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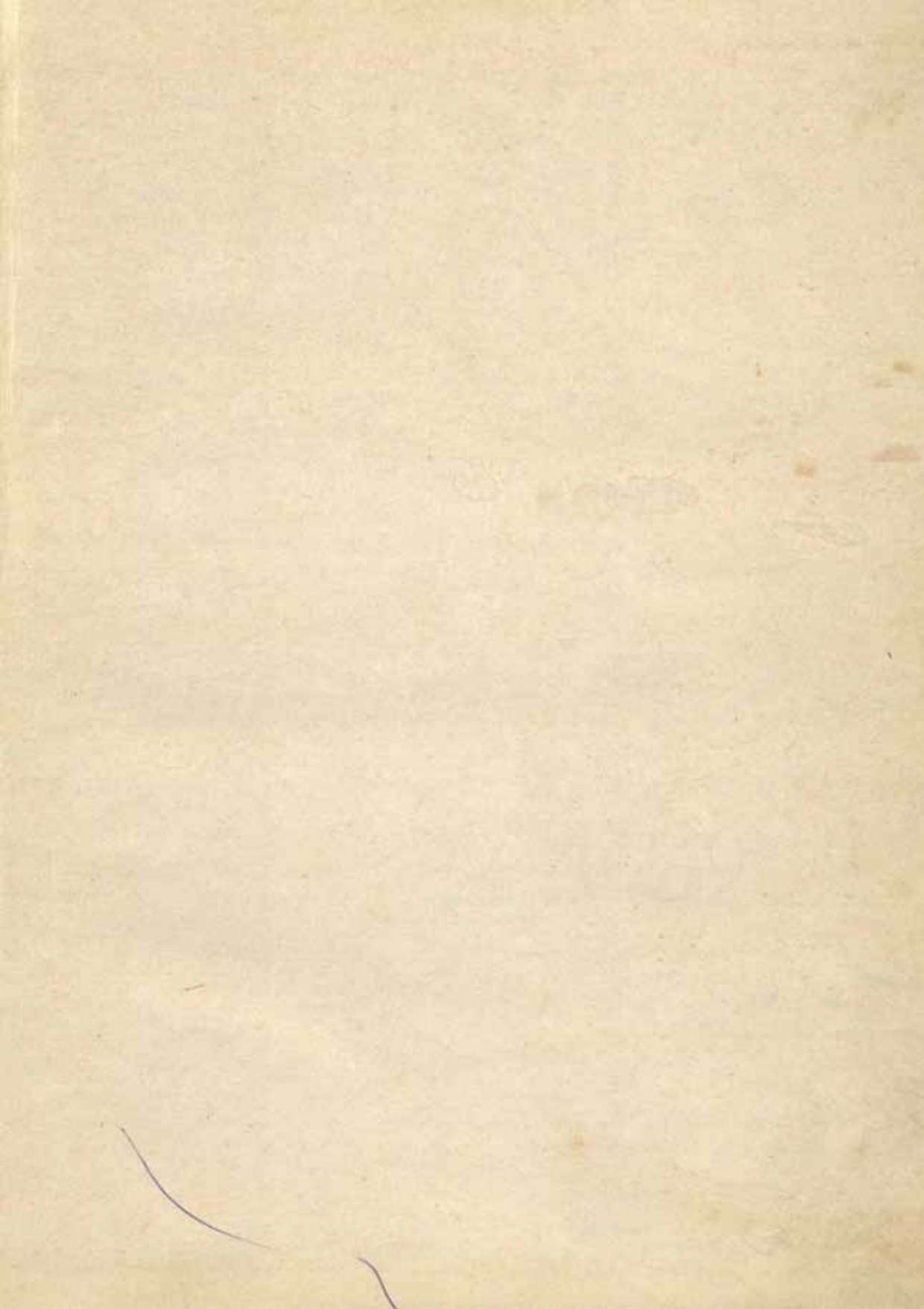
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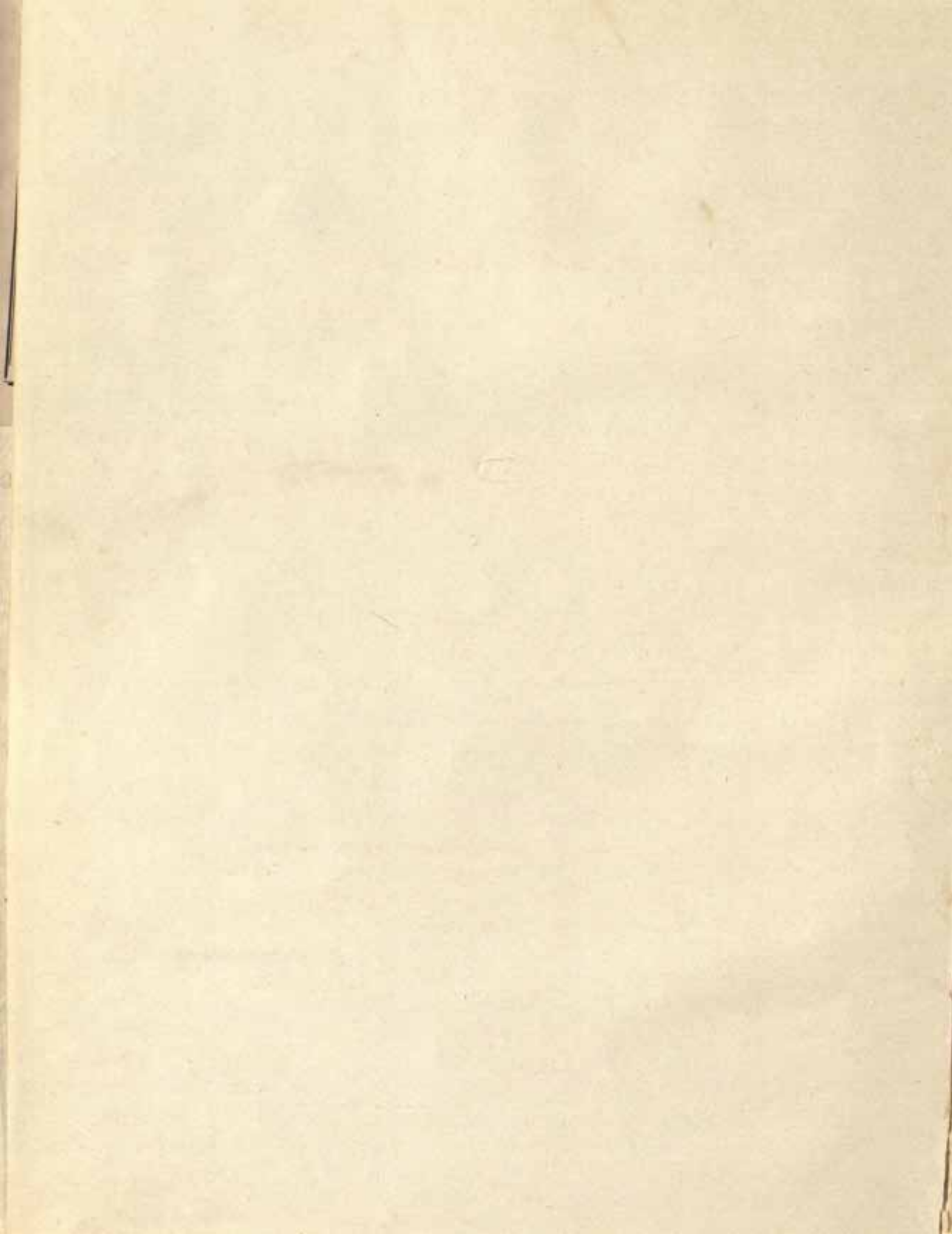
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## HARYANA : ANCIENT AND MEDIEVAL

*There is a country, called Hariyāṇī,  
A very Heaven on Earth, there lies the  
City called Dhillikā (Delhi),  
Built by the Tomaras*

DELHI MUSEUM INSCRIPTION  
SAMVAT 1384.



MAINTAINING A GOOD RECORD

There is a common fallacy that  
it was always so. In fact, it  
was not so. The world has  
changed many times over.  
The world is not the same  
today as it was in 1914.  
The world is not the same  
today as it was in 1914.

# Haryana : Ancient and Medieval

H.A. PHADKE

78099



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Pha



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## Preface

The present study attempts at a historical reconstruction of the past of Haryana. It is the first comprehensive account explaining why in ancient times Haryana became the centre of so much of political, social and cultural activity and how it continued to hold its own even in times of great adversity.

Regional studies have long been neglected by historians who were primarily interested in subjects of wider sweep. The importance of regional studies specially for a people who have suffered so long and continue to struggle to find their identity can not be gainsaid, but this has to be pursued not in isolation but in relevance to the general historical growth of the country. Haryana's contribution to the main stream of Indian history and culture has been remarkable. To the literary and historical tradition it has always been the land of plenty and the 'very heaven on earth'. It was the cradle of Indian culture, the site of decisive actions of Indian history and the place, where power of oppression was defied. The religious sanctity and spiritual association of the region largely depended on its material conditions and geo-political situation.

Chronologically our study falls into two main phases of its development : the first from the earliest times to the second battle of Tarain A.D. 1192 and the second from this date to the third battle of Panipat, A.D. 1761.

The first phase is marked by significant political and cultural developments. The rise and fall of great people—the pre-Harappans, the Harappans and the Aryans; the composition of the *Bhagavad-Gītā*, one of the greatest of philosophical poems of the world; the foreign inroads and their heroic resistance by the republican tribes; and finally the emergence of political power under the Pushpabhūtis, the Tomaras and the Chāhamānas are the characteristic landmarks of this phase.

With the defeat of the Rajput forces in the second battle of Tarain and the consequent establishment of the Sultanate at Delhi, begins the second phase when the region fell a prey to the oppression and injustice of the foreign rule. It later adjusted itself to the new administrative set-up (which was not altogether devoid of reforms and innovations particularly under the Surs and the early Mughals) till the emergence of the Marathas as the defenders of the later-Mughals against the Afghan invaders. This new power too followed a policy of aggression and plunder in the north and thus



alienated the sympathies of the people—the mainstay at the time of struggle against a foreign aggressor, and had to face the disastrous consequences in 1761 on the historic battlefield of Panipat.

The study is based on numerous sources—archaeological, epigraphic, and numismatic data, mythological and traditional literature, observations of various foreign visitors—Greek, Roman, Chinese, Arabic and Persian, etc. accounts of Muslim historians of the Sultanate and the Mughal court, the Maratha chronicles besides research journals have been fully made use of.

We offer our grateful thanks to our esteemed friends and colleagues, Sri Setu Madhav Rao Pagadi of Bombay, Prof. U.V. Singh, Prof. Suraj Bhan, Dr. M.C. Chaudhary, Dr. S.P. Shukla and others of the Kurukshetra University, Kurukshetra for their sustained encouragement and invaluable suggestions. Our thanks are also due to the Librarians, National Museum Library, and Archaeological Survey of India, New Delhi, Panjabi University, Patiala and Kurukshetra University, Kurukshetra.

