the bitch—a name connected with that of the Scythian warlord Ispākai, who rode hard at the Cimmerians' heels.¹⁴⁷ These names, Cišpiš and Spako, seem to be symbolic of the dynastic relationship of the Cimmerians and Scythians, who played a notable part in the foundation of the Achaemenian empire in Iran. The Cimmerians and Scythians, the Gimirrai and Ishkuzai of Assyrian Annals, were closely related. They spoke almost identical languages and lived by plunder. In the reign of Sargon II Urārtu bore the brunt of their invasion and, though they were repulsed, they devastated the country so much that the king Rusa I had to commit suicide in despair. Splitting into two, one group of the Cimmerians moved along Lake Urmia and appeared among the allies of Kašathrita, while the bulk of their cavalry swooped on Asia Minor and spelled the doom of the Phrygian and Lydian Kingdoms. Shortly afterwards Assurbanipal defeated them in the gorges of Cilicia and their remnants fled and joined up with the Scythian bands. During the reign of Esarhaddon the Scythians established themselves to the south and south-east of Lake Urmia and founded their capital at Sakiz, a town which still bears the impress of their name. Under their king Partatua, the Protothyes of Herodotus, they occupied the greater part of the province now known as Azerbaijan. Faced by the menace to Urartu, the Assyrian monarch sought the alliance of the Scythians, whose king Partatua was emboldened to demand the hand of an Assyrian princess. The power of the Scythians grew under Partatua's son Madyes, who invaded Media and reigned there for 28 years (653-625), according to Herodotus. This success nerved the Scythians to fall out with the Assyrians and launch an attack westwards. They laid waste Assyria and sacked and pillaged Asia Minor, North Syria, Phoenesia, Damascus and Palestine. The memory of their raid is preserved in Jeremiah (IV, 13) who foretold it as follows: "A destroyer of nations is on his way—Behold he shall come up as clouds and his chariots shall be as the whirlwind: his horses are swifter than eagles. Woe unto us: for we are spoiled."¹⁴⁸ The Pharaoh bought their withdrawal from the Egyptian frontier. In Iran, the Median

147. D.D. Luckenbill *Op-cit* Vol. II pp. 517, 533; F.W. König *Alleste Geschichte der Meder und Perser* pp. 27-31 quoting *Herodotus* Book I ch. 110.

148. R. Ghirshman, *Iran* p. 99.

Cyaxares, who had reorganized his army by adopting the tactics of Scythian horsemen, inflicted a defeat on Madyes and we perhaps find an echo of the Scythian invasion in the remark of Arrian that "Idanthyrso, the Skythian, issuing from Skythia subdued many nations of Asia and carried his victorious arms even to the borders of Egypt before the invasion of Alexander."¹⁴⁹

The settlement of Eurasian nomad immigrants in Luristan is proved by the "animal style" of the local school of bronze work and its expansion from Luristan to Fars during the reign of Cišpiš is indicated by the extension of this art-style over this vast territory.¹⁵⁰ The bronzes of Luristan lead one to conclude that they must have belonged to an *élite* clan of warrior horsemen and charioteers, who were reluctant to settle on the land and for this reason valued portable goods. Though this art reveals Hurrian and Assyrian elements, it has a prominent Scythian look. The belt—plaques, in particular, betray the classic art of the Scythians, as known from excavations in South Russia. This Scythian period of Iranian history is best illustrated by the discoveries at šakiz, the Saka settlement to the south of Lake Urmia. Some of the typically Assyrian articles, found there, seem to represent the gifts from the Assyrian court to Partatua or Madyes. Among the purely Scythian pieces, there is a gold scabbard, decorated in relief with a cluster of ibex-heads, the curve of the horns forming a lyre, and splendid gold plaques, depicting heads of lynxes full face joined to each other by ribbons. Of particular interest is a silver dish 14 inches in diameter showing crouching animals like lynxes and hares running towards the right in concentric circles. On this dish appear some hieroglyphic signs, which constitute the earliest known Scythian document. Among the gold terminals of furniture, one represents the *protome* of a bird of prey with a curved beak and round eye, another, a lion in a placid pose, and a third, ducks touching each other with their heads bent back. All these are typical Scythian motifs.¹⁵¹ Scythian art continued to influence the art of Iran in the Achaemenian period. Excavations of the ruins of Persepolis have yielded thousands of fragments of stone vases, some ornamented with

149. J. W. McCrindle *Megasthenes and Arrian* p. 201.

150. G.G. Cameron, *A History of Early Iran* (Chicago, 1936) pp. 183-184.

151. R. Ghirshman, *Iran* pp. 105, 107, 109-110.

heads of ducks and swans, which were typically Scythian motifs.¹⁵² Thus we observe that the Cimmerians and Scythians played a notable part in the history of early Iran. After their advent the Kurus and Kambojas appear to have reinforced their ranks. It was out of the turmoil of these tribal movements that the Achaemenian empire emerged in Iran.

22. *Śaka element in the Iranian Epic.*

The advent of the Śakas in Iran is signalled by a number of heroic myths and legends, which obtained a lasting place in the folklore of that country. The cycle of tales, associated with Zal and Rustam, is a significant illustration of Scythian influence. It is noteworthy that these heroes are not known to the *Avesta*, and the tales, relating to them, are distinct from the rest of the matter of the Iranian epic both in its local colour and fabulous atmosphere.¹⁵³ These legends are definitely associated with the two East Iranian provinces of Seistan and Zabulistan in the basin of the river Helmund. When the Arab conquerors pushed their way into Seistan, they found there a place called "the stall of Rustam's Horse" (Raksh-i-Rustam).¹⁵⁴ In the *Shāh-nāma* of Firdausi, Rustam is often called *Sagzi* by his antagonists evidently in view of his Śaka origin. It is also well-known that Rustam was not liked by the orthodox Zoroastrians, because he is known to have killed Isfandiyār, who was not only a crown-prince, but also a great champion and propagator of the new religion of Zarathushtra.¹⁵⁵ These considerations vouch for the outlandish character and Scythian affinity of Rustam. The fact that his ancestors bear Iranian names does not detract from his Śaka affiliations, since the Śakas themselves were a branch of the Iranian race speaking a language of Iranian family. The fact that Seistan was populated by the śakas

152. R. Ghirshman, *Iran* p. 176.

153. T. Nöldeke, *Das Iranische Nationalepos* 2nd edition pp.9-10.

154. T. Nöldeke, *Op. cit* p. 11.

155. I owe this important information to Prof. J.E. Senjana, Vide his letter dated 5-12-56. The equation of the name of Rustam with the Avestan *Raodhastakhma*, even if plausible, though discountenanced by Nöldeke, does not invalidate the thesis, enunciated above, since the Śakas were Iranians *par excellence*. Recently, two Sogdian fragments of the episodes of the Rustam story have been found [E. Benveniste, *Textes sogdiens* pp. 134-136]. They have strengthened the view that the Rustam story is of Scythian origin. H.W. Bailey calls Rustam a Scythian hero. (H. W. Bailey. 'The Persian Language' in A. J. Arberry 'The Legacy of Persia').

before the sixth century B.C. has been ably shown by F. W. Thomas.¹⁵⁶ But very soon these early Śakas merged in the sedentary population and culture of the Iranians so that Darius could not note their identity and mentioned the Śakas in the truly nomadic sense of the term in the land around Sogdiana. Likewise, the traces of the śaka intrusion into India were totally wiped out, except for some place-names, noted by a grammarian, interested in linguistic peculiarities, and some faint traditions lost in the multitudinous amalgam of legendary lore.

23. *The Mahābhārata a record of the Scytho-Iranian invasion of India of the 9th century B.C.*

The above account of the Völkerwanderung of the Śakas in Iran and India in the opening centuries of the first millenium B.C. found its poetic expression in the songs, lays and ballads, marked by herorism, fatalism and boisterousness, embedded in the *Shāh-nāmā* and the *Mahābhārata*. As seen above, there was a movement of the Eurasian nomads in Iran in the ninth and eighth centuries B.C., in which the Yautiyā, Marciyā and Asagartiyā figured prominently and in the heels of whom the Cimmerians, Scythians, Kurus, Kambojas etc, entered Iran and contributed to the formation of the Achaemenian empire. An aggregation of the Eurasian nomads, consisting of more or less the same tribal ingredients, descended into Afghanistan and the Panjab in almost the same age. In this invasion or migration the Śakas and their kindred migrating tribes were predominant. The advent of the Pāṇḍavas, commemorated in the *Mahābhārata*, reflects this invasion of India of the 9th century B.C. It may be noted that Raychoudhury places the accession of Parīkṣita, which followed the *Mahābhārata* war, in the 9th century B.C.¹⁵⁷ This date accords with the data of the nomadic invasion of Iran and the Panjab in that century.

156. F.W. Thomas, 'Sakaśthāna : Where dwelt the Śakas named by Darius and Herodotus, *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society* London (1906) pp. 181-200, addition in *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society* (1906) pp. 460-464. The archaeological research at Nad-i-Ali in Seistan, conducted by Ghirshman and quoted above, confirms the view of F.W. Thomas.

157. H. C. Raychoudhury, *Political History of Ancient India* (5th edition) p. 36.

24. *The dislocation of the Gāndhāras and the First Battle of Kurukṣetra.*

Whenever a tribe descended into the Panjab or an army of invaders swooped down that region, it dislocated and rooted the peoples, settled in the north-west, and pushed them in the interior of the plains. The invasion of the tribes, symbolised in the Pāṇḍava fraternity, also deracinated the people of Gandhāra and goaded them down the glacis of the Panjab to collide with the Kurus on the historic battle-field of Kurukṣetra outside the gateway of the Gangetic region. We learn from the *Mahābhārata* that one generation before the famous war of Kurukṣetra between the Pāṇḍavas and the Kurus, a battle took place in the same field on the bank of the Saravati between the Gandharvas of the north-west and the Kurus, in which the Kuru King Citrāngada lost his life.¹⁵⁸ These Gandharvas are identical with the Gāndhāras, both these words *gandharva* and *gandhāra* being related to the words *kudirei*, *kudri*, *kudira*, *kudure*, which denote 'horse' in the Dravidian languages, as shown by Jean Przyluski.¹⁵⁹ It appears that the accumulating pressure of the Pāṇḍava tribes resulted in the

158. *Mahābhārata*. 1, 101, 6-10.

स तु चित्राङ्गदः शौर्यात् सर्वान् चिक्षेप पार्थिवान् ।
 मनुष्यं न हि मेने सः कंचिद् सदृशमात्मनः ॥
 तं क्षिपन्तं सुराँश्चैव मनुष्याँस्तथा ।
 गन्धर्वराजो बलवान् तुल्यनामाऽभ्ययात्तदा ॥
 तेनास्य सुमहद्युद्धं कुरुक्षेत्रे बभूव ह ।
 तयोर्बलवतोस्तत्र गन्धर्वकुरुमुख्ययोः ॥
 नद्यास्तीरे सरस्वत्याः समास्तिस्रोऽभवद्रणः ।
 तस्मिन् विमर्दे तुमुले शस्त्रवर्षसमाकुले ।
 मायाधिकोज्वघीद्वीरं गन्धर्वः कुरुसत्तमम् ।
 सह त्वा तु नरश्रेष्ठं चित्राङ्गदमरिन्दमम् ॥
 अन्ताय कृत्वा गन्धर्वो दिवमाचक्रमे ततः ।

159. J. Przyluski, 'L'influence iranienne en Grèce et dans l'Inde' *Revue de l'université de Bruxelles* Vol 37 (1931-32) p. 285. It is significant that the Gandharvas are the people with the mouth of horse. In fact Gandharva is an equine genic. Hence the resemblance of their name with a word for horse has a unique significance. That the Dravidian peoples once passed through the north-western regions of the Panjab is proved by the existence of an islet of their speech among the Brahuis. Probably the word Gandhāra also reflects the memory of their advance in that region. The equation of this word with that meaning a horse is in accord with the prominence of the horse in the northern regions.

movement of the people of Gandhāra towards the south-east, which developed into the invasion of the Kurus and the battle of Kurukṣetra, in which the Kuru chief lost the day. But this invasion was merely a forerunner of a bigger and mightier onslaught of the Śaka-dominated nomadic tribes, symbolised in the conception of the Pāṇḍavas, which spelled the doom of the Kurus.