Kurukshetra  
28 December 1939

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## CHAPTER I

## *The Pre-Historic and Proto-Historic Haryana*

Haryana in the sense of a geographical unit was not known before 12th century A.D. In the Ajmer Museum inscription Arṇorāja Chauhan is described as 'carrying arms into Haritānaka (Haryana)'.<sup>1</sup> The *Skandapurāṇa* mentions it as Hariāla<sup>2</sup> while the Palam Baoli<sup>3</sup> and the Delhi Museum inscriptions<sup>4</sup> (A.D. 1280 and 1328) provide its other variants Hariyānaka and Hariyānā respectively. The suggestions<sup>5</sup> connecting it either with various mythological gods and persons or deriving it after Ābhīrayāna are mere conjectures having absolutely no historical basis, and hence deserve no serious consideration. The word Haryana, in fact, signified a land which abounded in greenery and vegetation. One of its other names Bahudhānyaka, occurring in the *Mahabhārata* and on the coins, conveys exactly the same meaning.<sup>6</sup>

Although the term Haryana is of late origin yet the antiquity of the area it covered has never been questioned. It had been the seat of pre-historic and historic cultures, variously known during the latter times, as Uttaravedi, Brahmavedi, Brahmāvarta, Brahmarshideśa, Kurudeśa, Kurukshetra, Kurujāṅgala etc. It also served as the traditional battlefield where many a time the fate of India was decided. Its geo-political background—Himalayas in the north, Aravallis in the south and the great desert of Rajasthan in the west—providing, in fact, a gateway to the Gangetic valley, has left tremendous impact on its historical and cultural growth. To this strategical importance was added the economic prosperity due to its three main river beds—the Sarasvatī, the Dṛśadvatī and the Yamunā with their numerous feeders. This natural setting, as a matter of fact, provided the key to the spiritual elevation and material advancement of the people. Quite significantly, it has been called *Dharmakshetra Kurukshetra*. Thus the religious sanctity and spiritual associations of the region, largely depended on its material conditions and geo-political situation.<sup>7</sup>

Archaeological explorations in Haryana began more than a century ago with the efforts of Sir Alexander Cunningham<sup>8</sup>, C. Rodgers<sup>9</sup> and later followed by D.B. Spooner and many others<sup>10</sup>. These attempts, though pioneering were mainly explora-



tory in nature and largely confined to historical period hence 'their full import could not be understood for want of scientific technique and advanced archaeological knowledge'. B.B. Lal<sup>11</sup> was the first to bring to light archaeological evidence for the pre-Buddha history of the region with his discovery of the Painted Grey Ware, a proto-historic ceramic industry of the first half of the first millennium B.C. at Kurukshetra, Pehowa, Amin, Panipat etc. He has associated this pottery with the Aryans of the Mahābhārata period. The discovery of stone age tools from Pinjor and Chandigarh and Ferozepur-Jhirka further suggests the hoary antiquity of the human habitation in this region.<sup>12</sup>

Proper exploration and excavation of the region was undertaken for the first time by the Department of Ancient Indian History, Culture and Archaeology, Kurukshetra University, Kurukshetra. Dr. Udai Vir Singh, in collaboration with Dr. Suraj Bhan, conducted excavations at Daulatpur, Karan-Kā-Qilā and Mirzapur.<sup>13</sup> He has supervised a number of Ph. D. dissertations<sup>13a</sup> on the early history and archaeology of several districts of Haryana and prepared a comprehensive list of Archaeological sites in Haryana for the *Dictionary of Indian Archaeology*, a project sponsored by the Indian Council of Historical Research, New Delhi. Dr. Suraj Bhan started exploration of the region since 1961 and discovered as many as two hundred archaeological sites. He conducted independent excavations at Sugh (1964-65), Mitathal (1968) and Siswal (1970),<sup>14</sup> and worked on *Pre-historical Archaeology of Sarasvatī and Dīśadvatī Valleys*, a dissertation accepted for the Ph. D. degree of the University of Baroda (1972). Jointly with Jim. G. Shaffer he conducted an extensive archaeological survey in northern Haryana bringing to light a number of pre-Harappan, Harappan, Late-Harappan, PGW, historical and medieval sites.<sup>15</sup> The Banawali excavations, conducted by Sri R.S. Bisht on behalf of the Department of Archaeology, Haryana, has brought to light one of the most important town sites of pre-Harappan and Harappan cultures in the region,<sup>16</sup> while at Bhagwanpura excavations Sri J.P. Joshi of the Archaeological Survey of India, adduced for the first time, evidence of overlap between the Late-Harappans and the Painted Grey Ware Cultures, a discovery of considerable significance for the early cultural and historical study of the region.<sup>17</sup>

These archaeological discoveries prove beyond doubt that the region was inhabited from very early times and was the centre of vigorous cultural and political activity. It perhaps holds the key to some of the fundamental questions of our early history and archaeology.

The Shiwalik foothills (in Ambala district) and the region around the Aravallis (in Gurgaon district) present a clue to the earliest inhabitants of the region. The primitive people who settled in the Shiwaliks used stone tools like choppers, cores, unworked flakes, scrapers, cleavers and hand-axes.<sup>18</sup> Such tools have been discovered from Dera Karoni, Mansa Devi, Pinjor, Ahian, Dhamla, Kotla, Paplona, Suketri (all in Kalka tehsil occupying the Shiwalik foothills of Ambala district) and belong to the



lower palaeolithic age.<sup>19</sup> Evidence regarding stone age sites has been recently discovered by the Department of Archaeology, Haryana, at Ferozepur-Jhirka (district Gurgaon). The relics recovered not only indicate 'the antiquity of the area but also the mobility of those who lived at a time when there was hardly any surface route or means of transport'. The stone age tools were discovered from the terrace of Jhirka-Cho, a seasonal *nullah*, which descends to the plains from Aravallis and forms a channel connected to the Sahibi Nadi. The tools lay embedded in gravel deposits and consist of cleavers and hand-axes made of quartzite, possibly these were used in killing prey beasts which were trapped. The implements not only provide fresh clues to the evolution of man on the sub-continent but may possibly lead to early man's rock shelters in the area. The evidence probably belongs to the stone age culture of the palaeolithic phase whose relics suggest the use of similar technology in the Soan (near Rawalpindi) region.<sup>20</sup>

The evidence of the excavations at Siswal and Mitathal (on the lost courses of the Dr̥ṣadvatī and the Yamunā respectively in the Hissar district) and Banawali (on the dry bed of the Sarasvatī in Fatehabad tehsil of the Hissar district) provide the earliest phases of the proto-history of the region. The earliest of these proto-historic people who are called pre-Harappans settled at Banawali in the first half of the 3rd millennium B.C. They built houses of sun-dried or kiln-baked bricks displaying sense of direction and definite town planning. They were skilled in producing pottery with a wide range of decorative shapes, and knew copper smelting. For their decoration they used ornaments of beads of gold, semi-precious stones, terracotta, steatite and bangles of clay, shell, faience and copper.<sup>21</sup> While 'Siswal A' marks the early phase of the culture 'Siswal B' and Mitathal I represent its late phase.<sup>22</sup> The houses at these sites were made of mud or sun dried bricks or huts of reeds plastered with clay. The saddle querns used for grinding corn also suggest their cultivation of cereals. Their other finds include baked clay missiles of disc shape and triangular cakes. They also seem to be acquainted with the art of writing towards the later phase as shown by graffiti marks on their earthen vessels.<sup>23</sup> The close affinity and proximity of this culture to Rajasthan, and its more evolved character in Haryana probably suggests north Rajasthan as its original home.<sup>24</sup>

The second phase in the proto-history of the region is marked by the advent of the Harappans (c. 2300-1700 B.C.) whose most prominent settlement were discovered at Banawali, Mitathal and Rakhigarhi. The existence of twin mounds suggesting dichotomous plan; typical chert blades; cubical weights; beads of semi-precious stones, steatite and faience; bangles of faience, clay and copper; toys and earthen ware at these sites suggest that the Harappans followed the pattern of the well-known classical sites of the Harappan culture.<sup>25</sup> At Banawali, the Harappans supplanted the pre-Harappans about 2300 B.C. They were versatile in building planned and fortified township 'laid in the classical chess-board pattern'. The striking features of this culture were streets, defence-walls and sanitary arrangements. They used usually



painted pottery, and their food included barley, meat and fish. Their seals show superb craftsmanship and their weights of stone and ivory precision. Their skill in metallurgy is evident from their copper and gold ornaments, and their terracotta figurines throw light on their folk-art.<sup>26</sup> Surplus food production in the field and the cattle farms, hunting and fishing helped bring about 'a great urban revolution leading to the emergence of a complex society of specialised trades-men, skilled and unskilled labourers and workers' during the Harappan times at Banawali.<sup>27</sup> The other Harappan site is that of Rakhigarhi, situated about 130 kms. northwest of Delhi in Hansi tehsil of Hissar district. It lies on the dried-up old course of the Dṛṣadvati and is perhaps the most extensive of the known Harappan sites in India. Dominating the fertile Indo-Gangetic Divide, it further gained ascendancy in the expansion of Harappan culture in north India. Its location (350 kms. southeast of Harappa, 190 kms. east of Kalibangan, and 80 kms. to the east of Banawali) suggests that 'it was the eastern most provincial capital of the Harappans'. The dichotomous plan as indicated by the twin mounds, the mud-brick platforms, the typical burnt and mud-brick architecture, the classical ceramic industry (gathered from the sturdy black on red ware) and the script indicate that this site was once a mature Harappan town.<sup>28</sup> The archaeological importance of the site though it still remains unexcavated is further proved by the recent discovery of a steatite seal belonging to the mature Harappan culture. It bears the image of a one-horned animal, probably the rhinoceros and classical Harappan script. It may be recalled that similar seals have been found at Banawali (district Hissar) and other Harappan sites. Among other notable finds are triangular, circular and rectangular terracotta cakes, toys, wheels, balls, beads and bangles.<sup>29a</sup>

Mitathal, lying about 11 kms. to the northwest of Bhiwani, is the eastern-most classical town site hitherto discovered in the north. Providing a continuous cultural sequence from pre-Harappan to the late-Harappan, Mitathal can also help in understanding in a better perspective, the lesser known localised chalcolithic cultures of the Gangetic delta. Further, its proximity to the Aravalli outspurs, arouses curiosity about 'whether or not the copper fields of the northern Vindhya were tapped by those pre-to-historic people'.<sup>29</sup> The two mounds, one bigger and the other smaller—possibly suggest the 'citadel' and 'lower city' following the classical Harappans town planning.<sup>30</sup> Like Banawali here also Harappans seem to have 'overcome the pre-Harappans when the latter were still in the prime of youth'.<sup>31</sup> Further, the interaction between the two traditions possibly led to the growth of 'a hybrid culture which ultimately had had its sway after the hey day of the Harappans'.<sup>32</sup> Among the notable finds of the site are—a *piazza* where roads and lanes coming from cardinal directions meet, walls of house blocks, massive mud-brick platforms, drains, ovens and hearths. The sun-dried mud-bricks were mostly used for construction, while for drains and places where the use of water was frequent baked bricks were employed. The excavation has also unearthed various road levels exhibiting the evidence of



ancient cart tracks.<sup>33</sup> Although the main ceramic industry of the period (c. 2300 to 1800 B.C.) was the characteristic Harappan pottery, cream-slipped ware and a distinct red ware employing pinched or incised decoration, or both, have also been found.<sup>34</sup> The other interesting finds include : gold beads and pieces; arrow heads, razor blade, sickle hook, bead, chisels and nails of copper and bronze; beads of semi-precious stones, faience, steatite, shell and clay; and terracotta bangles, cakes, nodules, *idlis*, marbles, figurines, toy cart-frames and wheels and sherds and cakes bearing Harappan characters and graffiti.<sup>35</sup>

The recent explorations and preliminary excavation at Balu (district Jind) have yielded typical pre-Harappan, Harappan and late-Harappan pottery. From the point of view of sequence and chronology the excavation would prove useful in understanding the cultural development of this region. The material cultural richness of the site can very well be gathered from its surface collection—distinctive pottery remains, inlaid Harappan stone beads; terracotta toy cart-frames, wheels, beads, triangular and oval cakes; and several examples of faience bangles.<sup>36</sup>

The general features of the Harappan culture show closer affinities with north Rajasthan than with Indus Valley. 'The use of sun-baked bricks for building houses, absence of street drainage, the use of pure copper, the absence of female figurines, the comparative dearth of antiquities and ornaments and the co-existence of the surviving pre-Harappan elements'<sup>37</sup> suggest the regional character of the culture. Harappan settlers seem to have migrated to Haryana as colonisers probably from Rajasthan. 'The far fewer Harappan sites and the dominating character of their towns as compared to the numerous pre-Harappan chalcolithic villages, the super-imposition of the latter sites by the former at Mitathal etc. and the co-existence of the two at several sites perhaps indicate a political bias in the Harappan expansion in this region'.<sup>38</sup>

The next phase is called the late-Harappan culture (c. 1700 B.C.-1500 B.C.) representing the decadent phase of the Harappan civilization. Discovered at Mitathal for the first time it provided 'a clear stratigraphic evidence of the survival of the Harappan culture in north India'. The material equipment of this period as found at Mitathal (II B), Daulatpur (I) and Mirzapur excavations suggest a degenerated stage as indicated by the evolved shapes, inferior treatment of the surface and the simpler and the fewer decoration in the pottery.<sup>39</sup> The overall degeneration of the culture is explained as 'the result of world-wide recession in trade and commerce, in face of unstable political conditions, which seem to have prevailed around c. 1800 B.C. when the business contacts with the Persian Gulf, Mesopotamia and Egypt seem to have been suddenly severed'.<sup>40</sup> The remains of oval ovens, charred grains, grinding stones along with copper fish-hooks and bone points at Daulatpur suggest that hunting and fishing supplemented the food supply of the people. The people decorated their persons with ornaments like bangles of faience and terracotta and beads of semi-precious stones.<sup>41</sup> Another important explored late-Harappan site is about 100 m. north of Augand (district Karnal) popularly known by the name of Jasrath tank.