25. *The Pañcālas and their wars with the Kurus.*

The invasion of the Scytho-Iranian nomadic peoples, symbolised by the Pāṇḍavas, seems to have synchronized with the outbreak of hostilities between the Kurus and the Pañcālas. The Pañcālas represented an earlier horde of people, in which various tribes were grouped and which was dominated by the Keshins or Kassites. As I have shown elsewhere, the advent of the Pañcālas into India resulted from the movement of a group of tribes, led by the Kassites, that invaded Mesopotamia in the seventeenth century B.C. and overthrew the house of the Amorite Hammurabi. The composition of the Pañcālas agrees with the grouping of the Kassites and these two movements of tribes into Mesopotamia and India were synchronous developments involving two wings of the same *Völkerwanderung*.¹⁶⁰ After the settlement of the Pañcālas in the Gangetic valley with their seats at Ahichatrā and Kāmpilya, the Kurus descended from their Central Asiatic homelands and occupied the regions of the Purubharatas, assimilating them within their tribal structure, as seen above. This settlement of the Kurus on the gateway of the Gangetic valley opened an era of conflict and antagonism among them and the Pañcālas of the eastern Gangetic regions. The Vedic literature is full of references to the enmity of the Kurus and the Pañcālas and the Epic also repeatedly adverts to it. In the *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa* (XII, 93, 3) (Macdonell and Keith: *Vedic Index* Vol. II p. 63) there is an allusion to the unfriendly relations between the Kurus and the Sṛñjayas, a constituent clan of the Pañcālas, and in the *Jaiminiya Upaniṣad Brāhmaṇa* (1,38, 1; XII, 4) there is a scene, in which the Kurus reproach the Dālbyhas, another clan associated with the Pañcālas. The *Mahābhārata* also preserves a memory of a

160. Ch. 3 above.

war between the king of the Pañcālas and the Puru-Bharata King Samvaraṇa, which resulted in the rout of the latter towards the Indus region. The Pañcālas are said to have dominated Kuruland, which is stated to have been visited with great misery, decadence and affliction. The Bharata King Samvaraṇa sought refuge in some remote fastness of the Indus region with his wife, sons, ministers and kinsmen and organised a campaign to recover his dominion under the leadership of Vaśiṣṭha.⁶¹¹ Even the Great War of Kurukṣetra between the Kurus and Pāṇḍavas was essentially a conflict of the Kurus and the Sṛñjayas, whom I have identified with the Sarangai or Zranka or Drangians, as a perusal of the battle-chapters of the *Mahābhārata* shows. While depicting the scenes of the battle, the editor of these parvans repeatedly refers to the antagonism of the Kurus and the Sṛñjayas as his main refrain in such a way as to show that it was his central theme, which was subsequently overlaid with the episode of the Pāṇḍavas. In the Bhīṣmaparvan the Kurus are usually

161. *Mahābhārata*. 1, 89, 31, 41.

आर्क्षे संवरणे राजन् प्रशासति वसुन्धराम् ।
 संक्षयः सुमहानासीत्प्रजानामिति शुश्रुमः ॥
 व्यशीर्यत ततो राष्ट्रं क्षयैर्नानाविधैस्तथा ।
 क्षुन्मृत्युम्यामनावृष्ट्या व्याधिभिश्च समाहतम् ॥
 अभ्यघ्नन् भारताश्चैव सपत्नानां बलानि च ।
 चालयन्वसुधां चैव बलेन चतुरगिणा ॥
 अभ्यायत्तं च पाञ्चाल्यो विजित्य तरसा महीम् ।
 अक्षौहिणीभिर्दशभिः स एनं समरेऽजयत ॥
 सदारः सामात्यः सपुत्रः ससुहृज्जनः ।
 राजा संवरणस्तस्मादपलायत महाबलात् ॥
 सिन्धोर्नदस्य महति निकुंजे न्यवसत्तदा ।
 नदीविषयपर्यन्ते पर्वतस्य समीपतः ॥
 तत्रावसन्बहून्कालान्भारता दुर्गमाश्रिताः ।
 तेषां निवसतां तत्र सहस्रं परिवत्सरान् ॥
 अथाम्यगच्छद्भरतान् वसिष्ठो भगवन्नृषिः ।
 तत्रागतं प्रयत्नेन प्रत्युद्गम्याभिवाद्य च ॥
 पुरोहितो भवान्नोऽस्तु राज्याय प्रयतामहे ।
 ओमित्येव वसिष्ठोऽपि भरतान् प्रत्यपद्यत ॥
 अग्नाभ्यषिञ्चत् साम्राज्ये सर्वक्षत्रस्य पौरवम् ।
 विषाणभूतं सर्वस्यां पृथिव्यामिति नः श्रुतम् ॥
 ततः स पृथिवीं प्राप्य पुनरीजे महाबलः ।
 आजमीढो महायज्ञैर्बहुभिर्भूरिदक्षिणैः ॥

pitched against the Sṛñjayas.¹⁶² When Bhīṣma and Arjuna were locked in a deadly encounter and the rest of the combatants were lulled with terror and astonishment, the Kurus and the Sṛñjayas looked aghast for a while together.¹⁶³ Again in the Karna-parvan, when the opposite armies were suffering from the terrible blows of Arjuna and Karna, it was the Kurus and the Sṛñjayas, who bore the brunt of the main tussle.¹⁶⁴ Elsewhere also the Kurus always fight with the Sṛñjayas whereas other tribes meet other peoples, according to inherent antipathy or strategic circumstance.¹⁶⁵ Thus it is crystal clear that in the Great War of Kurukṣetra the traditional struggle between the Kurus and Sṛñjayas, who figured in the Pañcāla confederacy, was reinforced by the terrible onslaught of the Scytho-Iranian

162. *Mahābhārata* VI, 45, 1-2.

पूर्वाह्णे तस्य रौद्रस्य युद्धमहो विशाम्पते ।
 प्रावर्त्तत महाघोरं राज्ञां देहावकर्तनम् ॥
 कुरूणां सृजयानां च जिगीषुणां परस्परम् ॥
 सिहानामिव सन्द्गदो दिवमुर्वी च नादयन् ॥

Mahābhārata VI, 32, 15

तत्राद्भुतमपश्याहमसंप्रहारं सुदारुणम् ।
 यदकुर्वन् रणे शूराः सृजयाः कुरुभिः सह ॥

Mahābhārata, VI, 73, 41.

मुक्तकेशा विकवचा विरथाश्छिन्नकार्मुकाः ।
 बाहुभिः समयुध्यन्त सृजयाः कुरुभिः सह ।

163. *Mahābhārata* VI, 60, 29

एवंविधं कार्मुकभीमनादमदीनवत्सत्पुरुषोत्तमाभ्याम् ।
 ददर्श लोकः कुरुसृजयाश्च तद्वैरथं भीष्मघनञ्जयाम्याम् ॥

Mahābhārata VI, 60, 29.

तस्मिन् तु कर्णार्जुनयोर्विमर्दे दम्बस्य रौद्रेहनिविद्रुतस्य ।
 बभूव रूपं कुरुसृजयानां बलस्य बाणोन्मथितस्य कीदृक् ॥

164. *Mahābhārata* VIII, 93, 1

एवं मारिषसंग्रामो नरबाजिगजक्षयः ।
 कुरूणां सृजयानां च देवासुरसमोऽभवत् ॥

165. *Mahābhārata* VIII, 47, 23.

स सन्निपातो रथयूथपानां बभूव राजश्रुतिभीमरूपः ।
 जनक्षयः कालयुगान्तकल्पः प्रावर्त्तताम्रे कुरुसृजयानाम् ॥

Mahābhārata VIII, 57, 12.

ततः पुनः समाजम्बुरभीताः कुरुसृजयाः ।
 युधिष्ठिरमुखा पार्थाः सूतपुत्रमुखावयम् ॥

Mahābhārata VIII, 59, 3:

tribes included in the Pāṇḍava conception. It is significant that the Pāṇḍavas were matrimonially related to the Pañcālas and that the Pañcāla chief Dhṛṣṭadyumna was anointed as their commander-in-chief on the eve of the battle. It is also noteworthy that the Vedic texts refer to the animosity of the Kurus and Pañcālas only and are constantly silent about the conflict of the Kurus and the Pāṇḍavas. This shows that the estrangement of the Kurus and the Pañcālas was an event earlier than the Pāṇḍava invasion. It appears that when the conflict of the Kurus and the Pañcālas was heading towards a climax, the Pāṇḍava tribes suddenly broke through the Panjab, probably at the bidding and invitation of the Pañcālas, as happened repeatedly in Indian history, and made short shrift of the Kuru power, in alliance with them.

26. *The fall of the Kurus in the Second Battle of Kurukṣetra.*

The fall of the Kurus is the subject of the tragedy of the *Mahābhārata*. Hopkins has quoted a verse of the *Chāndogya Upaniṣad* to show that the Kurus fell on evil days and a mare saved them.¹⁶⁶ The *Śāṅkhāyana Śrauta Śūtra* (XV, 16, 10-13) refers to the expulsion of the Kurus from Kurukṣetra as a result of a curse uttered by a Brāhmaṇa. The *Chāndogya Upaniṣad* 1, 10, 1¹⁶⁷ informs us that the swarms of locusts (*maṭaci*) devastated the crops of the Kuru country with the result that the family of Uśasti Cākrāyaṇa was reduced to great straits and had to eat the beans from the plate, in which another person was eating. The Purāṇas state that during the reign of Adhisimakṛṣṇa's son Nicakṣu, Hastināpura was washed away by a flood in the Ganges and the Kuru capital was shifted to Kauśāmbī.¹⁶⁸ In the Buddhist period the realm of the Kurus

166. *Chāndogya Upaniṣad* IV, 17, 9-10.

यतो यत् आवर्तते तत् तद् गच्छति मानवः ; ब्रह्मैवैक ऋत्विक् कुरुनस्वाभिरक्षति
cited in E.W. Hopkins, *The Great Epic of India* p. 385 cp. S. Radhākṛishnan, *The Principal Upaniṣads* p. 420.

167. S. Radhākṛishnan, *The Principal Upaniṣads*. pp. 420-421.

मटचिह्तेषु कुरुषु वाटिक्या सह जायया उशस्तिर्ह चाक्रायण इम्यग्रामे
प्रद्राणक उवास

168. F. E. Pargiter, *Dynasties of the Kali Age* p. 5.

गमयापहृते तस्मिन् नगरे नागसाहचर्ये ।
त्यक्तवा निचक्षु नगरं कौशाम्ब्या च निवत्स्यति ॥

had shrunk to the position of an ordinary janapada having no imperial status. The *Somanassa Jātaka* (no 505) locates Utra-Pañcāla-Nagara in Kururat̥tha showing thereby that the Pañcālas got a foothold in the land of the Kurus.

27. *The ascendancy of the Ābhīras.*

After the fall of the Kurus and the lapse of law and order in the kingdom, a large number of indigenous and foreign tribes swarmed into the Panjab. Prominent among them were the Śūdras and the Ābhīras, who spread over the Panjab and occupied the regions of the Sarasvatī. The *Ābhīras* seem to be connected with the *Apiru* (*Khapiru*), who played a very notable role in cuneiform documents of the nineteenth and eighteenth centuries B.C. as well as in Nuzian, Hittite and Amarna documents of the fifteenth and fourteenth centuries B.C. In Hebrew these people were known as *Ibhri* (an adjectival form of *Apiru*) and in Egyptian they figure as *A-pi-ru*. In Mesopotamia and Syria they appear as landless soldiers, raiders, captives and slaves of miscellaneous ethnic origins; in Palestine they are often mentioned in Canaanite letters of the early fourteenth century as raiders and as rebels against Egyptian authority, sometimes in alliance with Canaanite princes. Most of the scholars accepted the equation of the Khapiru (Habiri etc.) with the Hebrews. E. Dhorme and B. Landsberger, however, objected to this equation. But Albright sums up the position by stating that "until the question is decided, we must content ourselves with saying that a khapiru origin would square extraordinarily well with Hebrew traditional history and would clear up many details, which seem otherwise inexplicable. (W.F. Albright, *From the Stone Age to Christianity* (2nd ed.) pp. 240-241). It appears that a section of these people came to India also. They probably settled in the region called Abirvan between Heart̥ and Kandahar and thence entered into the Panjab. The tradition of the disappearance of the river Sarasvatī near Vinaśana as a consequence of the foul

ततो विनशनं राजन् जगामाच हलायुधः ।

शूद्राभीरान् प्रति द्वेषाद् यत्र नष्टा सरस्वती ।

¹⁶⁹. See also W. F. Albright, *The Archaeology of Palestine and the Bible* pp. 245 ff,

contact of the Ābhiras enshrines a memory of the advent of these people in the Kuruland in the heels of the Scytho-Iranian tribes, who dealt the death-blow to Kuru supremacy at Kurukṣetra. We learn from the Muśalaparvan that these Ābhiras grew so headstrong as to inflict a crushing defeat on the invincible Arjuna, when he was returning with the women of the Yādavas from Dvārakā after the tragedy of the Mahābhārata War.¹⁷⁰ At the same time some other indigenous tribes like the Nāgas also became assertive, since we find Janamejaya quelling them in the celebrated Sarpa-satra and holding his court at Takṣaśilā. Either he had to leave his capital and repair to the north-west under duress of some uprising, as Samvarana had to do long before his time, or he marched there to extirpate the menace of some foreign tribe, which overshadowed the north-western marches. It was at Takṣaśilā that Vaiśampāyana recounted the tales of *Mahābhārata* to him.

28. *The Mahābhārata as a Saga of the Śakas.*

We have considered above the tribal movements in the Panjab in the post-Vedic age as reflected in the *Mahābhārata*. We have seen that the Pāṇḍava episode, which is an integral part of the *Mahābhārata*, is foreign to the whole body of early Indian literature. Even the authentic and ancient genealogies of the Purānas do not allude to this important event or its main characters. Thus it is evident that the *Mahābhārata* preserves the literature of a peculiar order that is unknown to other Indian works and the traditions they embody. The great historian Arnold J. Toynbee has made a precious intuitive suggestion that the *Mahābhārata* owes its genesis to the Śakas. "When the Śakas felt the need for heroic poetry," he observes, "they addressed themselves to their Indian subjects; and it is evident that, when this demand is made upon a subject population, its poets will be prone to bring forth out of their treasure things old and new. If we imagine a Hindu poet, whose heart

170. *Mahābhārata* XVI, 8, 17-18

आमीरैरनुसृत्याजौ हताः पञ्चनदालये ।
घनुरादाय तत्राहं नाशकं तस्य पूरणे ।
यथा पुरा च मे वीर्यं भुजयोर्म तत्राभवत् ।
अस्त्राणि मे प्रणष्टानि विविधानि महामुने ॥

is set upon a new higher religion, being called upon by an importunate barbarian Śaka warlord to provide him with 'heroic' minstrelsy, is not the Sanskrit Epic, as we have it, exactly the kind of farrago, which we should expect to see produced by the *tour de force* of an attempt to provide simultaneous satisfaction for two tastes, that were so diverse, and for two interests, that were so far apart."¹⁷¹ Here Toynbee tries to explain the heroic poetry of the *Mahābhārata*, enshrining the memories and reflecting the conditions of the movement of Eurasian peoples in some remote age, in terms of the Śaka invasion of India and their rule in northern and western India about the dawn of the Christian era.² But the fact that this Śaka invasion was preceded by another intrusion of these and other allied tribes eight or nine centuries earlier was not clear to him. The identification of this Scytho-Iranian invasion in the ninth century B.C. in this study has enabled us to advance a more cogent and plausible explanation of the heroic poetry of the Great Epic. As we have observed, the advent of these tribes in the beginning of the first millennium B.C. and the consequent liquidation of the supremacy of the Kurus found its literary expression in the heroic poetry, which constitutes the kernel of the *Mahābhārata*. Subsequently this work was revised, reedited and refurbished so as to suit the requirements of orthodox Brahmanical society first about the dawn of the Christian era and then in the Gupta period and the Pāṇḍava heroes, shorn of their tribal connotations, were even connected with their adversaries, the Kurus, but the outlandish and adventitious character of the heroes, depicted in it, which does not fit in the atmosphere of Indian Society, still shows that its source lay somewhere outside the confines of Brahmanical culture. Following the method of comparative historiology, we have been able to identify the Scytho-Iranian tribes, symbolised by the Pāṇḍava fraternity, and to show that their lays, songs and ballads found their expression in the saga of the *Mahābhārata*, which is fundamentally a work of Śaka origin and inspiration dating from the 9th century B.C. This explains why its subject matter is so strange to the entire body of Indian literary lore.

171. Arnold. J. Toynbee, 'The Völkerwanderung of the Aryas and the Sanskrit Epic', *A Study of History* Vol. V pp. 605 -606.

CHAPTER V

THE ERA OF FOREIGN INVASIONS AND IMPERIAL MOVEMENTS

1. *The intrusion of the Bactrians.*

We have seen that in the later Vedic age the Gāndhāras in the regions, which are now represented by the Rawalpindi and Peshawar districts, the Kekayas between the Jhelum and the Chenab with that capital at Girivraja or Rājagriha, which has been identified by Cunningham with Girjak or Jalalpur on the Jhelum, the Madras between the Chenab and the Ravi with their seat at Śākala, modern Sialkot, and the Uśīnaras along the approaches to the Madhyadeśa were the main peoples of the Panjab. In the 9th century a group of Scytho-Iranian peoples entered into the Panjab and gliding down its glacis clashed with the Kurus at Kurukṣetra and brought about their downfall. In the wake of this invasion many other tribes like the Ābhīras raised their heads and infiltrated into the Panjab. Notable among these foreign peoples were the Bactrians or the Bālhīkas, who spread into the Panjab sometime before the rise of the Achaemenians. As we have observed, Bactria or Balkh lay on the route of the Eurasian nomadic invaders and migrants and saw their inroads repeatedly. Hence the Bactrians had an admixture of sedentary and nomadic elements and as such developed a resilient and elastic social organisation. In the *Atharvaveda* (V, 22, 5, 7, 9) the name Bālhīka occurs in association with the Mūjavants, who, perhaps, represent the speakers of Mūnjani dialect in the north-west. According to the *Mahābhārata*, the Bālhīkas were the offspring of the Piśācas and were a northern people. A variant of Bālhīka is Vālhīka¹ in the *Mahābhārata* and another is Vāhika. In the sūtras of Pāṇini the term Vāhika is used for the whole of the

1. *Mahābhārata*. 11,48, 12

कायव्या (काम्बोजा) दरदा दार्वाः शूरा वैरामकास्तथा ।

औदुम्बरा दुर्विभागाः पारदा बाह्लिकैः सह ॥

Panjab up to the confines of Uśinara.² The realms of the Kekayas, Madras and Uśinaras are included in Vāhika. According to Patañjali, Ārāt and Nandipura (Nandana), commanding the gateway through the Salt Range on the route from Takṣa-ñilā to Vitastā, Śākala, the capital of the Madras, Pāṭana-prastha, probably Paṭhānkot, the seat of the Audumbaras, and Kastira, which is probably identical with Kaspapyros or Kaśyapapura, a name of Multan in ancient times, as shown by Foucher, were Vāhikagrāmas. According to the *Mahābhārata* also, the whole of the Panjab and the North-West was known as Vāhika. In the *Kaṇaparvan* the land of the Five Rivers (Pañcanadyah), watered by the Śatadru, Vipāśā, Irāvati, Candrabhāgā, Vitastā and Sindhu, is said to have been populated by the Āraṭas, Vrātyas and Vāhikas.³ Kātyāyana derives the word Vāhika from the word *bahi* with the addition of the suffix *ikak* and takes it to mean the country outside the pale of orthodox Brahmanical society.⁴ In the *Mahābhārata* also this etymology has been followed.⁵

The Bāhikas appear to have advanced in the west also and settled near Saurāṣṭra, for the *Rāmāyaṇa* mentions the Bāhlikas and Saurāṣṭras together.⁶ It is noteworthy in this

2. Pāṇini IV, 2, 117 वाहीकग्रामेभ्यश्च teach the addition of ठञ् and ङिठ् to the derivatives from the names of Vāhikagrāmas e.g, कास्तीरिकी and कास्तीरिका from Kastira.

V, 3, 114 आयुषजीविसंघाञ्च्यद् वाहीकेष्वब्राह्मणराजन्यात् । क्षौद्रक्यः मालव्यः are the illustrations.

IV, 2, 118 विभाषोशीनरेषु c.g, सौदर्शनिकी, सौदर्शनिका, सौदर्शनीया

3. *Mahābhārata* VIII, 44, 31-32-33.

यदन्योऽप्युक्तवानस्मान् ब्राह्मणः कुस्तंसदि ।
पंचनद्यो बहन्त्येता यत्र पीलुवनान्युत ॥
शतद्रुश्च विपाशा च तृतीयैरावती तथा ।
चन्द्रभागा वितस्ता च सिन्धु षष्ठा बहिर्गिरेः ॥
आरट्टानामेते देशा नष्टवर्मा न तान् व्रजेत् ।
ब्राह्मणानां दासमीयानां वाहीकानामयज्वनाम् ॥

4. Pāṇini IV, 1, 85 दित्यदित्यादित्यपत्युत्तरपदाण्यः ।

Kātyāyana ईकक् च

5. *Mahābhārata*, VIII, 44.

6. *Rāmāyaṇa*, Kiṣkindhākāṇḍa, 42, 6

सुषेणप्रमुखा यूयं वैदेहीं परिमार्गय ।
सौराष्ट्रान् सह बाह्लीकारं चन्द्रचित्रार्तवैव च ॥

connection that there is some evidence of the existence of an Iranian settlement somewhere in Kathiawar. Tuśāspa, the Yavana rājā, who completed the construction of the Sudarśana Lake on behalf of Aśoka bears an Iranian name. Later on, in the second century A. D. the Persian (Pahlava) minister Suviśākha, the son of Kulaipa, who was the governor of Saurāṣṭra and Ānarta under Mahākṣtrapa Rudradāman, stopped a breach in that lake.⁷ Again in the fifth century A.D. Cakrapālita, the son of Skandagupta's governor Parnadatta, repaired the embankment of this lake⁸. These two names, Parnadatta and Cakrapālita, are the Indianised forms of the Iranian words Farnadāta and Cakharapāta and suggest that the persons, bearing them, were Iranians, as shown by Jarl Charpentier.⁹ Thus it is clear that for about one thousand years persons, bearing Iranian names, lived in Saurāṣṭra and were intimately associated with the construction and maintenance of the famous Sudarśana Lake. This existence of an Iranian colony in Kathiawar substantiates the reference to the Saurāṣṭras together with the Bālhikas (*Saurāṣṭrān Sahabālhikān*) in the *Rāmāyaṇa*, the Bactrians being also a ramification of the Iranian people. It is also noteworthy that in the *Arthasāstra* of Kauṭilya the guild (śreṇi) of the Saurāṣṭras is mentioned with that of the Iranians, Kambhojas, as living on trade and warfare.¹⁰ These notices make it clear that a section of the Bactrians (Bālhikas) had migrated to Kathiawar and settled among the people of Ānarta and Saurāṣṭra.

The wide-spread settlement of the Bālhikas is attested by the existence of many castes in the Panjab whose names recall these people. Some agricultural Jat clans of the Multan region are known as *Bhālar* and *Bhalerah*. Another agricultural people,

7. *Epigraphia India* Vol. VIII, p. 47, D. B. Diskalkar, *Selections from Sanskrit Inscriptions* p. 3:

पाथिवेन कृत्स्नानामानर्तसुराष्ट्राणां पालनार्थं नियुक्तेन पहलवेन
कुलैपपुत्रेणामात्येन सुविशाखेन यथावदर्थं धर्मव्यवहारदर्शनैरनुरागमभिवर्द्धयता
बनुष्टितमिति

8. Girnar Rock Inscription of Skandagupta, Verses 11, 16, J. F. Fleet, *Corpus Inscriptionum Indicarum* No. 14; Diskalkar, *Op. cit.* pp. 8-9.

9. Jarl Charpentier, 'Sassanian Conquest of Indus Region', *Krishnaswami Iyengar Commemoration Volume*. pp. 12-17.

10. *Arthasāstra*, *op. cit.*

found in Shāhpur, bear the name *Bhallowana*. Some sub-castes of the Khatri in the Panjab are called *Bhalla*, *Behl* and *Bahl*. A Baloch tribe of Sind, Bhawalpur and Dera Ghazi Khan, which is addicted to robbery, is named as *Bhalka*.¹¹ Hemacandra observes that the word *Bhāilla* (भाइल्ल) means a ploughman or a cultivator.¹² The word *behl* (behal) is also used in the Hindi speaking rural areas of the Gangetic valley, included in the state of U.P., in the sense of an uncultured and unmannerly man by way of reproach and probably enshrines a memory of the contempt of the people of Mādhyeśa for the Bactrianised population of the Panjab (*Vālhika*, *Vāhika*) in ancient times, the echoes of which are found in the *Mahābhārata* and the *Dharmasūtra* of Baudhāyana.

Besides being a people of warlike temperament and living by the profession of arms, the Bactrians had a strong *penchant* for trade and commerce also. Pāṇini lets us know that the *janapadas* of the Panjab were flourishing and specialised centres of commercial and economic activity.

The reference to *aśva-vāṇijā*, *gāndhāri-vāṇijā*, *kāśmīra-vāṇijā* *madra-vāṇija* among the illustrations of the rule *Gantavya panyam vāṇije* VI. 2, 13 throws a flood of light over the specialisation in trade achieved by these communities. The *Jātakas* state that caravans of merchants used to go from eastern India to Kaśmīra and Gandhāra and back for trade purposes. According to the *Taṇḍulanāli Jātaka*, the horse-dealers of *Uttarapatha*, who used to visit the markets of Banaras, were called *Saindhava*, which shows that they hailed from the Indus region.¹³ The *sārthavāhas* had to carry arms for protection against highway robbers.¹⁴ Przyluski has shown that the caravan-leader *Bhallika*, who was among the first converts to Buddhism and was passing by the Bodhi tree, when the Buddha attained enlightenment, was a Bactrian, as his name suggests.¹⁵ We learn

11. H. A. Rose, *Glossary of the Tribes and Castes of Panjab and N.W.P.* Vol. 11 p. 83.

12. Hemacandra, *Deśināmamālā* VI, 104 भायल-भासिब-भाइल्ल
जच्चतुरंगदिष्णहल्लिएसु

13. *Taṇḍulanāli Jātaka* No, 23. in the edition of V. Fausböll

14. B. C. Law, *India as described in Early Texts of Buddhism and Jainism* p. 185; Motichandra, *Sārthavāha* p. 55.

15. Jean Przyluski, 'Les Oudumbaras', *Journal Asiatique*. 1926 pp.10-12.

from Hiuan T'sang that a merchant of Tsao-Kiu Chau (Arachosia, Zabulistan) constructed a stūpa, called *Yu-kin-hiang* or *Kuñkumastūpa*, to the north-west of the wall of the Bodhi tree at Buddha-gayā. This merchant seems to have dealt in saffron, which he used to bring from the North-West, particularly the Bactrian regions, which were the home of this plant, to eastern India for trade purposes.¹⁶ In the second century B.C. these merchants and their caravans transported the silks and square bamboo walking sticks of southern China to Bactriana along the route of northern India called Uttarāpatha, as we learn from the report of Chang-Kien.¹⁷ Balkh, the metropolis of Bactriana, was situated on the threshold of the land of nomads. Its importance lay in the commerce, that passed through it. There, the traders of Persia, the pedlars of Scythia and the merchants of Syria and India used to rest in their journey and exchange their goods. Hence the appearance of this place was that of a caravansarāi rather than a capital of an old civilization. Being the scene of a crowded spring-fair, this city looked more like a bazaar, where nomadic and sedentary peoples jostled for a while and then dispersed.¹⁸ Therefore, in spite of its antiquity, this city lacks in architectural splendours, which characterise Palmyra, Ctesiphon and Persepolis. Its people expressed their genius more in commerce than in art and industry. It is for trade purposes that they spread in the Panjab and the interior of India and founded their settlements there. But, as commerce necessitated warfare, these Bactrian communities cultivated an aptitude for arms also and combined the functions of trade-guilds with the duties of military cantonments. In course of their expansion over the Panjab long before the invasion of Alexander, these Bactrians assimilated the indigenous peoples like the Austroloid Audumbaras, as shown by Przyluski.¹⁹