Here several mud brick structures are clearly visible of which the most important is a large mud brick platform perforated by several circular pits. One of the pits contained a large 'oven' type structure. Besides late-Harappan pottery (one with a pre-fired Harappan inscription), the site is specially rich in faience bangles.<sup>42</sup> That this culture was widely spread over Haryana can very well be gathered from the discovery of its pottery at various sites in the districts of Ambala, Kurukshetra, Karnal, Jind, Hissar, Bhiwani, Rohtak, Mahendragarh and Gurgaon.<sup>42a</sup> At Mitathal was discovered a copper harpoon, ring and axe (*paraśu*) (all typical of the well known 'Copper Hoards') and a neolithic ring stone providing for the first time late-Harappan context to the Copper Hoards.<sup>43</sup> The changed ecological conditions might possibly have led the Harappans to adopt new tool-types in imitation of the Neolithic people. This process of assimilation of the two cultures 'led to the evolution of a composite culture in the region, which later on extended farther east into the Gaṅgā-Yamunā Doab providing for the first time cultural unity to the ancient Madhyadeśa'.<sup>44</sup>

What led to the disappearance of the Harappan culture in this region? Suraj Bhan<sup>45</sup> has thrown some interesting light on this issue. On the basis of physiological and archaeological evidence he suggests that in the remote past 'Yamunā or at least one of its distributary had flowed by the side of Mitathal' and 'drifted eastwards to acquire the easterly course along Karnal, Panipat, Sonapat and Delhi in the PGW times'.<sup>46</sup> The 'absence of pre-PGW sites on the easterly course of the Yamunā and that of the PGW sites on her lower westerly course' suggest that the river had started drifting eastwards in the pre-PGW times and the drift was completed by the beginning of the PGW period. This must have led to the gradual decline of the Harappan culture on the westerly course of the Yamunā, and the migration of its people to northeast and across the Yamunā in search of better living conditions.<sup>47</sup>

Hydraulogical changes might possibly have led to the decline of this culture in the adjoining region also where the two rivers, the Sarasvatī and the Dr̥śadvatī seem to have been caught by the Yamunā in its upper course.<sup>48</sup> Perhaps these desiccated and desolate points of Haryana came to be known as Khāṇḍava and Kurujāṅgala to the literary tradition. Various Vedic and Puranic legends<sup>49</sup> on the disappearance of the Sarasvatī at Vinaśana also point to the same direction.

Towards the beginning of the first millennium B.C. with the advent of the Painted Grey Ware (PGW) culture (so called because of its typical fine grey pottery painted with black designs), a new era dawned upon Haryana. PGW has been traced from a large number of sites all over Haryana and more specifically in the Kurukshetra region. Recently an important PGW site has been located at Bhukari (district Ambala). The heavy erosion at the site has exposed a 'large number of partially reconstructable PGW vessels, many of which decorated with black motifs'. Although some late-Harappan and Kushāṇa sherds were also collected from here, there is no doubt that the major occupation at this site was PGW. Besides this, mud brick structures were also definable at the site.<sup>50</sup> Furthermore, the PGW has been recover-



ed from several sites mentioned in the later-Vedic literature and associated with the Mahābhārata period. 'The preponderance of the ware in the Sarasvatī and the Drśadvatī Valleys, its chronological position in the first half of the first millennium B.C. and its occurrence at sites alluded to in the later-Vedic and Sūtra literature might indicate the association of the PGW culture with the later-Vedic and the Sūtra age.<sup>51</sup>

For long scholars were puzzled over the clear breach between the Harappans and the Aryans but the excavations at Bhagwanpura (situated on the right bank of the river Sarasvatī in district Kurukshetra) have brought to light for the first time juxtaposition of the late-Harappans and the PGW cultures. This is of considerable importance for the historical reconstruction of the region from the middle of the second millennium B.C. The fusion of the two cultures is reflected in the continuity of the tradition in pottery types, painted designs, art of terracotta figurines and burials. Absence of iron and Black-and-Red Ware might possibly indicate that the Painted Grey Ware using people who inhabited this area, were of earlier wave of migrants than those met with at Hastinapur.<sup>52</sup> Here are some of the important results of the Bhagwanpura excavations :<sup>53</sup>

The late-Harappans made their first habitation at this site over the alluvium of the river Sarasvatī and built, in two successive phases, solid mud platforms to protect their habitation from the ravages of flood . . . . The excavation clearly revealed that the late-Harappans continued to occupy the site even after this calamity. The major ceramic industry of this period is the sturdy red ware pottery (associated with the late-Harappans) similar to that found at Bara, Bahadarabad, Atranjikhera, Siswal (II B), Mitathal (II B), Daulatpur, and Rāja-Karṇa-Kā-Qilā. The pottery gives a fairly good idea of their household objects—dishes, bowls, jars and basins, terracotta toys, beads and bangles.

Further, the Bhagwanpura excavation also throws welcome light on three phases of the structural activity of the Painted Grey people. The earliest phase revealed semi-circular thatched huts and oval shaped structures of highly burnt mud-walls. The second phase is marked by the building of mud-walled houses (as known from a complete house complex of thirteen rooms, corridor and a court-yard). The rooms yielded animal bones, PGW dishes and bowls, *ghaṭa*-shaped terracotta beads, bone styli and copper objects. Significantly 2 to 5 per cent of late-Harappan pottery was also available from the rooms of this house complex. The third phase gives evidence of the existence of houses built of baked bricks. Two curious oval-shaped structures which are also associated with this phase perhaps suggest some religious purpose. Besides this, two skeletons—of an adult and a child—have been found from the PGW habitation area. The different levels of the sites reveal variety of animal bones—bull, sheep, goat, ram, dog and equus suggesting their animal and cattle wealth.<sup>54</sup> The



Bhagwanpura excavation is thus of immense help in the reconstruction of the earliest phases of the archaeology and history of the region.

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## CHAPTER II

# *The Vedic Age*

### 1. The foundations of Indian culture

Watered by the divine rivers—the Sarasvatī, the Dṛṣadvatī and the Yamunā, the region gained considerable religious importance. On the holy banks of these rivers were kindled sacred fires,<sup>1</sup> and Vedic hymns composed and recited. It was the land of divine sacrifice<sup>2</sup> which became the foremost and highest form of duty for gods as well as for men.<sup>3</sup>

In ancient times, the Sarsavatī perhaps occupied the same position and importance as was enjoyed by the river Nile in the life of an Egyptian. Like the Egyptian priests, the Vedic seers also composed beautiful hymns in praise of the Sarasvatī.<sup>4</sup> She is described as the river *par excellence*, the best of mothers, the best of goddesses<sup>5</sup> and an ideal place for the performance of Vedic sacrifices. The *Taittiriya Brāhmaṇa* describes *R̥gveda* and *Sāmaveda* as springs of her waters,<sup>6</sup> while in the *Mahābhārata*<sup>7</sup> and the *Purāṇas* she is known as Vedamātā, Vedagarbhā, Śruti and Trayīvidyā.<sup>8</sup> This shows her associations also with the composition of the Vedic hymns.<sup>9</sup> The *Atharvaveda* describes Maruts as ploughing barley besides her when the lord of the plough was Indra, strong with hundred powers.<sup>10</sup> She was Sinivālī—the goddess of fertility, blessing the valley with abundant food supply and vegetation.<sup>11</sup> She was the inspirer of good songs, promoter of all gracious thoughts, holy and the dearest among the dear ones.<sup>12</sup> The Vedic seers prayed to her for the favour of glorious treasures, milk and her blessings and for living on her banks for ever.<sup>13</sup>

The Sarasvatī was the scene of the activities of the famous Vedic tribes—the Bharatas, the Purus and the Kurus. The *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa* narrates the story of Videgha Māthava (a king of Videha) accompanied by his priest Gotama Rāhugaṇa, carrying the sacred fire from her banks to east preserving thereby the tradition that the Kosalas and the Videhas received their culture from her.<sup>14</sup> In the *Mahābhārata* mention is made of Sārasvata, her son, sticking to her famine stricken banks and saving the Vedas when everyone else had left.<sup>15</sup>

The antiquity of the Sarasvatī can be traced back to still earlier times. The

discovery of pre-Harappan, Harappan, late-Harappan and PGW sites<sup>16</sup> along her bed and the recent Bhagwanpura (district Kurukshetra) excavations<sup>17</sup> on her bank showing for the first time evidence of interaction between the late-Harappans and PGW cultures, are of considerable significance for the historical continuity of the region.

The river Sarasvatī, identified with the modern Sarsuti, is a mere shadow of its former self. It takes its rise in the Sirmur hills of the Himalayan range, flows past Ambala, Pipli, Kurukshetra, Pehowa, Sirsa and is ultimately lost in the deserts of Bhatner.<sup>18</sup> The ancient town of Sirsa, also called Sarsuti, still stands on the north side of the dry bed of the Ghaggar.<sup>19</sup> The archaeological explorations<sup>20</sup> of the Sarasvatī-Ghaggar-Hakra bed further proves the Vedic and epic tradition that the Sarasvatī was once 'a mighty river' with a continuous and perennial flow down to the Arabian sea. The river seems to have dried up because of serious seismic disturbances towards the close of the Vedic period. The Vedic sages, aware of this phenomenon, prayed her intensely not to deprive them of her life giving waters. This fact finds mention in the *Brāhmaṇas*<sup>21</sup> and is also the subject of various Purāṇic legends.<sup>22</sup> Thus the stories relating Sarasvatī's carrying the *Vaṇavāṇa* (fire) in a golden jar to the western sea, her disappearance because of the fear of touching the *Śūdras*, *Ābhīras*, *Nishādas* and the curse of the sage *Utathya* causing her to go to *Marudeśa* and thereby become dry, are all Purāṇic legends to explain the natural factors which greatly interrupted her flow. Furthermore, the archaeological investigation of *Suraj Bhan*<sup>23</sup> have shown that 'in the late-Harappan times the desiccation of the river had already started resulting in the shifting of her settlements to the upper valley' and that 'it had lost most of its flow by the PGW period with little chance of its periodical rejuvenation.'<sup>24</sup>

Although dried up considerably, the Sarasvatī continued to retain her importance. As the goddess of speech she is associated with *Brahmā* and his creation.<sup>25</sup> The *Sūtras* mention sacrifices held on her banks as of special sanctity.<sup>26</sup> The entire region between *Plaksaprasavaṇa* (the place of her rise) and *Vinaśana* (the place of her disappearance) was the proper locality for the performance of the *Sārasvata sattras* (fire rituals).<sup>27</sup> She is glorified in the *Mahābhārata*<sup>28</sup> and the *Purāṇas*.<sup>29</sup> The Sarasvatī (the river goddess of the Aryans) primarily known for the composition and recitation of the *Vedas* (sacred lore), the *Brāhmaṇas* and the intensive philosophical speculations of the *Upanishads*, was elevated later on, to the lofty status of the *Goddess of Learning* to be worshipped in temples and educational institutions for ever.<sup>30</sup>

The *Dṛṣadvatī* identified with *Chitang*,<sup>31</sup> rises in the sub-mountainous Ambala district, passes through *Kapālmochan*, *Balchhapur*, *Mustafabad*, *Ladwa*, *Nisang*, *Jind*, *Hansi* and *Hissar* and ultimately culminates in *Rajasthan* near *Bhadra*.<sup>31a</sup> It was not a formidable river like the Sarasvatī. The *R̥gveda* specifically associated *Dṛṣadvatī* with the kindling of sacred fire, and offerings made by the *Bharata Princes*, *Devaśravas* and *Devavāta* on her banks.<sup>32</sup> The existence of pre-historic sites on her



dried-up course also testifies to her antiquity and importance.<sup>33</sup> The Dṛṣadvatī became dry in the post-Harappan period 'as a result of the cutting off her downward flow by the joint waters of the Sarasvatī and Somb which had taken eastward course to meet the Yamunā'.<sup>34</sup> In the *Pañchavimśa Brāhmaṇa*<sup>35</sup> and the *Śrauta Sūtras*<sup>36</sup> along with the Sarasvatī, the Dṛṣadvatī is the scene of special sacrifices. In *Manu*<sup>37</sup> the area between these two rivers is considered as the holiest place on the earth.

The river Yamunā, well-known for her traditional associations with Lord Kṛishṇa, rises in the Himalayas about 8 miles to the west of the mountain peak known as Bandarpuch and passing through the sacred shrine of Jamnotri it emerges from the Shiwalik range at Khara, becomes an extensive river near Faizabad from which place canals have been taken out from her main stream.<sup>38</sup> The western Jamunā canal (which is more relevant to our study) irrigates several districts of Haryana—Ambala, parts of Kurukshetra and Jind, Karnal, Sonapat, Hissar and Rohtak, enters the Union Territory of Delhi and running southward finally immerses itself into the main course.<sup>39</sup> In the pre-historic times, the river seems to have followed a more westerly course feeding the old bed of the Dṛṣadvatī (modern Chitang) below Jind (its remnants can be seen in the western Jamunā Canal with its Hansi-Hissar branch and another flowing below Panipat).<sup>40</sup> The river which forms a part of the Gangetic system today, belonged to the Indus system in remote times.<sup>41</sup> The Yamunā is mentioned in the *Mahābhārata* as a speedy river falling into the sea.<sup>42</sup> The river is variously known to the classical writers as Diamouna,<sup>43</sup> Jomanes<sup>44</sup> and Jobares.<sup>45</sup> It finds mention in the *R̥gveda*,<sup>46</sup> *Atharvaveda*,<sup>47</sup> the *Brāhmaṇas*,<sup>48</sup> the *Sūtras*<sup>49</sup> and later literature.<sup>50</sup> One of the holiest rivers of India of the later times, it also witnessed the rise of Indraprastha and Delhi, the centres of political power.