2. *The rise of Gandhāra.*

Following the intrusion of the Bactrians and the disturbance of the political structure of the Panjab, Gandhāra made

16. S. Beal, *Buddhist Records of the Western World*, Vol. 11 p. 126-127.

17. C.P. Fitzgerald, *China, A Short Cultural History* p. 180-181 Berthold Lanfer *Sino-Iranica* pp. 535-536.

18. A. Foucher, *La Vieille Route de l'Inde de Bactres à Taxila*. Vol. 1 p. 6.

19. J. Przyluski 'Les Udumbaras', *Journal Asiatique*, (1926) p. 10

a bid to establish her hegemony over the North-West. The Jaina *UttarādhyāyanaSūtra* refers to the Gandhāra King Nagnajit or Naggaji as an important king (bull of kings), who ranked with Dvimukha (Dummukha) of Pañcāla, Nimi of Videha, Karakandū of Kalinga and Bhīma of Vidarbha and is said to have adopted the faith of the Jainas.²⁰ In the middle of the sixth century B.C. Pukkusāti was the king of Gandhāra. He was a contemporary of King Bimbisāra of Magadha and Pradyota of Avanti. Buddhaghosa lets us know that there was a friendly relation between Pukkusāti and Bimbisāra, in token of which he sent an embassy and a letter to him.²¹ He also declared war on King Pradyota of Avanti and would have inflicted a crushing defeat on him had not the Pāṇḍavas launched an attack on him.²² Nearer home, the territory of Kaśmīra formed part of the Gandhāra kingdom, as we gather from the *Gandhāra Jātaka*²³ and the region between the Chenab and the Ravi, formerly occupied by the Madras, passed under the domination of the kings of Gandhāra, for we find a tribe, named Gandāris (Skt Gāndhāra), living there at the time of Alexander's invasion, according to Strabo.²⁴ Hecataeus of Miletus (549-468 B.C.) refers to Kaspapyros as a Gandaric city. This Kaspapyros or Kaśyapapura has been identified with Multan by A. Foucher.²⁵ Thus it is clear that the kingdom of Gandhāra expanded eastward up to the Ravi and southward up to Multan and included the territory of Kaśmīra and its armies were ready to march down the Panjab to measure swords with the forces of Avanti in the heart of northern India. This rise of Gandhāra was, perhaps, due to the energetic leadership of Pukkusāti, who launched on an imperialist policy, which his illustrious contemporary Bimbisāra was destined to pursue in Magadha.

A significant result of the rise of Gandhāra was the growth of her capital Takṣaśilā as a seat of learning and edu-

20. *UttarādhyāyanaSūtra*, ed. Jarl Charpentier, XVIII p. 45.

21. *Papañcasūdanī* 11 p. 982; T. W. Rhys Davids, *Buddhist India* p. 28, G.P. Malalasekera, *Op. cit.* 11 p. 215.

22. Félix Lacote, *Essay on Guṇādhyā* (Eng. tr. by Rev. A.M. Tabard) p. 176.

23. ed V. Fausböll no 406.

24. J. W. McCrindle, *The Invasion of India by Alexander the Great* pp. 111-112, 133.

25. A. Foucher, *Ancient Multān*, A. C. Woolner Com. Vol. 1941

cation and a centre of culture and commerce. The age of Buddha saw the spread of the fame of Takṣaśilā throughout the whole of Uttarāpatha. Students from Magadha traversed the vast distance of northern India in order to join the schools and colleges of Takṣaśilā. We learn from Pali texts that Brāhmaṇa youths, Khattiya princes and sons of Setṭhis from Rājagṛha, Kāśi, Kośala and other places went to Takṣaśilā for learning the Vedas and eighteen sciences and arts.²⁶ Jotipāla, son of the purohita of the king of Benaras, returned from Takṣaśilā with great proficiency in archery or military science and was later appointed commander-in-chief of Benaras.²⁷ Likewise, Jīvaka, the famous physician of Bimbisāra and Buddha, learnt the science of medicine under a far-famed teacher at Takṣaśilā and on his return was appointed court-physician at Magadha.²⁸ Another illustrious product of Takṣaśilā was the enlightened ruler of Kośala, Prasenajit, who is intimately associated with the events of the time of Buddha.²⁹ Pāṇini and Kauṭilya, two masterminds of ancient times, were also brought up in the academic traditions of Takṣaśilā.

Though there was no organised university at Takṣaśilā, there was a cluster of schools, managed, maintained and presided over by eminent teachers, who partly drew upon the contributions of the local people and partly depended on the fees and presents of rich pupils.³⁰ Most of these schools were centres of higher studies, rather than elementary education, for, students of the age of 16 were admitted there. There was a special academy for the princes, which had on its rolls 101 scholars. Another centre of royal scions was the institute of military science, whose strength was 103 princes and at one time rose to 500. Besides these institutions, there were many other colleges, where instruction in archery, hunting, elephant-lore, political economy, law and other arts, humanities and sciences was imparted to students of high rank and calibre from the whole of North India. After finishing the courses of studies

26. *Cittasambhūta Jātaka* no. 498. *Jātaka* I. p. 431, 436, 505, II, p. 52 III, pp. 18, 171, 194, 228, 248 V, pp. 127-177, 227.

27. *Jātaka* V p. 127.

28. *Vinayapiṭaka, Mahāvagga* VIII, 1, 3, 6.

29. *Dhammapada aṭṭhakathā* I, pp. 331-338

30. *Cittasambhūta-Jātaka* No. 498.

in these schools and colleges students wandered far and wide to acquire practical experience and develop the faculty of personal observation. As a result of its fame for education,³¹ Takṣaśilā grew into a cosmopolitan city and Arrian was right in describing it as a "great and flourishing city, the greatest, indeed, of all the cities, which lay between the Indus and the Hydaspes."³² The rise of Gandhāra under able rulers like Pukkuśāti was the main factor in the growth of Takṣaśilā as a centre of culture and learning.

3. *The Achaemenian interlude.*

The growth of Gandhāra was arrested by the expansion of the Achaemenid power in Iran. Cyrus the Great (559-530 B.C.) turned his attention to the eastern regions after completing his conquest of Asia Minor. He appointed Hystaspes, the father of Darius, the satrap of Hyrcania and Parthia and annexed Drangiana, Arachosia, Margiana and Bactria to his empire. Then, crossing the Oxus, he reached the Jaxartes and built fortified towns to defend the empire against the attacks of central Asiatic nomads. Returning from the eastern border, he undertook operations against Babylon, received the submission of the Phoenicians and prepared to launch an expedition against Egypt. But trouble broke out in the eastern parts of the empire and, giving the charge of the operations to his son Cambyses, he left for the east, where he met his death in a battle. We learn from a quotation from the *Persica* of Ctesias that Cyrus died in consequence of a wound on the thigh, inflicted by an Indian in an engagement, when "the Indians were fighting on the side of the Derbikes and supplied them with elephants."³³ It appears that the campaign, which cost Cyrus his life, was directed towards the Indian frontiers, since Xenophon in his romance, entitled *Cyropaedia* (1, 1, 4), states that Cyrus brought under his rule "both Bactrians and Indians." Echoes of the disastrous invasion of Cyrus are preserved in the account of Nearchus, who reports that the people of Gedrosia told

31. *Jātaka* V, 247 तक्कसिलं गत्वा उग्गहितसिप्पा ततो निक्खमित्वा सब्बसमयसिप्पञ्चदेसचारित्तञ्चजानित्सामाति अनुपुब्बेन चारिकं चरन्ता

32. J. W. McCrinelle, *The Invasion of India by Alexander the Great* p. 92.

33. *Persica* ed. Gilmore pp. 133-135.

Alexander that "Cyrus came to those parts with the purpose of invading India, but was prevented through losing the greater part of his army owing to the desolate and impracticable character of the route and escaped with only seven persons of his army."³⁴ But Megasthenes states that the Indians had never been "invaded and conquered by a foreign power, except by Hercules and Dionysus and lately by the Macedonians." As regards the Persians, he remarks that "although they got mercenary troops from India, namely the Hydrakes, they did not make an expedition into that country, but merely approached it, when Cyrus was marching against the Messagetæ."³⁵ Following Megasthenes, Arrian also avers that although Cyrus marched against the Scythians and showed himself in other respects the most enterprising of Asiatic monarchs, he did not invade India.³⁶ But Arrian also states clearly that the Indian tribes Astakenoi (Aṣṭaka) and Assakenoi (Aśvaka), living to the west of the river Indus, "paid to Kyros the tribute from their land, which he had imposed."³⁷ From these remarks it is clear that, while campaigning against the Scythians, Cyrus was forced to reduce some unruly and predatory tribes of Gedrosia, but his army perished and he had to escape with seven survivors only. Either in the same campaign or on some subsequent occasion, he moved against the Massagetæ and the Derbikes, but a soldier of the Indian elephant corps, that had gone to their assistance, inflicted a fatal blow on his thigh. Thus the campaign of Cyrus in the north-western borders of India proved a vain march without any consequence or significance and Megasthenes was right in not taking any note of it. It is likely that the army of Cyrus stormed the city of Capisa (Kāpiśī-Begram) in course of its movements, as we learn from Pliny. (*Natural History*) VI, 23 (25). As regards the notice of an Indian embassy in the court of Cyrus in the account of Xenophon and the remark of Arrian that the Indians, living between the Indus and the Cophen (Kabul), "finally submitted to the Persians and paid to Cyrus the tribute, which he imposed on

34. Strabo, *Geography* tr. Hamilton and Falconer (XV, 1, 5)

35. J. W. McCrindle, *Ancient India as described by Megasthenes and Arrian* pp. 110.

36. *Ibid.* p. 209.

37. *Ibid.* p. 183.

them," they probably refer to the assistance, given by the Ariaspians to Cyrus, whom he honoured with the title Euergetae (Benefactors). It is noteworthy that the vast complex of peoples, inhabiting the regions between the Indus and the Oxus, bore the name Indian in ancient times and Bactria was deemed to be included in Uttarāpatha.³⁸ Hence the vague notices of the submission of 'Indians' do not bear out the invasion of northern India by Cyrus much less his domination over her north-western frontier regions. The assertion of Eduard Meyer that Cyrus appears to have subjugated the Indian tribes of the Paropamisus and the Kabul valley especially the Gandarians and that "Darius advanced as far as the Indus" has no shred of evidence in support of it; rather the data of Indian history definitely give the lie to it.³⁹

At the time of Cyrus, Gandhāra was making rapid progress under the redoubtable leadership of Pukkusāti, who had extended his hegemony over a large part of the Panjab and plunged into the affairs of Magadha and Avanti. It is said that an onslaught of the Pāṇḍavas prevented him from pushing his war against Pradyota of Avanti to a decisive issue. These people are reminiscent of the Pāṇḍavas of the *Mahābhārata*, according to which only seven persons on their side survived the holocaust of Kurukṣetra, climaxed by the nocturnal attack of Aśvatthāman. This episode of the survival of seven men on the Pāṇḍava side has a resemblance with the escape of Cyrus from Gedrosia with seven persons. Likewise, the story of the death of Duryodhana as a result of the hurt of the thigh, inflicted by Bhīma, bears comparison with the tradition of the death of Cyrus in the battle against the Derbikes following a wound in the thigh caused by an Indian. It is well-known that the *Mahābhārata* underwent its redactions at Takṣaśilā in Gandhāra, where Vaiśampāyana is said to have recited it to Janamejaya. Hence it is certain that the stories and episodes of this epic were widely prevalent in the north-west and it is possible that some of them received a colouring from the history

38. Yaśodharas' comment on the *Kāmasūtra* of Vātsyāyana (Bangabasi Press edition) pp. 370-371. बाल्हीकदेश्या उत्तरापथिकाः

39. *Geschichte des Altertums* Vol III p. 97 note. A. V. W. Jackson 'Persian Dominions in Northern India down to the Time of Alexander's Invasion' *Cambridge History of India* I. p. 298

of the disaster of Cyrus in the north-western borders of India. But it is highly impossible that the insignificant and ineffective campaign of Cyrus among some highlanders of Afghanistan and Baluchistan could become the basis of the narrative of the Great War of Kurukṣetra between the Kauravas and the Pāṇḍavas, as argued by H. C. Seth.⁴⁰

Megasthenes states, as seen above, that the Hydrakes supplied mercenary troops to Cyrus. These people are evidently the Śūdrakas, who were an important tribe of the Panjab at the time of Alexander's invasion. It is likely that these people were manaced by the expansionist policy of Pukkusāti and tried to stir up and assist Cyrus in his campaign against Gandhāra. But the Gāndhāra monarch was also equal to the occasion and when Cyrus was engaged with the highlanders, named Derbikes and Massagatae, he sent his army to their help, which made short shrift of his campaign and a soldier of which put an end to his life. If we study the political conditions of India in the later half of the sixth century B. C., we would be driven to conclude that the only power, which was a match for the Achaemenian monarch, was Pukkusāti and it was his corps, which could smash the might of his armies.

After the death of Cyrus trouble broke out in large parts of the Persian empire and his son and successor Cambyses (529-522 B.C.) had to quell it and had to postpone his expedition to Egypt for five years up to 526-523. Thereafter all his energies were diverted to the conquest of Egypt, leaving him no time to devote his attention to the east. But his successor Darius (522-486 B.C.) was able to look in this direction after suppressing the uprising of Smerdis and subduing the insurgent tribe of Yautiyā under Vahyazdāta. He spent the first two years of his reign in the struggles against the rebels and had to defeat nine kings in nineteen battles. It was sometimes after these wars that Darius pounced upon Gandhāra and annexed it to his empire.

We know that the Yautiyā insurgent Vahyazdāta made the strategic move of capturing the twin cities, Kapisakāniś, in order to cut the communications between Darius's two principal

40. H. C. Seth, 'Cyrus the Great and the Mahābhārata War,' *Proceedings of the Indian History Congress (Hyderabad)* 1941. pp. 125-127.

supporters, the viceroys of Harahvaś and Bākhtriś and to establish his rule fully over the whole south-eastern and north-eastern part of the Achaemenian empire. But the satrap of Bactria, Vivāna, foiled his plan of action by defeating him at Kāpiśi and Gandutava. It is not unlikely that in course of these marches and movements some Persian army fell upon Gandhāra and put an end to its independence. The annexation of this region seems to have taken place after 518 B.C., for the Bahistun rock inscription of Darius, which was engraved between 520 and 518 B.C., does not include India in the list of the 23 provinces, which were under Darius. But the second of the two inscriptions on the tablets, sunk in the wall of the platform at Persepolis, which were carved between 518 and 515 B.C., as well as the upper part of the two inscriptions, chiselled around the tomb of Darius in the cliff at Naksh-i-Rustam after 515 B.C., expressly mention Hi(n)du as a part of his realm. Obviously the rule of the Achaemenians⁴¹ extended both over Gandhāra and Sindhu (Sind).

The Persian dominions in the north-west of India were organized in the taxation unit no 7 in the gazetteer of Herodotus. The dahyāuś of Gandhāra, mentioned in the aforesaid inscriptions, is the same as *Gandarioi* of Herodotus and the *Pa-ar-u-pa-ra-e-sa-an-na* of the Babylonian version of the official lists, the expression *Paraupāirisāena*, meaning the country which is beyond (para) the mountain range, that is 'higher than the eagle', being a designation of the people, who lived on the opposite side of the Hindu Kush from the Oxus Basin, i.e. the people inhabiting the basin of the Kabul river. In this satrapy the *Dadikai* (Darada), residing in the Koh-i-dāman and the Kuhistan as well as the upper Oxus valley above Bactria and Sogdiana, and the *Aparytai*, Āprita of Pāṇini and the Afridis of modern times, who inhabited the eastern end of the Safid Kuh on the watershed between the Kabul River and the Kurram River, just to the south of the Khyber Pass, were also included. Another division of this satrapy was *Thataguś*, *Sattagy dai* of Herodotus. Herzfeld points out that in the Achaemenian bas-reliefs the *Thataguś* are portrayed in loin-cloths, which indicates that their country lay somewhere on the

41. Sukumār Sen, *Old Persian Inscriptions* p. 98.

plains of the Indus Basin. According to him, *thatagu* represents a compound of the Indo-Iranian word for 'seven' with some word meaning 'stream'. Thus he identifies Thatagu with Hapta Hindu of *Vendidad* 1, 18 and takes it to include the whole of the Panjab.⁴² But Kent rejects this etymology and takes *thatagu* to mean 'having hundreds of cattle' : *thatagu* (Sattagydia), Elamite Sa-ad-da-ku-is, Akkadian Sa-at-ta-gu-u, from *thata* 'hundred', Avestan, *śata*, Skt *śatam*, Latin *centum*, English *hundred* Indo-Iranian *kmtō-m* together with *gav*-“cattle.”⁴³ This region thus corresponds to the Vedic *gomati* and may be identified with the region round Gomāl River in Afghanistan. Regarding its identification with the Panjab, Prof. Cameron observes: “I find it very difficult to reconcile Thatagus with the Panjab. Must it not rather be on the slopes of the Hindu Kush?”⁴⁴ Thus there is no warrant for holding that the *dahyāuš* of Gadara included the Panjab.

The Lower Indus Valley was encompassed in the twentieth satrapy of the empire called *Hidus* (Indoi of Herodotus). According to Herodotus, the northernmost section of the Indoi were next-door neighbours of the city of Kaspatyros and the Pactyan country, on the one hand, and of the Indian Desert, on the other. He states that the gold-getting Indoi were the “most warlike of the Indians” and their “country was approximately the same as that of the Bactrians.” These data accord with the fact of the intrusion of the Bactrian people into north-western India up to Sindhu and Saurāstra before the establishment of the Achaemenian empire, as seen above. Darius had a keen eye for natural resources like Peter the Great and he must have annexed the Lower Indus valley as part of his comprehensive plan for connecting the Indus, the Indian Ocean and the Red Sea and thus linking the eastern and western extremities of his empire by water communication. With this end in view he despatched a naval expedition under Scylax, a native of Caryanda in Caria, to explore the Indus about 517 B. C. The fleet succeeded in making its way to the Indian Ocean and ultimately reached Egypt two and a half years from the time, when the voyage began. Thus we observe that Darius conquered and

42. Ernst Herzfeld, 'Zarathustra, Teil 1' in *Archäologische Mitteilungen aus Iran* band 1 (Berlin 1929-30) p. 99.

43. Roland G. Kent, *Old Persian : Grammar, Texts, Lexicon* p. 187.

44. Arnold J. Toynbee, *A Study of History* Vol VII p. 649.

annexed the entire region to the west of the Indus and divided it into the two rich dahyāus of *Gadara* and *Hidu*. There is no evidence to show that his domination extended along the eastern bank of the Indus.

Under Darius the Trans-Indus region witnessed a new type of administration, which linked the satrapies into the centralized Persian empire. Under the Cyran branch of the House of Achaemenes the Empire had been grounded on the paramountcy of a broad association of imperial peoples, the Medes, the Persians, the Armenians and later on the Bactrians, and the autonomy of the conquered regions in matters of internal administration. But Darius revised this policy after going through the experience of quelling the sudden outburst of revolt in all the provinces after the death of Cambyses and forged a structure of centralized and bureaucratic administration under the control and direction of the Imperial court. We learn from Herodotus that the empire was divided into twenty taxation divisions, administered by satraps, who were appointed by the Imperial court from the Persian nobility and were directly responsible to the king. Next to each satrap was the commander-in-chief of the armed forces, stationed in the province, who was also directly responsible to the king. Besides these two officials, the collector of taxes was also centrally appointed. To supervise the work of these officials, there was an intricate machinery of inspectors, spies and secretaries, that was also controlled by the centre. Eduard Meyer has described this system as follows :

“To keep the satraps under control the emperor would take every opportunity of sending out into the provinces high officials, like the emperor’s “eye” or his brother or son with troops at their back. They would arrive without warning to inspect the administration and report abuses. Further safeguards against misconduct on the satrap’s part were provided by the presence of the imperial secretary, who was attached to the provincial governor, and of the commandants of fortresses and other military officers in the provinces, who all served as instruments of supervision. These checks were supplemented by a highly developed espionage system. The emperor had a ready ear for denunciations.”⁴⁵

45. Herodotus Book III ch. 128 interpreted in Eduard Meyer, *Geschichte des Altertums* Vol III pp. 66-68

For ensuring a prompt and unhesitating execution of imperial commands and keeping speedy communication among the far-flung units of the empire and thus effectively maintaining the control of the centre on distant satraps, a good net-work of roads was spread over the whole of the empire. To quote Meyer. :

“Instruments for holding the empire together were the great roads converging on Susa and traversing the empire in all directions in the track of the previously existing trade-routes. These roads were measured in parasangs and were permanently maintained in good condition. The Imperial Highway was provided, at intervals of about four parasangs on the average, with “imperial post-stations and excellent inns.” The provincial boundaries and the river crossings were guarded by strongly garrisoned fortresses. At these points the traffic was subjected to searching supervision. All post-stations were manned by mounted couriers, whose duty it was to convey imperial commands and official despatches post-haste, travelling day and night without a break, “swifter than cranes”, as the Greeks put it. There is also said to have been a system of telegraphic communications by beacon signals.”⁴⁶

The service was so efficient that the caravans could travel the Imperial Highway from Susa to Ephesus and cover its 1,677 miles in ninety days and royal envoys moved from one end to another in a week. After the conquest of the Indian satrapies the road from Babylon to Holwan, Behistun and Hamadan was extended to the valley of the upper Kabul, whence, following the river, it reached the river Indus. Along this road the royal court, which was continually on the move, must have made its journeys.

The burden of taxation must have fallen heavily on the Indian satrapies of the empire, for, out of the total revenue of 14,500 silver talents, nearly a third was contributed by them. In terms of gold the contribution of Hi(n)du amounted to 360 talents of gold, which is equivalent to over a million pound sterling. In addition to these payments in precious metals, the satraps paid dues in kind, horses, cattle and food. The separation of the fiscal department from the adminis-

trative set-up and its direct connection with the centre must have accentuated the hardships of exactions, though it seems to have curbed the highhandedness of the satraps. Thus though the Indian satrapies were bled white by the exorbitant levies of the empire and the untrammelled exploitation of its officials, it experienced a new kind of centralised and bureaucratic administration, which became the basis of the new political organisation of the Maurya empire, as we shall see.

Under Xerxes (486-465 B.C.) also the authority of the Achaemenians over the Indian satrapies remained intact, as is manifest from the contributions of the contingents of infantry and cavalry by them. Herodotus (VII, 65) describes the equipment of the Indian infantry as follows : The Indians, clad in garments, made of cotton, carried bows of cane and arrows of reeds, the latter tipped with iron, and thus accoutred, the Indians were marshalled under the command of Pharnazathres, son of Artabates. Regarding the cavalry, he states that "they were armed with the same equipment as in the case of the infantry, but they brought riding horses and chariots, the latter being drawn by horses and wild asses." Considering the integrity of the empire under Xerxes, it is plausible to assume that the Indian satrapies remained intact during his reign.

Artaxerxes I, the son of Xerxes, was a man of weak character. His accession was marked by the rebellion of Bactria, which was rapidly quelled. The reign of his successor, Darius II was riddled by intrigue and corruption. Under Artaxerxes II the empire registered a precipitous decline. The satraps rose in revolt everywhere. Egypt, Cyprus, Phoenecia and Syria became independent in quick succession. Bithynia, Caria, Lydia, Mysia, Lycia, Pisidia, Pamphylia and Cilicia soon followed suit. The empire reached the breaking point, which was, however, shelved by the incidental desertion of the Pharaoh Takhos to the imperial side. The next ruler Artaxerxes III was, no doubt, a man of iron will and strength and tried to resuscitate the falling fortunes of the empire, but in 338 B.C. he was poisoned. By that time so much royal blood had been spilt within the family that, on the death of the son of Artaxerxes III, a distant relative Darius Codomannus was brought to ensure the continuity of the royal line. This prince was destined to bear the *coup de grace* of Alexander, which put an end to the

expiring tragedy of the Achaemenian empire. This steep decadence was reflected in the realm of art and culture also. As Herzfeld wrote, "Iranian art after Artaxerxes II shows an astoundingly quick decline, an unparalleled fall, to the point that even the mere technique was almost entirely lost. Old Persian art was dead before Alexander conquered Persia and with the art the whole culture died; this complete decay was the cause, the conquest was its consequence. The burning of Persepolis by Alexander was only the symbolic expression of the fact that the ancient East had died."⁴⁷

In this period of decline the Indian provinces shook the yoke of Achaemenian authority. The view of A.V.W. Jackson that the Achaemenian sway in India lasted up to 330 B. C. and of S. Chattopādhyāya that Artaxerxes II and Darius III maintained the Indian empire, created by the genius of Darius the Great, has no leg to stand upon.⁴⁸ The presence of Indian soldiers in Persian armies, on which this view is founded, does not at all show that the Indian satrapies continued to hug the corpse of Achaemenian empire into the last. We know from Pāṇini and Kauṭilya that the north-western regions of India were full of floating contingents of mercenary soldiers, who lived by the profession of arms and lent their services to those kings, who paid them best. Such contingents of soldiers sought fortune under the Achaemenian emperors, who promised rich prospects to their troops. Megasthenes quite expressly says that the Persians got mercenary troops from India.⁴⁹ It is noteworthy that when Alexander invaded India, he did not find any trace of Persian authority there, but faced sturdy communities and powerful monarchs, who fought to the last drop of blood in defence of their independence.