Besides the three main rivers mentioned above there are still a number of small rivers which flow to the southwestern parts of Haryana. M.L. Bhargava has attempted to identify a number of these rivers with those mentioned in early Vedic literature. Bhargava recognises southeastern Rasā, a river mentioned in the *R̥gveda* with the Sahibi, and the Vadhūsarā with the river Duhan mentioned in the *Mahābhārata* as having originated from the tears of Divyā Paulomā, the wife of sage Chyavana and flowing past the latter's āśrama. Quite interestingly the river still flows through the region near a place Chyavanāśrama (Dhosi). The *Mahābhārata* describes it as a sacred stream with many holy places on its course proving thereby that it might have been a fairly large and important river in those early times. The learned scholar similarly suggests the association of the stream Kasāvati or Kṛṣṇāvati with *R̥gvedic* tribe, the Kṛṣṇas who lived on her banks; and that the lower Nai is identical with the river Anumati associated with Bṛhaspati who came in conflict with the Paṇis and the Kṛṣṇas who lived further southeast. The last named river, according to Bhargava, came to be known as Havishmati, its bed has now turned into a nālā and is therefore, called lower Nai. Furthermore, Bhargava equates the *R̥gvedic* Arvāvat sea with several shallow marshes of varying sizes at various distances, a few kms. south,



southwest and west of Najafgarh township in the Union Territory of Delhi and the Jahangirpur-Jahajgarh lake in the Jhajjar tehsil of the Rohtak district. Whatever big or small size of this lake might have been in ancient times, certain it is that it received and is still receiving the waters of the Yamunā, the Dṛṣadvatī and various streams of the Aravalli's since time immemorial. It is probably this lake which is called Dvaitavana after the name Dhvasana Dvaitavana, a powerful king of the Matsyas who performed horse-sacrifice on its banks and who finds mention also in the Mahābhārata in the context of the Pāṇḍavas' movements in course of their exile. It has been suggested by a scholar that the village Dhansa, about twenty kms. west of Delhi and on the borders of district Rohtak may have been so called perhaps after Dhvasana Dvaitavana, the Matsya king of Śatapatha fame.<sup>50a</sup> The identifications of the rivers and places as suggested above, if accepted, would further help in tracing the antiquity also of the southern parts of Haryana as far back as the Vedic period, if not earlier.

How was this land of the divine rivers known before it was occupied by the Bharatas, the Purus and the Kurus? From an old commentator Śāyāyana as quoted by Sāyaṇa (a distinguished commentator of 14th century A.D.) we gather that there was a locality known as Śaryaṇāvāt, indicating a district and also a lake in the back-part (*Jaghanārdha*) of Kurukshetra.<sup>51</sup> The unusual consistency of Sāyaṇa's statements favours its application in the sense of a geographical name. The importance of the place can be gathered from its mention in the *R̥gveda*, *Sāmaveda*,<sup>52</sup> *Yajurveda*,<sup>53</sup> *Jaiminiya* and *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇas*,<sup>54</sup> *Śaunakiya Bṛhaddevatā*<sup>55</sup> and also Pāṇini.<sup>56</sup> The earliest reference to Kurukshetra in the sense of a locality appears in the *Maitrāyaṇi Samhitā*<sup>57</sup> of the *Kṛṣṇa Yajurveda*. Since Śaryaṇāvāt also finds mention in the same veda, the inference may be drawn that during the Yajurvedic period Śaryaṇāvāt and Kurukshetra both existed side by side. This explains as to why Sāyaṇa locates it in Kurukshetra. Śaryaṇāvāt is not mentioned in later literature. This may be due to the fact that other names of the place such as Brahmasara, Kurukshetra etc. became so popular that the earliest names of the place relegated completely to the background.

Śaryaṇāvāt is associated with the racial conflicts of the Aryans and the non-Aryans as reflected in the mythological story connected with the sage Dadhyañch, Aśvins, Indra and Vṛtras. Indra's thunderbolt was formed of the horses' head, which was supplied to the headless Dadhyañch by Aśvins so that he might teach them his *madhuvidyā* (wherein questions regarding the relation of soul to the ultimate reality, the origin of universe, and the manifestation of nature in intelligible and beautiful forms were raised and answered).<sup>58</sup> Dadhyañch was a terror to the Asuras throughout his life, who, after his death, multiplied and spread over the entire world. A frantic search was made to see if something of the sage was left behind, and his head was found at Śaryaṇāvāt.

Further, Cunningham, Rodgers and V.S. Agrawala have identified Śaryaṇāvāt



with Brahmasara at Kurukshetra.<sup>59</sup> This tank, the place of deepest veneration, became the magnet that attracted millions of pilgrims to the holy city of Kurukshetra. The identification of Śaryāṇavat thus establishes the antiquity of the literary tradition of the region as old as the *Rgveda*.<sup>60</sup>

With the advent of the Bharatas, the most powerful Aryan tribe of the Rgvedic period, the history of the region becomes meaningful and coherent. Settled between the Sarasvatī and the Yamunā,<sup>61</sup> the Bharatas (after whom the country was called Bhārata) were the earliest inhabitants of the region of whom we have any written record. Their king Divodāsa vanquished the Purus, the Yadus, the Turvaśa, Śambara—the *dīśa* king, and the Paṇis and also encountered the Pārāvatas and the Bṛiṣayas on the banks of the Sarasvatī.<sup>62</sup> But the most striking event described in the *Rgveda* is the battle which was waged between Sudāsa and the confederacy of ten kings.<sup>63</sup> It was a continuation of a struggle for supremacy begun in the time of Sudāsa's predecessor Divodāsa. The immediate cause of the battle was the dismissal of Viśvāmitra (a priest)<sup>64</sup> by Sudāsa who appointed a new priest Vasiṣṭha, reputed for his learning.<sup>65</sup> This led Viśvāmitra to organise a confederacy of ten kings—Puru, Yadu, Turvaśa, Anu, Druhyu, Alina, Paktha, Bhalānas, Śiva and Vishāṇin, to oppose the Bharatas.<sup>66</sup> In the battle of Paruṣṇī (Ravi) the Bharatas emerged victorious under Sudāsa's leadership defeating their formidable enemies led by the Purus.<sup>67</sup> He waged another battle on the bank of Yamunā defeating a few other non-Aryan tribes—Ajas, Śigrus and Yakshus led by Bheda.<sup>68</sup> The account of the battles shows that they covered an extensive area including parts of this region.

The Bharatas were a pastoral people settled in small villages with houses made of wood and bamboo. They led a simple corporate life, worshipped nature and encouraged learning. Divodāsa was a fire worshipper, and King Sudāsa was also a scholar and a composer of Vedic hymns, whose victory in the battles was attributed to Vasiṣṭha's superiority over Viśvāmitra in spiritual knowledge.<sup>69</sup> The glory of the Bharatas finds a special mention in the *Mahābhārata*<sup>70</sup> and in Bhāsa's famous play the *Svapnavāsavadattam*.<sup>71</sup> The greatness of Bharata (a Bharata prince) says the *Śatapatha*, 'neither the men before nor those after him attained, nor did the five (tribes of) men, even as a mortal man (does not touch) the sky with his arms'.<sup>72</sup>

The Purus, an influential tribe, though defeated in the battle of ten kings were settled on the banks of the Sarasvatī. The enumeration in the *Rgveda*<sup>73</sup> of a large number of their kings : Durgaha, Girikshit, Pūrukutsa, Trasadasyu, Hiraṇyin and other descendants, Trikshī, Trayāruṇa and Kuruśravaṇa signifies their power. In several passages their victories over the aborigines are extolled.<sup>74</sup> Their king Trasadasyu, the son of Pūrukutsa, tried to salvage the honour of his family by subduing the Bharatas and capturing their forts.<sup>74</sup> The poet Vāmadeva thus describes his military exploits :<sup>75</sup>

And at his thunder, like the roar of heaven,  
Those who attack, tremble and are affrightened;



For when he fights, against embattled thousands  
Dread is he in his striving, none may stay him.

Political and social compulsions led to the beginning of the process of assimilation among the Purus and the Bharatas and consequently emerged the Kurus, though not specifically mentioned in the Ṛgveda as a tribe, were a distinct people, after whom the region came to be called Kurudeśa. This was a common feature during the Vedic period whereby tribes were transformed into *janas* (peoples) and *janapadas* (nations).

The Kurus were the most prominent people of the Brāhmaṇa period and in making this region the home of Vedic culture they made a distinct contribution by their excellence in military skill, by their idealism and innate literacy and spiritual reserves. In the *Brāhmaṇas*<sup>76</sup> they are often mentioned in conjunction with Pañchālas suggesting regrouping of the old and new tribes which took place probably when the Aryans pushed on from the Punjab towards the east. The Kurus initially settled themselves between the Sarasvatī and Dṛṣadvatī, a region which came to be known later on after them as Kurukshetra, and where the foundations of Aryan religion and culture were laid. They attacked their enemies in autumn but returned to their homeland in summer.<sup>77</sup> They performed *Rājasūyas*, kindled sacred fire and made sacrifices on the Sarasvatī, the Yamunā and the Gaṅgā<sup>78</sup> suggesting their advance also into the Gangetic Valley. The *Brāhmaṇas*<sup>79</sup> call their speech as the best and purest and their mode of sacrifice as ideal and perfect. Uddālaka Āruṇa, a prominent teacher of the later-Vedic period, belonged to the Kuru-Pañchālas, who displayed supremacy in spiritual matters.<sup>80</sup> This is very well illustrated in the following extract of a conversation among Vedic scholars from the *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa* :<sup>81</sup>

This fellow is a Kuru-Pañchāla Brāhmaṇa and son of a Brāhmaṇa. Let us take care lest he should deprive us of our domain : Come let us challenge him to a disputation on spiritual matters. With whom for our champion ? With Svaidāyana.

The region was considered as a source of great spiritual benefit because of the divine sacrifices which were performed here. It was believed that the gods attained high spiritual power by the performance of *Yajñas* and the mortal beings could also attain similar bliss by following their gods. It becomes evident from the following extract from *Śatapatha* referring to a divine sacrifice at Kurukshetra. It relates :<sup>82</sup>

The gods, Agni, Indra, Makha, Viṣṇu and all the Viśvedevas, except the Aśvins, performed a sacrificial session at Kurukshetra therefore people say that Kurukshetra is the god's place of divine worship; hence wherever in Kurukshetra one settles there one thinks, 'This is a place of divine worship for it was the god's place of divine worship'.

The *Aitareya Brāhmaṇa*<sup>83</sup> shows that the Soma plant and banyan trees were in abundance in this region. It refers to a sacrifice performed by the sages on the bank of the Sarasvatī from which Kavaṣa (who was the son of a female slave) was excluded.<sup>84</sup> The *Pañchavimśa Brāhmaṇa*<sup>85</sup> gives an idea of the religious rites performed on the holy banks of the Sarasvatī and the Dṛṣadvatī. The *Brāhmaṇas*<sup>86</sup> and the *Sūtras*<sup>87</sup> for the first time refer to the places of pilgrimages in the region. The very fact that religious rites performed here were known as *Sārasvata Sattras* (sacrifices associated with Sarasvatī) indicates a close association of the river with Vedic ceremonies.<sup>88</sup> The scene of the Ṛgvedic love story of Purūravas and Urvaśī, the region since then was known for its lakes full of lovely lotus beds,<sup>89</sup> a striking feature which can be witnessed even today at its various sacred tanks.

The Puranic tradition mentions the spiritual and material advancement of the region under the Kurus. According to the *Mahābhārata*<sup>90</sup> the sage king Kuru cultivated this land with passionate devotion. Kuru, a simple and pious man, gifted with the power of working miracles, was the son of Saṁvaraṇa and Tapatī, the ancestors of the Kauravas and the Pāṇḍavas. The *Vāmanapurāṇa*<sup>91</sup> describes the courage, intensive devotion and asceticism of Kuru and elaborates on the king's cultivation of the eight fold ethical conduct (*aṣṭāṅgamahādharma*) of austerity (*tapas*), truth (*satya*), forgiveness (*kṣamā*), kindness (*dayā*), purity (*śauca*), charity (*dāna*), *yoga* and continence (*brahmacharya*). These traditions point out Kuru's crucial role in the cause of the regeneration of his people. By his emphasis on the growth of agriculture and cultivation of moral conduct—the twin pillars of material prosperity and spiritual elevation, Kuru laid the foundation of that type of culture which was spiritual without being unworldly and material without being avaricious. It was this culture which was considered later on by the *Manusmṛiti*<sup>92</sup> as 'worthy of emulation by humanity all over the world'.

## 2. The epoch of the Mahabharata

In the popular mind the history of the region begins with the battle of the *Mahābhārata* and the *Bhagavadgītā*. This belief has been accepted throughout the ages as a matter of fact by millions of people in this country because the *Mahābhārata* and the *Gītā* occupy a special place in the life of the nation. But this region had been a traditional battlefield and a renowned centre of spiritual contemplation much earlier than the *Mahābhārata*.<sup>1</sup> It had witnessed the racial conflicts between the Aryans and non-Aryans,<sup>2</sup> and the wars waged by Paraśurāma against the Kshatriyas.<sup>3</sup> Pāṇini<sup>4</sup> mentions Kauravyas as one of the independent warrior communities, whose martial qualities were also recognised later by the *Manusmṛiti*,<sup>5</sup> which is indeed a tribute to the valor of the people of the region.

Both on the historicity and the date of the Bhārata war there has been much



controversy and speculation among scholars. Largely the controversy has arisen due to the conflicting nature of evidence—literary, archaeological and astronomical.

Because of the changes, additions and interpolations effected in the text of the epic the *Mahābhārata*, it becomes difficult to determine the portion which delineates the actual battle. Furthermore, the tendency to hanker after contemporary direct evidence establishing the historicity of the battle would be merely an exercise in reconstruction in retrospect. Despite this handicap which is almost germane to the whole study of our early history, the evidence still available provide a fairly adequate basis for the historicity of the Mahābhārata War, though of its magnitude and date there would be a fairly genuine scope of difference of opinion.

As regards the literary evidence, the earliest Purāṇas (5th-4th century B.C.) mention Vyāsa, the son of Parāśara, and a contemporary of the heroes of the battle, as the compiler of the Vedas.<sup>6</sup> He is also known as the author of *Jaya* (a historical poem called 'victory', the earliest edition of the *Mahābhārata*). This work is unfortunately untraceable, but it did exist once is gathered from the epic.<sup>8</sup> In ancient India people had little sense of history and of historical writing. This explains why the early Vedic literature, basically a religious work, is absolutely silent over the Mahābhārata battle. As rightly pointed out by F.C. Pargiter, 'the battle was a purely political contest, had no religious significance (and therefore) . . . did not concern the recluse Brāhmins who composed the religious literature and naturally they did not mention it'.<sup>9</sup> Secondly, it was probably also considered unnecessary because of the existence of a separate work on the subject. The early Vedic literature, however, refers to quite a number of rulers which are described in the Purāṇas as ancestors of the epic heroes.<sup>10</sup>

Śāṅkhāyana and Āśvalāyana (c. 800-600 B.C.) the well known Sutrakāras, are the two earliest authorities on the war. Śāṅkhāyana alludes to a sacrificial error as a result of which the Kurus were driven out of Kurukshetra.<sup>11</sup> Āśvalāyana speaks of Vaiśampāyana, a pupil of Vyāsa, as Bhāratāchārya<sup>12</sup> showing thereby his knowledge of the epic story. Pāṇini (c. 500 B.C.)<sup>13</sup> and Patañjali (c. 200 B.C.)<sup>14</sup> the two distinguished grammarians, are acquainted with the Mahābhārata personages, while Kauṣilya (c. 400 B.C.)<sup>15</sup> attributes the destruction of Duryodhana to his usurption of another's (Pāṇḍava's) kingdom. This literary tradition persists right down to our time particularly at numerous places in Kurukshetra.

The historicity of the war is reinforced by the statement in the Purāṇas that the war was a dividing line between two great epochs—Dvāpara and Kali i.e. past and present.<sup>15</sup> Furthermore, the genealogical portion of the Purāṇas makes no mention of the next generation of the Kauravas (meaning their extinction) and continues the Bharata-Kuru genealogy in the line of Arjuna, third of the Pāṇḍavas.<sup>16</sup> This also finds ample support in the Buddhist literature<sup>17</sup> which refers only to Dhanañjaya and kings of the Yudhiṣṭhira stock. The Purāṇas state clearly that the Mahābhārata war inaugurated a political era, a period of cultural decay.<sup>18</sup> The ruin of the Yādavas



due to the fratricidal strife, the attack of the Ābhīras on the forces of Arjuna, the Nāga invasion of Hastināpura, and the subsequent death of Parīkshit illustrates general decadence of the times. This decaying spirit of the age can also be captured from the opening *adhyāya*<sup>19</sup> of the *Bhagavadgītā* and is further corroborated archaeologically by the decline of the PGW culture towards the upper levels of Hastināpura, and the shifting of the centre of political power to eastern India in the seventh century B.C. Thus it may not be 'far-fetched to see in the advent of the Kali Yuga the reflection of such a situation after the Mahābhārata War'.<sup>20</sup> The Chinese pilgrim Hiuen Tsang who visited Kurukshetra in 634 A.D. states that 'a terrible fight had taken place in the region of Thanesar in remote past so that the entire area became covered with bones which were still visible to him'.<sup>21</sup> The Purāṇas<sup>22</sup> do mention a place in Kurukshetra called Asthipura or 'the city of bones' which was identified by Cunningham<sup>22a</sup> as the site where the cremation of those slain in the battle took place.

The archaeological evidence on the historicity of the war is indirect.<sup>23</sup> The Painted Grey Ware, whose date goes back to about 11th century B.C.<sup>24</sup> has been recovered at hundreds of places in Haryana (in the Ambala, Kurukshetra, Jind, Sirsa, Karnal, Sonapat, Hissar, Rohtak and Gurgaon districts)<sup>25</sup> and also particularly at those sites associated with the Mahābhārata story such as Panipat (Pāṇiprastha), Sonapat (Soṇaprastha), Inderpat (Indraprastha), Baghpat (Vṛkaprastha), Tilapat (Tilaprastha), Kurukshetra, Hastināpura, Barnava (Vārṇāvat) and Bairat (Virāṭanagara).<sup>26</sup> The Hastināpura site has yielded the iron objects (in period III), and also the remains of horse-bones, while its stratigraphical evidence indicates flood levels.<sup>27</sup> References in the Purāṇas<sup>28</sup> show that a flood occurred during the reign of Nichaksu, seventh in descent from the Pāṇḍavas. The shifting of the Kuru capital to Kauśāmbī due to the floods in the Gaṅgā is confirmed by both these types of evidences. Thus the Purāṇic evidence of the continuation of the Kuru dynasty only in the line of the Pāṇḍavas (because of the extinction of the Kauravas in the War)<sup>29</sup> is indirectly supported by archaeology.

The absence of the use of iron and massive structures in the time of the Mahābhārata War tends to cast doubts not so much on its historicity as on its magnitude. The absence of iron weapons and massive structures in early periods at Hastināpura may be due to climatic and other reasons but unless vertical excavations are undertaken at these Mahābhārata sites, nothing definite can be said on this matter. It is likely that massive mud structures wherein wood was used must have been destroyed.<sup>30</sup> The Painted Grey Ware associated with the Mahābhārata period presupposes a knowledge of iron technology, and the possibility of its use in warfare in some form by the people cannot be altogether ruled out. Further, it may be pointed out that iron (*śyāmāyasa*) was known to the *Yajurveda*<sup>31</sup> and the subsequent literature.<sup>32</sup> Even if it is assumed that iron came in regular use in warfare at a later period it need not prevent a war being waged and won without it. The description



of the war, as portrayed in the epic is no doubt exaggerated but to deny the historicity of the event on this count is unjustified.<sup>33</sup>

Attempts at fixing the date of the battle were made for the first time in the Gupta period because of the growth of scientific literature on the subject. But the date in the 4th, 3rd and 2nd millennium B.C. is not compatible with our knowledge of the proto-historic period i.e. the discovery of the late-Harappan settlements (2000-1500 B.C.) at Kurukshetra itself.

Fixing a date in the 15th, 14th and 12th centuries also goes against the accepted schemes of an average reign per generation between the war and King Udayana, between Parīkshit and Mahāpadmananda and between Adhishimakṛiṣṇa and Mahāpadmananda of the Purāṇic tradition.<sup>34</sup>

The Vamśa or list of teachers reproduced in the *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa*,<sup>35</sup> *Bṛihadāranyaka Upaniṣad*<sup>36</sup> and the *Kauṣhitaki* or *Śāṅkhāyana Āraṇyaka*<sup>37</sup> suggests that Guṇākhyā Śāṅkhāyana, the well known Sūtrakāra, flourished about seven or eight generations after Parīkshit, who was born after the war. Śāṅkhāyana was a contemporary of Āśvalāyana, another renowned Sūtrakāra.<sup>37a</sup> Whether this Āśvalāyana was identical with his namesake mentioned in the *Majjhima Nikāya*<sup>38</sup> as a contemporary of Buddha cannot be said with certainty, but there is no doubt that the war was fought before Śāṅkhāyana and Āśvalāyana (c. 800-600 B.C.), the earliest authorities who refer to the war. The reference to Śāntanu, the great grand-father of the Kauravas and Pāṇḍavas only in the 10th maṇḍala of the *Rgveda*<sup>39</sup> suggests that the war was fought after the composition (1400-1000 B.C.)<sup>40</sup> of the said work, while the mention of Dṛtarāṣṭra Vaichitravīrya,<sup>41</sup> Vyāsa Pārāsarya,<sup>42</sup> Kṛiṣṇa Devakīputra<sup>43</sup> and Sikhaṇḍin Yajñasena<sup>44</sup> (the direct participants) in the later-Vedic literature makes it reasonably possible to fix the date of the war somewhere between c. 1200-1000 B.C. This also provides a margin of a few centuries for the foundation and growth of Vedic culture after the disappearance of the late-Harappan culture (c. 1500 B.C.) in the Kurukshetra region.<sup>45</sup>

For the causes and location of the battle which lasted for eighteen days one has to rely mainly on the *Mahābhārata*. The main cause of the war according to the epic was the unlawful usurption of the land.<sup>46</sup> It was perhaps fought with a view to establishing political authority over the whole of India which was accomplished by the victory of the Pāṇḍavas. The lifting of cattle and treasures, arrogance and the necessity of helping allies were contributory factors.<sup>47</sup> Quite different in the view of D.D. Kosambi who suggested that 'it was the argument over the possession of the rich iron ore mines in the south-west area, the slate and the marble and other precious stones, that caused the Mahābhārata War'.<sup>48</sup>

The *Mahābhārata* provides a vivid description of the setting up of military camps and their elaborate arrangements. Kurukshetra was chosen because of its religious importance, a place of salvation for those abandoning their lives there. Secondly, it had been the traditional battlefield and its proximity to rivers and forests



could make the supply of food and drinking water easily available. The left flank of the Pāṇḍava army facing the east was resting on the Sarasvatī and the right near Kirmach (*Kulatāraṇatirtha*) about 8 miles from Thanesar; while the Kaurava army, spread over an extensive area, was facing the west with its right resting on the Sarasvatī and its left towards Amin.<sup>40</sup> The whole army, according to *Mahābhārata*, spread itself over five *yojanas* or forty miles.<sup>40</sup> Making due allowance for the poetic exaggeration it may be said that the battle extended roughly over the area covering Kaithal, Pehowa, Amin and Thanesar.<sup>41</sup> The epic account of the location of the battle is confirmed by local tradition, which points to a number of places in Kurukshetra and adjacent area, reminiscent of the memory of the events and personages of the *Mahābhārata*.

The Bhārata battle inspired 'highly sophisticated and subtle philosophical thought' which has come down to us through the *Śrīmadbhagavadgītā*, the most revered of the Hindu sacred texts. At its most simple the issue related to the dispute about property involving family honour and virtue which were threatened by men who prided themselves of their self righteousness. But this dispute ostensibly of mundane nature assumed the character of the law of Good and the forces of Evil.<sup>42</sup> The *Gītā* is both simple and philosophical; simple for those, who devoid of subtlety of thought and philosophical niceties, still guide their life through contemplation, and philosophical for those who trained in the austerities of deep speculation appreciate keenly the metaphysics and subtlety of profound thinking. Probably there is no work in the literature of mankind where such high and profound philosophy harmonizes with the simple religious precepts.<sup>43</sup>

Any attempt at the search of the actual place where Lord Kṛṣṇa expounded his philosophy would be futile unless satisfactory answers are found to a few basic questions. First, what was the original *Gītā*, which represented the period when the battle was fought? Second, what are the different phases of the earlier thought which culminated in the philosophy of the *Gītā*? The other names of the *Gītā*—*Brahmavidyā*, *Yogaśāstra* and *Upaniṣad* indicate that it was not really a sudden isolated creation, but had behind it the tradition of philosophical speculation nurtured since the *Vedas*, the *Brāhmaṇas* and the *Upaniṣads*. Third, what part of the holy land of Kurukshetra is particularly associated with this spiritual evolution? For the present we can only suggest that the place which may possibly deserve the distinction is the area round the sacred tank (*Brahmasara*) which came to prominence as centre of philosophical speculation long before the *Mahābhārata*. According to the epic the battle took place at *Samantapañchaka* (another name of the holy tank)<sup>44</sup> and this is probably the place where the divine message was delivered.