4. *The supremacy of the Pauravas.*

When the hold of the Achaemenians over the outlying satrapies of their empire began to weaken after the ill-fated expedition of Xerxes against Greece, the tribes and peoples of the Panjab, exotic as well as native, asserted their inde-

47. Ernst Herzfeld, *Iran in the Ancient East* p. 274.

48. R.C. Majumdar, 'The Achaemenian Rule in India', *Indian Historical Quarterly* (1949) Vol. XXV pp. 153-156.

49. J. W. McCrindle *Op. cit.* p. 109.

pendence and carved separate states for themselves. Relying on an allusion in the *Harṣacarita* of Bār abhatta, Dr. D. R. Bhandarkar held that Kākavarṇa, son of Śisunāga, invaded the Panjab from Magadha and, conquering up to the confines of the Achaemenian empire, inflicted a defeat on the Persian satrap of Gandhāra. But this victory proved pyrrhic, for Kākavarṇa was allured by the Yavanas or Persians to the vicinity of a place, named Nagar, and assassinated with a dagger thrust in his neck.⁵⁰ This suggestion may not be historically true, but the fact that the Achaemenian away over north-western Panjab and Sind disappeared after Xerxes admits of no doubt. Gandhāra assumed independence under a native dynasty, whose scion Omphis played a notable part in the events of the time of Alexander's invasion. The name Omphis is identical with Āmbhi, mentioned in a gaṇapāṭha of Pārini, and recalls the Āmbhiyas, who represented a school of political thought, according to the *Arthaśāstra* of Kauṭilya⁵¹ (I, 16). According to M. Sylvain Lévi, the reigning dynasty of Takṣaśilā at the time of the Greek invasion was a Kṣatriya family derived from Ambhas and designated by the patronymic Āmbhi.⁵² But the rise of the Āmbhiyas or Āmbhis was eclipsed by the emergence of another imperial power in the Panjab, that of the Pauravas.

We have seen in the second chapter of this study that the Purus were an Aryan tribe of the Indo-Iranian age, that spread into India and subsequently merged among the Kurus. But some remnants of them survived in the mountainous retreats of the North-West and emerged from there in the plains of the Panjab and set up a powerful state in the region between the Jhelum and the Chenab, which was the cradle of the Kekayas. The *Bṛhatsamhitā* of Varāhamihira associates the Pauravas with the peoples of Takṣaśilā and Puṣkalāvati and locates them in the vicinity of the Mālavas and Madrakas.⁵³

50. D. R. Bhandarkar, 'Notes on Ancient History of India' *Indian Culture* Vol. I p. 13ff.

51. F. W. Thomas, *Bārhaspatya Arthaśāstra*, (introduction) p. 15.

52. Sylvain Lévi, 'Notes sur l'Inde à l'époque d'Alexandre', *Journal Asiatique*, (1890) I p. 234-236.

53. *Bṛhatsamhitā* IV, 26-27.

तक्षशिलपुष्कलावतकलावतकण्ठघानाश्च ।

अम्बरमद्रकमालवपौरवकच्छारदण्डपिङ्गलकाः ॥

The *Mahābhārata* also refers to the city of the Pauravas, which was adjacent to the republics of the Utsavasanketas and the territory of Kaśmīra.⁵⁴ The Purus were the leading tribe of the Parvatīya group, for, when Arjuna marched against the Pauravas, he encountered the stiff resistance of the Parvatīya warriors and, after defeating them in a battle, he proceeded towards the capital of that country, which was guarded by Paurava.⁵⁵ Hiuen T'sang called the territory east of the Jhelum, which was occupied by Poros at the time of Alexander's invasion, Parvata.⁵⁶ Thus it is clear that Paurava was a tribal name and Parvatīya was a territorial designation and that Poros of Greek writers and Parvataka of the *Mudrārākṣasa* both refer to the famous adversary of Alexander, as shown by F.W. Thomas and H.C. Seth.⁵⁷

Poros launched on a policy of conquest and expansion. It seems that the foundation of the kingdom of Poros was at the expense of the state of Gandhāra. Hence the king of Gandhāra, Taxiles, was menaced and terrorised by the rapid expansion of the Paurava kingdom and hugged a foreign invader to thwart the ambition of Poros. Curtius informs us that on the approach of Alexander, "Omphis urged his father to surrender his kingdom to Alexander." But just then his father passed away and he "sent envoys to enquire whether it was Alexander's pleasure that he should meanwhile exercise authority or remain in a private capacity till his arrival."⁵⁸ Then

54. *Mahābhārata* 11, 27, 16-17.

पौरवं युधि निजित्य दस्युन्पर्वतवासिनः ।
गणानुत्सवसकेतानजयत्सप्त पाण्डवः ॥
ततः काश्मीरकान्वीरान् क्षत्रियान् क्षत्रियर्षभ ।
व्यजयल्लोहितं चैव मण्डलैर्दशभिः सह ॥

55. *Mahābhārata* 11, 27, 14-15.

स तैः परिवृतः सर्वैर्विश्वगश्वं नराधिपम् ।
अभ्यगच्छन्महातेजाः पौरवं पुरुषर्षभ ॥
विजित्य चाहवे शूरान् पर्वतीयान् महारथान् ।
जिगाय सेनया राजन् पुरं पौरवरक्षितम् ॥

56. S. Beal, *Buddhist Records of the Western World* 11 p. 275.

57. *Cambridge History of India* Vol. 1 p. 471; H.C. Seth, 'On the Identification of Poros and Parvataka', *Indian Historical Quarterly* (June 1941) p. 173; *Buddha Prakash*, 'Poros', *Annals of the Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute* Vol. 32 (1951) pp. 198-233.

58. J. W. McCrindle, *Invasion* p. 201.

he set out with his army to receive Alexander and made a present of 56 elephants, three thousand bulls and a large number of sheep together with 80 talents of gold to him. To his friends he offered golden crowns and treated them with lavish hospitality for three days. This solicitude of Omphis to seek succour from Alexander was born of the pressure of Poros. When Alexander asked him whether he had more husbandmen or soldiers, he replied that, as he was at war with two kings, he required more soldiers than field labourers. These kings were Abhisares and Poros, but Poros was superior in power and influence.⁵⁹

Though Abhisares or the king of Abhisāra was fighting with Omphis, together with Poros, he seems to have been sceptical of the friendship of his ambitious and aggressive ally. Hence, just on the morrow of Alexander's entry into Takṣaśilā, he sent his envoys to him and offered submission. But he was also assuring Poros of his help in the event of Alexander's invasion. On the eve of the battle of the Jhelum, Poros was expecting the arrival of the armies of Abhisāra any moment and, when the Macedonian troops landed on the eastern bank of the Jhelum, he thought that it was Abhisares, who was coming for his assistance.⁶⁰ But he kept quiet at his capital and waited for the verdict of the battle of the Hydaspes. When the battle was over and the affairs of the combatants had been settled, he again offered his submission to Alexander through his brother by making a present of money and of 40 elephants.⁶¹ His pretext of illness, symbolic of a policy of running with the hare and hunting with the hound, was dictated by the distrust and suspicion, raised by the expansionist objective of Poros.

As in the west and the north, so in the east and the south also, the blows of Poros fell heavily on the kings and peoples. We learn from Greek sources that the territory between the Chenab and the Ravi, which was the seat of the Madras, was also ruled by a Paurava prince. It appears that he was a junior member of the house of the Pauravas, appointed by the Elder Poros, as his representative, after overthrowing the Madras and pushing them further south. But this scion of

59. *Ibid.*, p. 202.

60. Curtius, *Invasion* p. 207.

61. Arrian, *Invasion* p. 112.

his family entertained a desire to assert his independence. Hence he also played the role of Taxiles and welcomed the advent of Alexander. Arrian states that "while hostilities still subsisted between Alexander and the elder Poros, this Poros had sent envoys to Alexander offering to surrender into his hands both his person and the country, over which he ruled, but this more from enmity to Poros than friendliness to Alexander."⁶² After the Battle of the Jhelum he sent his envoys again to Alexander.⁶³ But since the differences of Alexander and Poros had been composed and the latter bore a grievous grudge for the rebel, Alexander was unable to accept his offer. Rather Alexander pursued him in person at the instance of Poros, for he was determined to catch him and hand him over to his suzerain. But to quote Arrian, "on learning that Poros had not only been set at liberty, but had his kingdom restored to him, and that too with a large accession of territory, he was overcome with fear, not so much of Alexander, as of his namesake Poros, and fled from his country, taking with him as many fighting men as he could persuade to accompany him in his flight."⁶⁴ Perhaps he reached Magadha to join the Gangaridae or the Nandas.⁶⁵ His territory formed part of the dominion of Poros. Further east the Kathaians also appear to have been attacked by Poros.⁶⁶

In the south the arms of Poros fall on the Kṣudrakas and Mālavas, who, as already discussed, were the branches of the Indo-Iranian peoples, encompassed in the confederacy of the Śālvas. Before the invasion of Alexander, Poros had invaded their territory in close association with his ally Abhisares. Arrian remarks that, "when shortly before this time, Poros and Abhisares had marched against them, they were obliged, as it turned out, to retreat without accomplishing anything at all adequate to the scale of their preparation."⁶⁷ Thus it is clear that Poros was extending his realm in all directions and was emerging as the paramount ruler of the Panjab, west of the

62. Arrian, *Invasion* p. 114.

63. Arrian, *Invasion* p. 112.

64. *Invasion* p. 114.

65. Diodoros, *Invasion* p. 279.

66. Arrian, *Invasion* p. 115.

67. Arrian, *Invasion* p. 115.

Ravi. His elephant corps was dreaded far and wide and his military fame spread in distant lands.

Poros had developed so much power that the Achaemenian emperor of Iran approached him for assistance in the time of need. We learn from Greek, Syriac and Persian sources that Darius III Codomannus sought the help of Poros against Alexander the Great. According to the *Pseudo-Kallisthenes*⁶⁸ and its Syriac version⁶⁹, Darius invited Poros to meet him with an army at the Caspian Gates and promised him half the spoil and Alexander's horse Boukephalas. Firdausi gives a slightly different version of this episode in his *Shāh-nāmā*, which is based on old Pahlavi traditions. He says that, in course of his flight after his defeat at Arbela, Darius wrote a letter to Alexander, in which he set forth his terms of peace with him.⁷⁰ Alexander's response to this offer was very favourable, but, in the meantime, Darius was struck with remorse at the thought of surrendering himself at the feet of a foreign invader and leading the life of an humble vassal. Hence he made another attempt to resist and repel Alexander and wrote a letter to Poros (*Fur* in the Persian version) requesting him for succour and promising him a rich return. This letter shows that Darius had a high opinion of Poros and pinned much hope on his assistance. In the dark hour of distress the prospect of the help of this Indian ally was the only ray of hope for the Achaemenian emperor. Poros made an immediate response to the request of Darius and sent his elephant corps to him.⁷¹ But Alexander came to know of the arrangement of Darius and swooped down on his worsted rival with great force and alacrity. Darius collected the remnants of his broken army and tried to face

68. *Pseudo-Kallisthenes* ed. C. Müller Vol. II p. 19.

69. *The History of Alexander the Great being the Syriac Version of the Pseudo-Kallisthenes* edited and tr. by Ernst A. Wallis Budge II p. 11.

70. *Shāh-Nāmā* of Firdausi ed. Turner Macan Vol. III p. 1279. *Chu yāvar na-būdāsh zanāzdik-o-dūr, yaki nāmāḥ banavisht nazdik-i-Fūr.*

71. *Ibid.* Vol. III p. 1305.

Badāngah ki dārā merā yār khvāst
Dil-e-bakht bāvi na dīdaim rāst
Hami zindāḥ pilān farastādmaḥ
Hamidūn bayāri zubān dādmaḥ
Chu bar-dast ān bandāḥ bar-kashtāḥ ḥud
Sar-i-bakht irāniān gashtāḥ ḥud
Za-dārā chu ru-i-zamiñ pāk-ḥud
Tirā zahr bari-dāḥ-i-tiryāk ḥud

Alexander. But his army was a wreck, many chiefs deserted him, only 300 cavaliers followed him in his flight, and, finding him a broken reed to lean upon, his ministers assassinated him. Probably this assistance of Poros to Darius was one of the motives, which led Alexander to invade India to pay off these scores.

The traditions, reported by Firdausi, are true from many standpoints. He states that Darius fought three battles with Alexander, that he was assassinated by his ministers, and that Alexander had no hand in that foul act. Hence there is no reason for rejecting his account of *Fūr* (Poros), which accords well with the historical situation of that period.⁷²

5. *The Kṣudrakas and the Mālavas.*

At the time of the rise of Poros, southern Panjab was dominated by the Kṣudrakas and the Mālavas. As we have seen above, these two tribes were the constituents of the Sālva confederacy. The Kṣudrakas were probably a branch of the Skudrā, that are repeatedly mentioned in Achaemenian inscriptions⁷³, and the Mālavas were identical with the Madras or Bhadrās, but they separated early from their parent body, assuming their distinct name. At one time the whole of the Panjab between the realms of the Kekayas and Uśinaras was under their sway. The existence of Mālava Sikhs in Ferozpur, Ludhiana, Patiala, Jind and Malerkotla shows that they become prominent in these regions also. But the pressure of imperialist movement seems to have pushed them southwards and, at the time of Poros, they occupied a part of the Doab, formed by the Chenab and the Ravi, and extended upto the confluence of the Chenab and the Indus. McCrindle⁷⁴ thinks that their region comprised the modern district of Multan and portions of that of Montgomery, whereas, according to Smith,⁷⁵ it comprised the Jhang district and the latter. They also seem to have lived along the bank of the lower Ravi. In the vicinity

72. For detailed discussion see, Buddha Prakash, *Studies in Indian History and Civilization* pp. 28-69.

73. Sukumar Sen, *Old Persian Inscriptions* pp. 152-154.

74. McCrindle, *Invasion* p. 351.

75. V. A. Smith, 'Notes on Alexander's Campaign' *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society* (1903) p. 631.

of the Mālavas were the Kṣudrakas. Bunbury⁷⁶ thinks that they lived on the east or left bank of the Satlej in what is called the modern state of Bahawalpur and extended as far as the junction of the Satlej with the Indus up to Uchh.