For the religious, social and economic life of the people of Haryana during this period—the only source of our information is the *Mahābhārata* whose final edition although prepared at a much later date (after the event) also reveal traditional information about the earlier times. The epic mentions the high moral character of



the people (the Kurus) and their prosperity as indicated by the fertility of soil, abundance of water and vegetation.<sup>55</sup> The Kurus were brave, learned and gentle.<sup>56</sup> They followed their duties tenaciously, performed sacrifices and valued truth.<sup>57</sup> Give freely and enjoy were the words often uttered in the houses of common citizens as well as in leading Kuru families.<sup>58</sup> It was believed that even in remote parts of the country the Kṛta age had come to stay.<sup>59</sup> The soil produced succulent grains; the rains were timely and trees were 'laden with fruits'.<sup>60</sup> The forests were tenanted by large number of wild animals and birds.<sup>61</sup> Religious festivals were frequently held.<sup>62</sup> After the foundation of the city of Indraprastha, the Pāṇḍavas made the country rich in 'animal wealth and grains'.<sup>63</sup> Among trees were the *pārijāta*, *aśoka*, *śāla*, *bakula*, *āmra*, *ketaki*, *tāla*, *panasa*, *lodhra*, *badara*, *aśvattha*, *palāśa*, *pilu* and *bilva*. There were orchards of bananas and other fruits, which looked pleasant to the eyes.<sup>64</sup> Ponds of clear water, various types of water birds like *haṁsa*, *kāraṇḍava* and *chakravāka* were seen.<sup>65</sup> Large herds of elephants, cows, camels, donkeys and horses were still met with.<sup>66</sup>

This land of the Kurus thus reached the pinnacle of glory during the Mahābhārata period. It was then known as the land of plentiful grains and immense riches (Bahudhanadhānya). In course of Nakula's western expedition mention is made of Rohitaka (Rohtak) full of horses, cattle-wealth and crops, blessed by the war-god Kārtikeya and inhabited by the valiant Mattamāyūrakas. From here Nakula marched to the other end of the region comprising the deserts and reduced the towns of Śairishaka (Sirsa) and Mahechchha (Meham in district Rohtak).<sup>67</sup>

According to the Purāṇas, the Bhārata war left the Pāṇḍavas as the supreme political power in the north. They were succeeded by Parīkshit<sup>68</sup> who was acclaimed as a universal king, in whose kingdom (*rāṣṭra*) 'milk and honey' flowed.<sup>68a</sup> According to the epic tradition his kingdom covered the land between the Sarasvatī and the Gaṅgā corresponding approximately to the present Haryana.<sup>69</sup> The glorious reign of Parīkshit ended with his tragic fall in the struggle with Takṣaka, the Nāga king of Taxila.<sup>70</sup> This was avenged by his son Janamejaya who conquered Taxila and performed a snake sacrifice.<sup>71</sup> Tradition has it that it took place at Sarpidarvī or Sarpadamana (modern Safidon in Jind district). The *Mahābhārata*<sup>72</sup> states that Janamejaya sometimes held his court at Taxila where Vaiśampāyana narrated the story of the great war. In the *Brāhmaṇas*,<sup>73</sup> Janamejaya is glorified as a great conqueror and performer of horse sacrifice. The *Mahābhārata*<sup>74</sup> informs us that he attended a sacrifice at Kurukshetra along with his brothers, Śrutasena, Ugrasena and Bhīmasena. From the Purāṇas we gather that Indraprastha (modern Delhi) and Hastināpur (in district Meerut) were the capitals of Kurus much before the times of Janamejaya.<sup>75</sup> Āsandīvat<sup>76</sup> (modern Asandh) served probably as the second capital on strategic grounds for the control of the northern parts of the kingdom.

The Purāṇas provide information about the successors of Janamejaya. In the reign of Adhishmakṛishṇa a three years sacrifice was performed on the banks of the



Dr̥ṣadvatī<sup>77</sup>, while during Nichakshu's reign the Gaṅgā washed away Hastināpura and the Kurus shifted their capital to Kauśāmbī<sup>78</sup> (the village Kosam about 48 kms. from Allahabad), a fact which also finds corroboration in Bhāsa's *Svapnavāsavadattā*<sup>79</sup> wherein Udayana, the king of Kauśāmbī is referred to as a scion of the Bhārata family. This was followed by other calamities.

In the assembly of Janaka at Mithilā, the life and achievements of Pārīkshitas was a subject of popular curiosity and interest.<sup>80</sup> This is explained in the question—whether have the Pārīkshitas gone (*Kva Pārīkṣitāḥ abhavan?*) asked by Bhujyu Lāhyāyanī to Yājñavalkya, and in the answer given by the latter—thither where the performers of the horse-sacrifice abide.<sup>81</sup> This shows that the line of Pārīkshita had already ended before the time of *Bṛihadāranyaka Upaniṣad* where the question is made the subject of philosophical discussion. The *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa* explains that they were guilty of some sinful acts which they atoned by their horse sacrifice with its boundless gifts to the priests. Janamejaya's quarrel with the Brahmins is recounted in the *Aitareya Brāhmaṇa*,<sup>82</sup> the *Arthasāstra*<sup>84</sup> and also the *Matsya Purāṇa*.<sup>85</sup> The *Śāṅkhāyana Śrautasūtra*<sup>86</sup> refers to Vṛidhadyumna's error in a sacrifice and the curse uttered by a Brahmin resulting in the misfortune which drove the Kurus out of Kurukshetra. The *Chāndogya Upaniṣad*<sup>87</sup> refers to the devastation of crops in Kurudeśa by Maṣachī (hail stones or locust) resulting in the migration of people to other parts of the country. Furthermore, the story of Videgha Māthava carrying the sacred fire of Yajña from the banks of Sarasvatī to Videha,<sup>88</sup> and the dialogue between Yudhiṣṭhira and Mārkaṇḍeya in the *Matsya Purāṇa*<sup>89</sup> highlighting the importance of Prayāga as the greatest of all the *tīrthas* indicate the eastward movement of the Aryans and the emergence of new cultural and religious centres.

The land of the Kurus even during its decline was acknowledged as the home of Brahmanical culture which attracted greatly the people living in other parts of the country. The *Taittirīya Āranyaka*<sup>90</sup> while narrating a divine sacrificial session at Kurukshetra mentions Tūrghna (Śrughna or Sugh in Ambala district) and Khāṇḍava (the kingdom of Pāṇḍavas with Indraprastha as its capital) as its adjoining regions, while the *Śāṅkhāyana*, *Lāṭyāyana*, *Āśvalāyana* and *Kātyāyana Śrautasūtras*<sup>91</sup> refer to the religious rites performed on the banks of the holy rivers—the Sarasvatī, the Dr̥ṣadvatī and the Yamunā. The Upaniṣads make numerous references to the erudition of Kuru-Pāṇchāla Brahmins at meeting places in the open air. The *Kauṣītaki*<sup>92</sup> cites the example of Gārgya, a man of great learning, who lived among Uśīnaras, Sātvat-Matsyas, the Kuru-Pāṇchālas, and the Kāśī-Videhas. The *Bṛihadāranyaka*<sup>93</sup> refers to the assembly of great Janaka of Videha where the Kuru-Pāṇchālas gathered together and the king wanted to know who amongst them was the greatest of scholars.

The natural calamities which visited the Kurus must have considerably affected their outlook on life. The Kuru-Pāṇchālas who were regarded as authorities on the whole corpus of rituals, began to learn eagerly about the concept of *Ultimate Reality*



and Spirit, and later were converted as the followers of the heterodox teachings of Mahāvīra and Buddha.<sup>94</sup> But even under the changing outlook, the Kurus retained and cherished the basic value of life : spiritual knowledge, justice, truth and rectitude (*Kauraveyāstu Dharmam*).<sup>95</sup> Few people in the world could have conceived such an ideal; and fewer could have gone so far towards its realization.<sup>96</sup>

## NOTES AND REFERENCES

### 1. The foundations of the Indian culture

1. *Rig.* X. 75.5-6; III. 23.4; II. 41.16; I. 3.11-12; P.V. Kane, *History of Dharmalāstra*, IV, p. 690.
2. *Maitrāyaṇī Saṁhita*, II. 1.4; IV. 5.9.
3. *Rig.* X. 90.16.
4. *Rig.* I. 3; II. 41; VI. 61; VII. 95, 96; VIII. 21; X. 125. The Egyptians considered Nile, their river goddess (Hapi) as the source of life and prosperity of the people. A hymn to the Nile on papyrus (now preserved in the British Museum) runs as follows :  
Homage to thee, O Hapi (the river Nile or the river goddess), thou appearest in this land. . . . Thou waterest the fields which Ra (the sun god) hath created. . . . Thou art the friend of bread and drink, thou givest strength to the grain and makest it to increase. . . . thou art the creator of barley. . . . when thou appearest upon the earth, shouts of joy rise up and all people are glad. . . . thou fillest the store houses, thou makest the granaries to over flow.
5. *Rig.* II. 41.16-18.  
*Ambitame naditame devitame Sarasvatī*  
*Aprasastā ivasmasi prasastimamba naskridhi*
6. *Taī Br.* I. 4.4.9  
*Rikṣāme vai sārāsvatāvutsau*
7. *Mbh.* Śānti, XII, 339 .56.
8. *Pad.* 5.27 118; *Skand.* 6.46, 28; *Vām* 32.6.
9. According to Max Mueller, Weber, Muir and many others the composition of the bulk of Rigvedic hymns took place in the Panjab whereas the more recent view put forth by Hopkins and Keith is that it was composed in the land round Sarasvatī, south of modern Ambala. For details see, *The Vedic Age*, p. 244; *The Vedic Index*, I, p. 468, *Cambridge History of India*, I, p. 79 etc.
10. *AV.* 6.30.1.
11. *Rig.* X. 184.2; 30.12; *AV.* VII. 68.1, 2, 3.
12. *Ibid.*, VII. 95.1; VI. 61.10.
13. *Ibid.*, VI. 61.14; *AV.* XIX. 30.5.9-10.
14. *Sat.* I. 4.1.10 f.
15. *Mbh.* Śālya. 50.
16. Suraj Bhan, *Pre-historical Archaeology of Sarasvatī and Drṣadvatī Valleys*, MS, Baroda University Ph.D. Thesis, 1972; *Mārg.* 'Haryana Heritage', September, 1974, pp. 5-6.
17. J.P. Joshi, *op. cit.* (*Mahābhārata: Myth and Reality*, ed. S.P. Gupta and K.S. Ramachandran, pp. 238-8).
18. Suraj Bhan, *op. cit.*

19. *Imperial Gazetteer of India*, XXIII, p. 45.
20. A. Ghosh, *The Rajasthan Desert, its Archaeological Aspects*, *Bulletine of the National Institute of Science of India*, No. I; A Stein, *A Survey of Ancient Sites along the 'lost' Sarasvati River*, *Geographical Journal*, London, Vol. 99.
21. *Alt.* VIII. 1; *Śāṅkha*. XII. 3.  
 The sage Kavasha was driven out by the Brahmanical priests for being the son of a female slave. He was left in a sandy desert so as to die of thirst. But Kavasha who was equally versed in the *mantras* praised the Sarasvati who came rushing to the place where he stood. This shows, as very correctly pointed out by Prof. P.V. Kane, that in the time of the *Āitareya Brāhmaṇa* and long before it the bed of the Sarasvati was dry (*History of Dharmśāstra* IV. pp. 558-59.).
22. *Pad.* Śrīṣṭi. 18.159-60; *Mbh.* Vana, 130.3-4; *Anuśāsana*, 155. 25-27; *Vām.* 3.8.
23. Suraj Bhan, *op. cit.*
24. The problem of the disappearance of the Sarasvati and her rejuvenation has drawn the attention of Indian scientists as well. In a Seminar held at Jodhpur in 1973, H.L. Uppal, Emeritus Scientist made valuable suggestions for the diversion of Rakhi and Chitang and the flood waters of the Somb, Boli and Yamunā into the Sarasvati. It was stressed that this should be accepted by the Government of India as a National problem and research and investigation required in this connection should be taken up at that level (H.L. Uppal, *Rejuvenation of the Sarasvati and Reclamation of the Thar Desert*).
25. *Sat.* 2.5 4 6; *Alt.* 2.24; 6, 7.  
*Vāgvaī Sarasvatī*  
*Vageva Sarasvatī*
26. P.V. Kane, *op. cit.*, pp. 557-58, 681.
27. *Ibid.*
28. *Mbh.* Vana, 83; *Śalya*, 39.
29. *Pad.* Ādi, 26-27; *Nārada*, Uttara, 65; *Vām.* 23.
30. For the cultural and historical importance of the river see, H.A. Phadke, 'Sarasvati : the river par excellence' *Dilip*, Bombay, July/August, 1977, pp. 23-25; Interpretation and Archaeological Correlation of a passage from Pañchavimsa Brāhmaṇa' *Ajaya-Srī* ed. Devendra Handa, Delhi, 1989, I, pp. 41-4.
31. D.C. Sircar, *Cosmography and Geography in Early Indian Literature*, p. 24; Rapson, *Ancient India*, p. 51; *Imperial Gazetteer of India*, X, p. 186, New Delhi, Re-print.
- 31a. Suraj Bhan, *op. cit.*
32. *Rig.* III. 23.4.
33. Suraj Bhan, *op. cit.*
34. *Ibid.*
35. *Pañch.* XXV. 10.13.
36. *Kat.* XXIV. 6.6.38; *Lāt.* X. 19.4.
37. II. 17.
38. J.H. Dave, *Immortal India*, IV, Bombay, 1961, p. 7.
39. Silak Ram, *op. cit.*, pp. 19-20.
40. *Ibid.*
41. *Ibid.*, p. 28.
42. *Mbh.* Vana, 90.3. cf. *Sarasvatī mahāpunyā hradīnī tīrthamālīnī Samudragā mahāvegā Yamunā yatra Pāñḍava*.
43. McCrindle, *Ancient India as Described by Ptolemy*, ed. S.N. Majumdar, Calcutta, 1927, p. 98.



44. *Ibid.*
45. *Ibid.*
46. *Rig.*, VII. 18, 19.
47. *AV.* IV. 9, 10.
48. *Alt.* VIII. 14.4; *Śat.* XII. 5.4.11; *Pañch.* IX. 4.11.
49. *AS.* S.S. XII. 6.28.
50. *Ang. Nik.* IV. 101; *Sam. Nik.* II, 135; IV, 401, 460-61; *Mahābhāṣya*, I. 1.9; I. 4.2; *Raghu.* VI. 48; see also Kane *op. cit.*, III (Hindi Version), p. 1376-77.
- 50a. For details see M.L. Bhargava, *The Geography of Rigvedic India*, Lucknow, 1964, pp. 12-15, 45-51; Śilak Ram, *op. cit.*, p. 13; *Śatapatha*, XIII, 5.4.9; *Rig.* V, 41.5; *Vāmāna*, Ch. XIII; *Mbh.*, Ādi. 6, *Vana*. 99, 125.
51. *Rig.* I. 84.13-14 and also Sāyana's Commentary.
52. *SV.* II. 4.2.11; III. 1.8.2.
53. *Mait. S.*, II. 13.6, 23-25 and also *AV.* XX. 41.1.2.
54. *Śat.* XIV. 1.1; *Jaimī Br.*, III. 64.
55. III. 23
56. *Aṣṭādhyāyī*, IV. 2.86.
57. *Mait. S. op. cit.*
58. Siddhesvara Sastri Chitrav, *Bhāratavarṣiṃ Chaitra Kōṣa*, Pune, 1964, pp. 263-64.
59. Cunningham, *op. cit.*, 1972, II, pp. 218-19; Rodgers, *op. cit.*, p. 6; V.S. Agarwala, *Pāṇini Kālina Bhāratavarṣa*, p. 22.
60. For details see H.A. Phadke, 'Śaryānāvāt', All India Oriental Conference, *Proceedings*, 1974, pp. 367-71.
61. *The Vedic Age*, ed. R.C. Majumdar and A.D. Pusalkar, London, 1957, p. 245.
62. *Rig.* I. 130.7; II. 12.11; VI. 26.5, 61.1; VII. 18.20, 19.8; IX. 61.2-3; Macdonell and Keith, *Vedic Index of Names and Subjects*, Varanasi, 1958, I, p. 363.
63. *Rig.* VII. 18.20 2, 25.3, 32.10, 33.3, 64.3, 83.1.
64. *Vedic Index*, II, p. 275f.
65. *Rig.* XII. 33; *Alt. Br.* VII. 34-9.
66. *Rig.* VII. 18.6-8, 12, 13.
67. *Ibid.*
68. *Ibid.*, 19.
69. *The Vedic Age*, *op. cit.*
70. *Mbh* (Gorakhpur edn.), Ādi, 94.1-64.
71. *Svapnavāsavadattam* (Ganapati Sastri ed.), p. 140.
72. *Śat.* XIII. 5.4.14, *ŚBE*, XLIV, pt V, Eggeling's Trans, p. 398.
73. *The Vedic Age*, p. 246; *Vedic Index*, I, p. 327.
- 73a. *Vedic Index*, II, p. 12.
74. *Rig.* VII. 96.2; Buddha Prakash, *Evolution of Heroic Tradition in Ancient Panjab*, Patiala, 1971, p. 18.
75. *Rig.* VII. 96.2; Buddha Prakash, *op. cit.*
76. *Jai. Up. Br.*, III, 7, 6; 8.7; IV. 7.2; *Kau. Up.* IV. 1; *Gop. Br.*, I, 2.9; *Kāth. S.* V. 6; *Vāj. S.*, XI. 3.3 (Kāṇva recension); *Vedic Index*, I, p. 165.
77. *Tai. Br.*, I, 8.4.1-2.
78. *Śat.* V. 5.2.3.5; XIII, 5.4.11; *Alt.* VIII. 23.
79. *Śat.* III. 2.3.15.
80. *Ibid.*, XI. 4.1.1-2; *Go. Br.*, I. 3.6.
81. *Śat. op. cit.*

82. *Ibid.*, XIV, 9.9.1.2.
83. *Ait.* VII, 30.
84. *Ait.* 8.1; *Śān. Br.* XII, 3.
85. *Pān.* XXV, 10.1, 15, 16, 21, 23.
86. *Ibid.*
87. *Āa. Ś.S.* XII, 6; *Lā. Ś.S.* X, 15ff; *Kā. Ś.S.*, 24.6.5ff; Kane, *op. cit.*, pp. 557-58.
88. *Ibid.*
89. *Rig.* X, 95.15; *Śat.* XI, 5.1.4; *Mbh.* (Gorakhpur edn.) Text with Hindi Trans. *Ādi*, 207, 47-8; *Harshacharita*, ed. K.S. Parab, Bombay, 1912, III, p. 94, IV, p. 123 (specially the references to red lotuses in the region are noteworthy).
90. *Mbh* text (Gorakhpur edn.), *Śalya*, 53, 1-26.
91. *Vām.* ed. Anand Swarup Gupta, Varanasi, 1968, XXIII, pp. 126-8.
92. *Manu.* II, 20.  
*Etatdesaprasūtasya Sakāśōdagrajanmanah*  
*Svañ Svañ Charitrañ Śikṣeran Prithivyām Sarvamānavah.*

## 2. The epoch of the Mahabharata

1. H.A. Phadke, 'Śaryapāvat', *Pro. Ori. Con.*, Pune, pp. 367-71.
2. *Rig.* VII, 18 etc.
3. *Mbh* (cr. edn.), I, 2-12; III, 81.22-3; 117.5; *ABORI*, XVIII, 1937, pp. 5-6, 20 where V.S Sukhtankar suggests Ramahrada's identification with Samantapañchaka. Paraśurāma and Bhīṣma also fought here (*Mbh*, Udyoga, 5, 180-6).
4. *Aṣṭādhyāyī*, IV, 1.178.
5. *Manu*, VII, 193.
6. *Vā.* 60, 11-12; *Viś.* III, 4.2; *Brahmaṇḍa*, II, 34.12-16; *Mbh.* (cr. edn.) 57.73.
7. *Mbh.* Mangala śloka.
8. *Ibid.* *Ādi*, 62.20, Udyoga, 136.18.
9. P.E. Pargiter, *Ancient Indian Historical Tradition*, London, 1922, pp. 283-84.
10. H.A. Phadke, 'The Date of the Mahābhārata War—Evidence of the Vedic Literature', in *Age of Bhārata War*, Delhi, 1979, pp. 218-221.
11. *S.S.S.*, XV, 16.10.13.
12. *Ā.G.S.* III, 4.
13. *Aṣṭādhyāyī*, II, 4.59; III, 3.130, 4.74; IV, 1.114, 169, 176; 3.104; VIII, 395.
14. *Mahābhāṣya*, IV, 1.4.
- 14a. *Arthaśāstra*, I, 6.
15. *Vā.* 99.428-9; *Mat.* 273.49-50.
16. Pargiter, *op. cit.*, p. 148 (for Table of Royal genealogies).
17. *Jāt.* II, 366; III, 400; IV, 361, 450; VI, 260 etc.
18. Pargiter, *op. cit.*, pp. 284-85.
19. *Arjunaviśādayoga*, verses 38-44.
20. Suraj Bhan, 'An Epic Puzzle', *The Times of India*, 23.11.1975.
21. *Buddhist Record of the Western World*, Tr. Samuel Beal, 1969, pp. 184-86; Watters, *On Yuan Chwang's Travels in India*, pp. 314-15.
22. *Pad.* *Ādi*, 27.62; *Vām.* 23.1.7.
23. B.B. Lal, *Ancient India*, *Bulletine of ASI*, 1955; 'Archaeology and the two Indian Epics', *ABORI* LIV, 1973, pts I-IV, pp. 1-8.
24. This is the date of the PGW discovered at Atranji Khera in Western U.P.



25. U.V. Singh, 'List of Archaeological Sites in Haryana', *Dictionary of Indian Archaeology*, MS.
26. B.B. Lal, *op. cit.*
27. *Ibid.*
28. Pargiter, *DKA*, p. 5.
29. H.A. Phadke, 'Historicity of the Bhārata War', Press Note, September 20, 1975.
30. B.P. Sinha, 'History and Myth', *The Times of India*, 17.10.75.
31. *Vaj. S.* XVIII. 13; *Mai. S.* IV. 2.9; *Vedic Index*, I, pp. 31-2.
32. *AV*, V. 28.1; IX. 3.1.7; *Sat.* V. 4.2.2; *Vedic Index*, *op. cit.*
33. For detailed discussion see—H.A. Phadke, *op. cit.*; *Mahābhārata: Myth and Reality* for various other views on the controversy.
34. Pargiter, *op. cit.*, p. 179ff; *The Purāṇa Text of the Dynasty of the Kali Age*, London, 1913, pp. 58, 74.
35. *Sat.* X.
36. *Bṛi. Up.* VI.
37. *Sān. Ar.* Ch. 15-
- 37a. Śāṅkhāyana's teacher Kohola is honoured by Āśvalāyana (*G.S.* III, 4.4).
38. II. 147.
39. *Rig.* X. 98.
40. A.L. Basham, *The Wonder that was India*, New York, 1954, p. 32.
41. *Kāt. Ś.*, X. 6.
42. *Vedic Index*, I, p. 519.
43. *Chā. Up.* III. 17.6.
44. *Kau. Br.* VII. 4.
45. H.A. Phadke, *op. cit.*
46. *Mbh*, Bhishma.
47. Major P. Sen Sharma, *Kurukshetra War : A Military Study*, Ganganagar, 1975, p. 10.
48. *Mārg*, 'Haryana Heritage', p. 3.
49. *Mbh*, Bhishma. XX. 5; Cunningham, *ASIR* XIV, pp. 92-94.
50. *Mbh*, Udyoga, 196.15.
51. H.A. Phadke, *op. cit.*
52. V.N. Datta and H.A. Phadke, *History of Kurukshetra*, p. 31.
53. *Ibid.*, pp. 47-48.
54. *Mbh* (Gorakhpur edn.). 1.2.13.  
*Antare caiva samprāpte Kalidvōparayorabhut  
Samantapañchake Yuddham Kurupāṇḍavasenayoh*
55. *Ibid.*, 108. 1-16.
56. *Ibid.*, 4.
57. *Ibid.*, 6.
58. *Ibid.*, 16.  
*Gṛheṣu Kurumukhyānām paurāṇām ca narādhipa !  
Dīyatām bhujiyatām ceti vāco śrāyanta sarvaśah !!*
59. *Ibid.*, 5.  
*Pradeśeṣvapi rāṣṭrāṇām kṛtayugamavartata*
60. *Ibid.*, 2.  
*Urdhva sasyā bhavad bhūmi sasyāni rasavanti cha !  
Yatharturvarshi parśanyo bahu pushpa phala drumah !!*
61. *Ibid.*, 3.