The pressure of imperial powers seems to have driven the Kṣudrakas and the Mālavas into a political and military alignment, which was marked by a merger of their armies. The confederate military arrangement of these tribes is referred to by Pāṇini in the Gaṇasūtra of sūtra IV, 2, 45, *Kṣudrakamālavāt senāsañjāyām*, and underlies the mention of the Kṣudrakas and Mālavas together in the compound *Kṣudraka-mālava* in the *Mahābhārata*.⁷⁷ V.S. Agrawala thinks that Pāṇini himself composed the Gaṇasūtra on the basis of his personal knowledge of such an army.⁷⁸ The Greek writers inform us that this practice of combining the armies was prevalent among these tribes before the invasion of Alexander. Arrian states that "they had certainly agreed to combine with the Oxydrakai and give battle to the common enemy, but Alexander had thwarted this design by his sudden and rapid march through the waterless country, whereby these tribes were prevented from giving each other mutual help."⁷⁹ Diodoros observes that the "Syrakousai and the Malloi, two popular and warlike nations.....had mustered a force of 80,000 foot, 10,000 horse and 700 chariots. Before Alexander's coming, they had been at feud with each other, but, on his approach, had settled their differences and cemented an alliance by intermarriage, each nation taking and giving in exchange 10,000 of their young women for wives. They did not, however, combine their forces and take the field, for, as a dispute had arisen about the leadership, they had drawn off into the adjoining towns."⁸⁰ Curtius, however, gives a different account and writes that "they had selected as their head a brave warrior of the nation of the Sudraces," "who

76. Bunbury, *History of Ancient Geography* pp. 515-520 Strabo (XV, 1,8) says that they were reported to be the descendants of Bacchos, because the vine grew in their country and their kings set out on expeditions in the Bacchic fashion. Hence Laufer derives the name *kṣudraka* from the word for grape (*d-rākṣā*) *Sino-Iranica* pp. 235-240 But this seems to be a mere conjecture.

77. *Mahābhārata* II 48, 14 वसातयः समौलेयाः सहक्षुद्रकमालवैः ।

78. *India as known to Pāṇini* p. 469.

79. *Invasion* p. 150.

80. *Invasion* p. 287.

encamped at the foot of a mountain", whence Alexander routed him.⁸¹ From these accounts it is clear that the joint military arrangement of these tribes broke down on the eve of Alexander's invasion and they had to bear the brunt of the conflict singly. Thus the reference to their joint armies reflects the condition before the invasion of Alexander. We have seen above that Poro launched an attack against them and they had armed themselves to the teeth and repulsed him. Hence it is likely that their confederate military arrangement was born of the emergency of the invasion of Poros.

The Kṣudrakas and the Mālavas are also stated to have cemented their alliance with inter-tribal marriages, as we learn from Curtius. This was a revolutionary step indeed in view of the fact that these tribes sedulously preserved their tribal integrity and exclusiveness, as is clear from the remark of Patañjali that only the members of the ruling Kṣatriya class among them were called Mālavya and Kṣaudrakya respectively, the slaves and free labourers being debarred from the use of these titles.⁸² It is also manifest that the affairs of the government rested in the hands of the aristocracy having the privilege of bearing the tribal surname. We learn from Arrian that, when these tribes were defeated, they sent the leading men of their cities and their provincial governors, besides 150 of their most eminent men, entrusted with full powers to conclude a treaty.⁸³ This contrasts with the submission of Taxiles or Sambos and proves that the Kṣudrakas and Mālavas had an oligarchical or saṁgha type of government rather than a monarchical form of polity.

6. *The Kathas and the Saubhas.*

We have seen above that the arms of Poros fell on the Kathaians also. But their military ardour and love of independence stood them in good stead and they maintained their territorial integrity to the east of the Ravi. The sacrifice of Naciketas,

81. *Invasion* p. 236.

82. *Mahābhāṣya* on IV 1. 168 इदं तर्हि क्षौद्रकाणामपत्यं मालवानामपत्यमिति । अत्रापि क्षौद्रक्यः मालव्य इति नैतत्तेषां दासो वा भवति कर्मकरो वा । किं तर्हि । तेषामेव कस्मिँश्चित् ।

83. *Invasion* p. 154.

alluded to in the Vedic texts⁸⁴, probably refers to the custom of exposing infants, which prevailed in the neighbouring kingdom of Sopheites also. The name Kathaians or Kaṭha, applied to these people, shows that they were the Udīcyā disciples of Vaiśampāyana. At the time of Patañjali their fame as the preservers and exponents of an authentic tradition of Vedic literature had travelled far and wide.⁸⁵ The Kapiṣṭhala Kaṭhas of Pāṇini VIII, 3, 91 have been equated with the *Kambistholoi*, located by Megasthenes near the Hydraotes.⁸⁶ At the time of Poros their stronghold at Sangala, which is probably identical with the *Sānglāwālā Tibā* in the Jhang district, became so famous as to find a place in the gaṇapāṭha of Pāṇini under IV, 2, 75 entitled *Sankalādi*. It was there that they offered a stiff resistance to Alexander by resorting to the trilinear waggon strategy or *Śakaṭavyūha*. At first their missiles haffled the Greek cavalry, but ultimately they gave way before the grim charge of the phalanx and repaired into their citadel. Alexander laid siege to it and Poros also reinforced his ranks with elephants and 5,000 men. At last dissension rent the defenders into two groups and their resistance broke down and they tried to slip away, but the Greeks got scent of their plan and pounced on them. Then followed a terrible massacre and the storming and razing of the citadel. These people survive among the *Kattia* nomads, scattered at intervals through the plains of the Panjab, and the Kathiars of U. P. The region, called *Kāṭhiawar*, may be connected with these people.

Adjacent to the Kaṭhas was the realm of Sopheites. This name recalls *Subhūta*, mentioned besides *Sankala*, in the gaṇapāṭha of Pāṇini under IV, 2, 75. Another variant of this name seems to be *Saubha*, which was the capital of the Sālvas, according to the *Mahābhārata*.⁸⁷ The king of this region is also called

84. *Rgveda* (X, 135); *Taittirīya Brāhmaṇa* III, 1, 8; *Mahābhārata, Anuśāsanaparvan* 106; *Kaṭha Upaniṣad* I, 1, 4. स होवाच पितरं तात कस्मै मां दास्यसीति । द्वितीयं तृतीयं तम् होवाच मृत्यवे त्वा ददामीति

85. Bhāṣya on IV 3, 101,

ग्रामे ग्रामे काठकं कालापकं च प्रोच्यते

86. V. S. Agrawala, *India as known to Pāṇini* p. 324.

87. *Mahābhārata* III, 14, 2.

साल्वस्य नगरं सौभं गतोऽहं भरतर्षभ ।
निहन्तुं कौरवश्रेष्ठ तत्र मे श्रुणु कारणम् ॥

Saubha or Saubharāt.⁸⁸ It appears that a tribe, bearing the name Saubha, became predominant among the Sālvas. As seen above, the Sālvas included the Madras, who were spread up to the Chenab. As a result of the pressure and expansion of Poros towards the east and the south, the Madras seem to have been pushed eastward and in this movement the Saubhas appear to have obtained the upperhand among them.⁸⁹ This explains the reference to Saubha as Sālva in the *Mahābhārata*.

88. *Mahābhārata* III, 17, 15.

शतैरभिहतः संख्ये नामर्षयत् सौभराट् ।

शरान् दीप्ताग्निसंकाशान् मुमोच तनये मरु ॥

89. We learn from Arrian that, after arranging to sail down the Hydaspes on his return journey, Alexander "instructed his generals to march with all possible speed to where the palace of Sopheites was situated" (*Invasion* p.133) This shows that the realm of Sopheites was somewhere near the Jhelum. Strabo also gave similar information, "Some writers", he says, "place Kathaia and the country of Sopheites, one of the monarchs, in the tract between the rivers Hydaspes and Akesines; some on the other side of the Akesines and of the Hydraotis, on the confines of the territory of the other Poros, the nephew of Poros, who was taken prisoner by Alexander, and call the country subject to him Gandaris. It is said that in the territory of Sopheites there is a mountain composed of fossil salt sufficient for the whole of India. Valuable mines also, both of gold and silver, are situated, it is said, not far off, among other mountains, according to the testimony of Gorgos the Minor. (*Invasion* p. 133) Cunningham identified Gandaris with the present district of Gundulbar and fixes the capital of Sopheites on the western bank of the Hydaspes at *old Bhira* with a very extensive mound of ruins and distant from Nikaia (now Mong), three days by water. According to McCrindle, his rule must have extended westward to the Indus since the mountain of rock-salt, which Strabo includes in his territory, can only refer to the Salt Range (the Mount Oromenus of Pliny, XXXI, 39), which extends from the Indus to the Hydaspes. An argument in support of this location of the territory of Sopheites may be drawn from the fact that this region was formerly occupied by the Kekayas, whose dogs are particularly mentioned in the Rāmāyaṇa as bred in royal kennels (अन्तःपुरेति संवृद्धान्), strong like tigers (व्याघ्रवीर्यबलोपमान्) big in size (महाकायान्) and with large teeth (महादंष्ट्रान्) (Rāmāyaṇa 11, 07, 20). This description agrees very closely with that of the ferocious dogs of Sopheites given by Greek writers. Thus it is likely that the realm of Sopheites coincided with that of the Kekayas and the Madras and the tradition reported by Strabo rests on a sound basis. But the remarks of Curtius and Diodoros that the territory of Sopheites lay between the Hydraotes and the Hyphasis in the vicinity of the realm of the Kathaians (*Invasion* p. 279) are too clear to be brushed aside. There is no doubt that the region of Sopheites was between the Ravi and the Beas, which was once peopled by the Uśīnaraṣ. We have suggested that the subjects of Sopheytes had moved eastward from the north because of the pressure of Poros. Evidently they had brought their dogs also with them, which Curtius and Diodoros pointedly mentioned. Because their migration was a recent event, Arrian and Strabo mistook them to be still in occupation of the Hydaspes region. As a matter of fact the existence of the independent kingdom of Sopheites on the Hydaspes in the teeth of the rising power of Poros is quite unlikely.

This Saubha is stated to be a powerful monarch, since he challenged Kṛṣṇa to avenge the death of his relative Śiśupāla.⁹⁰ Accordingly, he launched an attack against the kinsmen of Kṛṣṇa, the Vṛṣṇis and Ānartas, and invested their city Dvārakāvati, which suffered all the hardships of a siege.⁹¹ At last the defenders broke out and a battle ensued, in which Pradyumna the son of Kṛṣṇa, and Saubha were locked in a deadly contest. Ultimately, when Pradyumna was on the point of killing his adversary, the gods intervened to prevent him from doing so, saying that he was destined to die with the hand of Kṛṣṇa only.⁹² Accordingly, Kṛṣṇa hastened from the Kuru capital to put an end to the life of Saubha. In this account the tactics and armaments of Saubha are said to be outlandish⁹³ and strange and he is looked upon as a demon (Dānava). It is not unlikely that this episode of the humbling of Saubha bears some reminiscence of the submission of Sopheites to Alexander and the annexation of his kingdom to the empire of Poros after the retreat of the Macedonian forces. The important thing in this connection is that Saubha, Saubhūti or Sopheites is not heard of in the Panjab after Alexander and Poros. As regards the coins, said to have been issued by Sophietes, it has been definitely proved by Whitehead⁹⁴ that they belong to some Greek potentate of the Oxus region and have no connection with the Indian contemporary of Alexander. As a matter of fact, it passes comprehension that an Indian prince could have dressed him-

90. *Mahābhārata* III, 14, 11-12:

क्वासौ क्वासाविति पुनस्तत्र तत्र प्रधावति ।
मया किल रणे योद्धुं कांक्षमाणः स सौभराट् ॥
अद्य तं पापकर्माणं क्षुद्रं विश्वासघातिनम् ।
शिशुपालवधामर्षात् गमयिष्ये यमालयम् ।

91. *Mahābhārata* III, 15, 2.

उपायाद् भरतश्रेष्ठ शाल्वो द्वारवतीं पुरीम् ।
अरुन्धत्तां सुदुष्टात्मा सर्वतः पाण्डुनन्दन ॥

92. *Mahābhārata* III, 19.

तौ रौक्मिणेयमागम्य वचोऽब्रूतां दिवोकसाम् ।
नैष वध्यस्त्वया वीर शाल्वराजः कथंचन ॥

93. *Mahābhārata* III, 16, 6.

तुष्टपुष्टबलोपेतं वीरलक्षणलक्षितम् ।
त्रिचित्रध्वजसन्नाहं विचित्ररथकार्मुकम् ॥

94. *Numismatic Chronicle* (1943.)

the Greek fashion and used the Greek script and emblems such a remarkably perfect manner and had undergone the process of total Hellenisation merely in the passing blast of Alexander's invasion. As regards the theory of D. R. Bhandarkar⁹⁵ that Sopheites himself was a Greek and issued the said coins before Alexander's invasion, Greek historical accounts do not in the least suggest any community or connection between him and Alexander, as they do in the case of the Nysians. Hence such an inference has no leg to stand upon. If our suggestion that the Saubhas rose to power among the Sālvas or Madras in the wake of the expansion of the Paurava empire in eastern Panjab and declined soon afterwards with the establishment of the hegemony of Poros, following the retreat of Alexander, has any historical soundness, and the identification of their chief, mentioned in the aforesaid episode of the *Mahābhārata*, with Sopheites of Greek writers has any plausibility, the history of eastern Panjab will assume a new significance in a new light.

Greek writers inform us that Sopheites had adopted Spartan laws to increase his military strength. In the words of Curtius "here they do not acknowledge and rear children, according to the will of the parents, but as the officers, entrusted with the medical inspection of infants, may direct, for, if they have remarked anything deformed or defective in the limbs of a child, they order it to be killed."⁹⁶ According to Strabo, the inspection was made, when the child was two months old. Thus children of "perfect limbs and features" and having "constitutions, which promised a combination of strength and beauty" were allowed to be reared and those, who had any bodily defect, were condemned to be destroyed.⁹⁷ Diodoros observes that "they make their marriages also in accordance with this principle, for, in selecting a bride, they care nothing whether she has a dowry and a handsome fortune besides, but look to her beauty and other advantages of the outward person. It follows that the inhabitants of these cities are generally held in higher estimation than the rest of their countrymen."⁹⁸

95. *Ancient Indian Numismatics* (Charmichael Lectures, 1921) pp. 30-31.

96. *Invasion* p. 219.

97. Diodoros *Op. cit.* p. 280.

98. *Invasion* p. 280.

These reforms were undertaken to improve the military standard of the people evidently under duress of the invasions of powerful neighbours like Poros. They had an important bearing on social divisions and manners, as we shall see later on.

Adjacent to the realm of the Saubhas was the kingdom of Bhagala.⁹⁹ Diodoros calls this king Phegeus and Curtius names him as Phegelas. The latter name is correct, since it corresponds to the Sanskrit word Bhagala, which is the name of the royal tribe of the Kṣatriyas, that are classed with the names of Takṣaśilā, Ambha etc. under the rubric Bāhu in a gaṇapāṭha of Pāṇini, as shown by Sylvain Lévi.¹⁰⁰ The name *bhagala* survives in the name of the locality Phagawara, the initial sonant being changed into a surd, according to the tendency of the phonetics of the Panjabi language. Phagwara is an important railway junction between Amritsar and Jullundhar and its location agrees with the situation of the kingdom of Phagelas, according to Greek writers. The Bhagala chief decided to submit to the Macedonian invader and, while his subjects were tilling the fields, he presented himself to Alexander with choice gifts. But his kingdom was destined to prove the stop of Alexander's campaign, for the news of the military strength of the Gangaridae and the Prasi deterred his armies from running any more risk.

7. *The Macedonian invasion.*

The decline of the Achaemenian empire was the signal of foreign invasion. In the last phase of decline the satrapies shook off the imperial yoke. Alexander's invasion was the climax of this crescendo of disruption and disintegration. The Achaemenian empire was already dead and outer elements were preying on its decomposed parts, when the Macedonians swooped down over it to consume its last remains. Within no time the mighty empire of Asia crumbled like a house of cards and in 331 B.C. the Greeks conquered it in the foothills of the Assyrian mountains near Arbela. The flight and assassination of Darius III created a political vacuum, into which Alexander soon plunged, and, making himself the master of

99. McCrindle, *Invasion* pp. 221, 281.

100. Sylvain Lévi, *Op. cit.*, *Journal Asiatique* (1890) p. 259.

the empire of Asia, set out to recover and consolidate its broken parts. It is likely that the assistance, rendered by Poros to Darius, made him aware of the might of India and gave him an incentive to measure swords with her people.

In the spring of 327 B.C. he crossed the Hindu Kush and was on the road to the Indus. At Nikaia, in the vicinity of modern Jalalabad, he divided his army into two parts, one under Hephaistion and Perdikkas was ordered to proceed through the Kabul valley towards Gandhāra and the other was to follow the king in the hilly country north of the Kabul river in order to subdue the unruly tribes of that region and thus secure his rear and flanks. Ascending the valley of the Kunar river, Alexander reduced the clans of the highlanders, who defied foreign conquest and domination. The Aspasiens and Assakerioi, known as the Āśvāyana and Āśvakāyana in Indian works, were defeated and their strongholds of Massaga, Bajaur and Aornos were stormed. In this region there were some colonies of the Ionians, which probably dated from the days of Achaemenian ascendancy. Alexander was astonished to find such a colony at Nysa, where the people adhered to their old customs and festivals and adopted an oligarchical form of government. This place was situated near mount Elum, also known as Ram Takhat, at the foot of which is a cluster of old towns, bearing Greek names, derived from Bacchos : Lusa (Nysa) Lyocah (Lyaeus), Elys, Bimeeter (Bimeter), Bokra (Boukera), Kerauna (Keraunos) etc.¹⁰¹

In the meantime, the corps of Perdikkas and Hephaistion advanced towards Gandhāra, which was divided into two states at that time : Puṣkalāvati and Takṣaśilā. The former was ruled by a chief, called Astes, belonging to the tribe, known as Hāstināyana in the grammar of Pāṇini¹⁰², and the latter was dominated by Āmbhis or Omphis, representing the Ambhas of Pāṇini, Āmbhīyas of Kauṭilya and, perhaps, Opiai of Hecataeus.¹⁰³ In the *Vāyupurāṇa* also this division of Gandhāra

101. Holdich has identified Nysa with Kohinor in the Swat region, Saint Martin with Nysatta, McCrindle with Nagarahara and Foucher with some place of Yaghistan between the valleys of the Kunar & Swat rivers. (Holdich, *The Gates of India* p. 133; J.W. McCrindle, *The Invasion of India by Alexander the Great* pp. 338, 340. A. Foucher, *Le veille route de l'Inde de Bactres à Taxila* Vol. II pp. 208, 260; B. M. Barua, *Asoka and his Inscriptions* pp. 96.

102. *Pāṇini* VI 4, 174.

103. *Cambridge History of India* Vol. I p. 354.

into Puṣkalāvati and Takṣaśilā is clearly referred to.¹⁰⁴ Mortimer Wheeler thinks that these two cities were founded during Achaemenian rule.^{104a} But it appears that they were founded earlier, for we hear of Takṣaśilā at the time of Pukkusāti and Buddha. However, it is quite certain that these two states became independent after the decline of the Achaemenian empire. The policy of the rulers of these states towards the invasion of Alexander was fundamentally different. Hastin resisted the invaders on the field of battle and gave way only after a bloody encounter, but Āmbhi embraced these incomers, though moving out in a warlike manner, and hugged them as his supporters and friends.

In the beginning of the rainy season of 327 B. C., the people of Takṣaśilā watched the procession of strange figures parading through the streets. According to Arrian, this was the greatest city in that region.¹⁰⁵ Its metropolitan character is attested by the prevalence of the custom of sati,¹⁰⁶ a practice going back to Scythian origins, by the vogue of exposing the dead,¹⁰⁷ a usage current among the Persians, by the sale of women in public markets, a manner peculiar to the Asuras and the people of the hilly regions, by the presence of saints and ascetics, devoted to severe corporeal penances¹⁰⁸ and snarling at the insignificant drama of conquest and alliance, by the existence of teachers and politicians, lucubrating on the prospects of evolving a structure of unity out of the welter of rivalry and conflict, and by the assembling of royal fugitives, seeking succour from the foreign invader, envoys of kings, offering presents to him, as well as messengers, conveying the news of war and bloodshed. From this city the Macedonians, accompanied by their Indian allies, marched against the redoubtable Poros and had a fierce contest with him on the Karri plain east of the Jhelum. This encounter brings into prominence the differences in military tactics and techniques between the belligerents

104. *Vāyupurāṇa*, 88, 189-90.

104a. Mortimer Wheeler, *Charsada, A Metropolis of the North-West Frontier* pp. 13-15.

105. J. W. McCrindle, *The Invasion of India by Alexander the Great*, *Op.cit.*

106. Strabo, XV, 1, 28, J. W. McCrindle, *Ancient India as described in Classical Literature* pp. 33-34.

107. *Ibid.* p. 69.

108. *Ibid.* p. 72. Megasthenes, *Fragment XLI*, McCrindle, *Ancient India as described by Megasthenes & Arrian.* pp. 97-103, *Invasion* pp. 313-315.

and sheds a floods of light on the contact of the cultures of the West and the East, that they symbolised.

Alexander's army consisted of the companions, who were mounted and armoured, the Hypaspists, "the bearers of round shields", who acted as heavy infantry, but were lighter in equipment and more rapid in movement than the Hoplites, (the bearers of oval shields), who wore heavy armour, carried a sword & a spear and formed the backbone of the famous Spartan infantry, the phalanx, which was six rows deep, each soldier standing, three feet behind another, wearing full defensive armour, consisting of a helmet, breast-plate and two long curved plates protecting the thighs, and carrying long swords, long shields and 24 feet long spears, called *sarissa*, so as to have the appearance of a gigantic porcupine or a moving forest of glittering steel points, the archers; mounted on horseback, comprising the Scythians & Agrianians and making lightning movements and skirmishing and harassing the enemy ranks from a distance, and the engines, called balists and catapults, which were meant for darting stones. Tarn has shown that Alexander had 5,300 cavalry, 15,000 infantry and at least 14,500 archers. The cavalry consisted of two regiments under Koinos. The battalions of the phalanx were 7. Those of Klitos the White and Antigones crossed with Alexander. The other three of Meleager, Attalus and Gorgias were left on the opposite bank of the river, strung out in different places, and crossed and joined Alexander. The remaining two under Polyparchon and Alketas were left with Krateros in Alexander's camp and reinforced the fighting ranks at the concluding stage of the battle. The mounted light cavalry of the Thracians and Scythians was posted exactly on the right wing. The right wing consisted of the cavalry with the Scythian regiment forming the vanguard. Then there was the unit of the foot archers and the light infantry, then the five battalions of the phalanx were posted in a straight line and on the extreme left were again the units of the light infantry and the archers skirted by a regiment of javelin-men.¹⁰⁹

The army of Poros consisted of elephants, chariots, cavalry and infantry. Bröler has shown that this army was drawn up according to the rules of the *Arthaśāstra* of Kauṭilya.¹¹⁰ Kauṭilya

109. W. W. Tarn, *Alexander the Great* Vol. II pp. 190-191.

110. Bernhard Bröler, *Alexanders Kampf gegen Poros; Ein Beitrag zur Indischen Geschichte* (Stuttgart, 1933).

prescribed that the elephants should be posted at the van of the army and that they are particularly effective in plashy, marshy and watery terrain in rainy season. He stressed their role in breaking up compact formations by spreading terror and confusion.¹¹¹ Accordingly, Poros placed his elephants, 200 according to Arrian, 130 according to Diodoros, and 83 according to Curius, in the front of his army, each animal being not less than a *plethrum* (101 English feet) apart. But Tarn thinks that the elephants were divided into two shorter lines inclined right and left towards his rear from the ends of the front line making the face look like a huge redoubt. Behind the elephants was the infantry of 50,000 foot, according to Diodoros, or 30,000, according to Arrian, which protruded to fill the gaps between the towering beasts. On each end of the array he posted his cavalry, 4,000 according to Arrian, or 2,000 according to Plutarch, and near it were the chariots, 300 according to Arrian, or 1,000 according to Diodoros. Thus the Indian army presented the spectacle of a mobile fortress. As for the armaments, each chariot was drawn by 4 horses and carried six man, namely, a shield-bearer and an archer on each side and two drivers armed with Javelins. The infantry carried the bow of the size of a man, one end of which was pressed under foot and the other was held by one hand, while the arrow was mounted on the string and shot forth by the other. Some carried javelins and others were equipped with swords and wicker-shields only. Their shields were made of buffalo-hide and were no match for the long metallic shields of the Macedonians. They were also handicapped for want of long pikes. The cavalry was not armoured and had no section of mounted archers. Thus the Greeks had a marked technological superiority over the Indians, which increased the drive and vigour of their numerically larger cavalry.

As soon as Alexander crossed the river in the darkness of the night¹¹², when the howl of the storm drowned the rattle of

111. *Kauṭīliya Arthasāstra* X, 4 ed R. Shamsastri pp. 371

पुरोयानमकृतमार्गवासतीर्थकर्म बाहूत्सारस्तोयतरणावतरणे स्थानगमनावतरणं विषमसंबाधप्रवेशाग्निदानशमनमेकाङ्गविजयः भिन्नसंधानमभिन्नभेदनं व्यसने त्राणमभिघातो विभीषिकात्रासनौदार्यं गृहणं मोक्षणं इति हस्तिकर्माणि ।

112. *Kauṭīliya Arthasāstra* X. PP 365 तीर्थाभिग्राहे हस्त्यश्वैरन्यतो रात्रावुत्तार्य सत्रं गृहणीयात्