62. *Ibid.*, 12.
63. *Ibid.*, 206.
64. *Ibid.*, 41-44; also (cr. ed.) III. 25, IX. 36.55, 58-60.
65. *Ibid.*, I, 206.46-48.
66. *Ibid.*
67. *Ibid.* (Cr. ed.) II. 29.3-5.
68. *Ibid.*, I, 94.52, 95.41; *Mat.*, 50.57; *Bhāga*, Chs, 16-18.
- 68a. Bloomfield, *AV*, pp. 197-98, verses 7-10; H.C. Raychaudhuri, *Political History of Ancient India*, Calcutta, 1953, p. 12.
69. Raychaudhuri, *op. cit.*, pp. 21, 22; *The Vedic Age*, p. 319.
70. *Mbh.* I. 36.40; 45-47; *Devī Bhāgavata*, 2.8-10; S.S. Chitrav, *op. cit.*, p. 401.
71. *Mbh.* I. 3.20.
72. *Ibid.*, XVIII. 5.34.
73. *Ait. Br.* VIII. 21; *Śat. Br.* XIII. 5.4.1-2; Keith, *Rigveda Brāhmaṇas*, p. 336; Eggeling, *Śat. Br.* V, p. 396.
74. *Mbh.* I. 3.1.
75. *The Vedic Age*, p. 301; Raychaudhuri, *op. cit.*, p. 43.
76. Raychaudhuri, *op. cit.*, p. 44.
77. *Vā.* I., 10-12; *Mat.* 50, 65-67.
78. Pargiter, *DKA*, p. 50.
79. ed. Ganapati Sastri, p. 140, Trans. V.S. Sukthankar, p. 79; Raychaudhuri, *op. cit.*, p. 47.
80. *Bṛihad. Up.* III. 3.1; Weber, *Indian Literature*, p. 126f.
81. *Ibid.*
82. *Śat. Br.*, XIII. 5.4.1.3; *Mbh.* XII. 150.3.9; 152.38. According to the *Mbh* these sinful deeds of which the eldest of the Pārikshitas was guilty were Brahmahatyā and Bhṛūgahatyā (Raychaudhuri, *op. cit.*, p. 43).
83. *Ait. Br.* VII. 27.
84. I. 5.
85. *Mat.* 50.63.4.
86. *Śān Ś.S.* XV. 16.10-13.
87. *Chānd. Up.* I. 10.1; *Bṛihad. Up.* III. 4; Raychaudhuri, *op. cit.*, p. 45.
88. *Śat. Br.* I. 4.1.10f.
89. *Mat.* Chap. 109.
90. *Tai Ār.*, V. 1.1.
91. *Lāt. Ś.S.* X. 15ff; *Ās. Ś.S.* XII, 6f; *Kā. Ś.S.*, XXIV. 6.5f; *Āp. Ś.S.* XXIII 12-13; *History of Dharmasāstra*, IV, pp. 558, 681.
92. *Kau. Up.* 4.1.
93. *Bṛihad. Up.* 3.1.1-2.
94. Raychaudhuri, *op. cit.*, p. 69.
95. *Mbh.*, VIII. 45.28.
96. Datta and Phadke, *History of Kurukshetra*, p. 37.



### CHAPTER III

## *Buddhism, Foreign Inroads and the Heroic Traditions*

#### 1. Buddhism in Kurudesa

The political importance of Haryana declined due to the destruction of Hastināpura by the erosion of the Gaṅgā while the devastation of crops by locusts led its people to migrate to the eastern parts of India. The region, although fell under the influence of Buddhism during the 6th century B.C., continued to hold its supremacy in rituals and ethical code of conduct.\*

The region, frequently referred to in the Pali canons<sup>1</sup> as Kuru or Kururatta, was one of the sixteen *Mahājanapadas* three hundred leagues in extent and had its capital at Indapatta (Indraprastha) which was seven leagues in circumference.<sup>2</sup> Its other parts were known as Kurukhetta and Kurujāṅgala which included Thanesar-Kaithal-Karnal and Rohtak-Hissar districts respectively.<sup>3</sup> And Kurudeśa its another name denoted the entire territory of the expansion of its people the Kurus, from the Sarasvatī to the Gaṅgā and included Kurukshetra which had already come to prominence as the chief centre of Aryan religion and culture.

The Kuru realm seems to have very little political influence in Buddha's time<sup>4</sup> for the centre of political gravity had already shifted to the east, to Magadha and its capital Rājagṛha. The Kuru kings, however, do find mention in Buddhist literature. The dynasty which ruled at Indapatta is mentioned as belonging to the *Yudhitthillagotta*,<sup>5</sup> and reference is also made several times to *Dhanañjaya*<sup>6</sup> who was none else than Arjuna of the epic tradition. *Bodhisatta Sutasoma* who belonged to the Kuru tribe made large gifts, but he got no pleasure in making such gifts as there was none among the recipients who possessed the five moral qualities<sup>7</sup>, a necessary condition for the efficacy of such charity. During Buddha's time, the king of Kurus was called *Koravya*, and his debates with the elder *Ratthapāla*, also a scion of the noble family of Kurus, are embodied in the *Ratthapāla Sutta* (The Buddhist Text).<sup>8</sup> King *Koravya* lived in the well known city of *Thullakotthila*<sup>9</sup> identified with *Dhankot* in district

Gurgaon.<sup>10</sup> It is so called because houses of its people had abundant grains.<sup>11</sup> Other towns of the region during that period were Kammāsadamma<sup>12</sup> and Kuṇḍi<sup>13</sup> or Kuṇḍila (villages on the G.T. Road in Sonapat tehsil).<sup>14</sup> Kammāsadamma was a nigama or nagara where Buddha used to stay and where a number of his discourses such as, Satipattāna Suttanta, Māgandīya Suttanta, Anaṅha Sappaya Suttanta etc. were delivered.<sup>15</sup> About half a mile of the village there is a small settlement of early historic times, and a stone sculpture found here undoubtedly shows Buddha's close association with the place.<sup>16</sup> The other town Kuṇḍi or Kuṇḍila has been located at village Kundal<sup>17</sup> (also in Sonapat tehsil) where a high mound yielding remains of early historical period exists, and which according to local tradition is connected with the Mahābhārata period.<sup>18</sup> According to Ācārya Buddhaghosa<sup>19</sup> in Buddha's times not a single monastery was established in Kurudeśa and hence whenever the Master visited this region he used to stay in the city of Kammāsadamma. The famous Buddhist nuns Nanduttarā and Mittākālī also belonged to this place.<sup>20</sup> According to *Dīpavaṃśa*<sup>21</sup> Buddha went to a town of the Kuru region and received alms on the banks of Anotatta lake, which he crossed.<sup>22</sup> Udena's queen Māgandīya belonged to the land of the Kurus,<sup>23</sup> and Aggidatta, the priest of the Kosala king, lived on the boundary between the Kuru, Ariga and Magadha regions, and was honoured by the people of these kingdoms for performing his duties honourably and efficiently.<sup>24</sup> The *Chullavagga*<sup>25</sup> mentions Aggalapura (Agroha) as a stronghold of Buddhism while the *Vinaya Piṭaka*<sup>26</sup> recounts the visit of renowned physician Jivaka to the town of Rohtak. From the Somanassa Jātaka<sup>27</sup> it appears that at one time the Kuru kingdom extended as far as Uttarapañchāla, a town in the Kururaththa with Reṇu as its king.

The people of the Kuru kingdom were reputed for deep wisdom, generosity and bodily health. They offered gifts and performed virtuous deeds.<sup>28</sup> A Kuru king along with members of his family and his chief officials followed the *Kurudhamma*, which laid down five rules of moral conduct, and which were supposed to bring about unbounded prosperity to people.<sup>29</sup> Their moral excellence gained popularity, and that is why Buddha is said to have delivered some of his wisest discourses to the Kurus, who embraced Buddhism.<sup>30</sup> This tradition was current even at the time of the visit of the Chinese pilgrim Hiuen Tsang<sup>31</sup> in the second quarter of the seventh century A.D. In his account of Śrughna (Sugh in district Ambala) the pilgrim mentions an Asokan *stūpa* towards the west of Yamunā containing hair and nail relics of Tathāgata (Buddha) at a spot where in former times the Tathāgata had preached the law to covert men; and to its right and left were *stūpas* containing mortal remains of Buddha's famous disciples Sāriputta and Maugalyāyana and other great *arhats* (saints).<sup>32</sup> This evidence of an eye witness and the existence of *stūpas* at Thanesar and Chaneti undoubtedly shows that even the Buddhist acknowledged the importance of this region for propagation of their faith and for the establishment of religious complexes there.<sup>33</sup>

In the *Jātakas*<sup>34</sup> particular mention is made of *Kurudhamma* or the moral code



of the Kurus and their way of life irrespective of any caste, creed or colour. It was the model of an house holder's ideal life, a simple and moral code unconnected with traditional ideas of heaven and hell or salvation which prevailed long before the birth of Buddha. The *Jātakas*<sup>35</sup> tell us that even from distant Kalinga, the Brāhmaṇs used to go to the Kuru land to seek knowledge on their *Dhamma* and brought back the text inscribed on golden plates as a gift for their kings. It consisted in the observance of Pañcāśīla or five rule of moral conduct viz. abstaining from taking of life, the precept not to take that which is not given, abstaining from misconduct in several actions, abstaining from false speech and from liquor that causes intoxication and indolence.<sup>36</sup> The *Papañcasūdanī*<sup>37</sup> (a commentary) of *Majjhima Nikāya* refers to this code of moral conduct of as *Kuruvattadhamma*, and *Aṭṭhakathā*<sup>38</sup> of the *Paṭiṭṭhāna Sutta* recalls the Kurus' enquiry into *samādhi* (state of mind beyond consciousness). It is stated that even the servants and slaves, as also the women folk gathered at the village wells used to talk about *smṛityupasthāna* (application of awareness).<sup>39</sup> Pāṇini<sup>40</sup> also refers to *Kurugārhapatam* (the code of conduct of the Kuru household), a special feature of the social life of the Kurus, which represented possibly their moral and spiritual attitude similar to that commended in the Kurudhamma Jātaka. It would thus appear that although the region had shrunk to an ordinary *Janapada* during the Buddhist period but it continued to be the model of moral and spiritual life.

During the fifth century B.C. Pāṇini, the renowned grammarian, mentions in his *Aṣṭādhyāyī*<sup>41</sup> a number of towns of Haryana such as Kapisthala (Kaithal in Kurukshetra district), Soṇaprastha (Sonapat), Roṇi (probably Rodi in Hissar district), Tauśāyana (Tohana, a place of historical-archaeological importance in Hissar district), Śairīśhaka (modern Sirsa, district headquarter), Yugandhara (Jagadhari in Ambala district), Śrughna (Sugh in Ambala district), Kālakūṣa (probably Kalka in Ambala district), Aishukarī (probably the ancient name of Hissar) and Gauḍapura (probably Gauḍagrāma or Gurgaon in Haryana). That the area was populated also in the subsequent period is further proved by the number of settlements of pre-Mauryan and Mauryan times found during explorations.<sup>42</sup>

During this period northwest India was invaded by the Persian emperors—Cyrus (558-529 B.C.), Darius (522-486 B.C.) and Xerxes (486-465 B.C.).<sup>43</sup> Haryana which was further east was not affected by these invasions. Xerxes's weak successors, who had to face rebellion of their *satraps*, and also the Greek attack, lost hold over their Indian possessions. Whatever little Persian influence remained, it finally disappeared with the emergence of Alexander on the scene sometime in 330 B.C.<sup>44</sup> On the authority of Eratosthenes, Strabo relates<sup>45</sup> :

The Indus was the boundary between India and Ariana, which latter (Ariana) was situated next to India to the west, and was in possession of the Persians at that time (i.e. when Alexander invaded India).



Arrian mentions three garrisons of Indian soldiers who, responded to Darius III's call to resist the advancing Greeks, and one of them came from the eastern side of the Indus.<sup>46</sup> The Indians were placed in the centre, where the Persian emperor himself took position.<sup>47</sup> This indicates that the Indians enjoyed special favours of the king and also the distinction of protecting him.<sup>48</sup> It is quite probable that the Indian contingent, which fought the Greeks, included the Kurus of this region, renowned for daring valour, and also because the Kuru kingdom included Taxila in the extreme northwest during the Mahābhārata period,<sup>49</sup> and that there existed a Paurava kingdom between Jhelum and Ravi even at the time of Alexander's invasion.<sup>50</sup> As stated earlier, the Kurus, the descendants of the Ṛgvedic Puru-Bharatas, were included by Pāṇini among the warrior communities of the northern region.<sup>51</sup>

The Macedonian legions under Alexander, although intended to proceed as far as the Gangetic Valley, did not cross even the Beas because he had received reports about good fighting stuff, strength and great material prosperity of the people beyond it. Arrian, the Greek historian, relates :<sup>52</sup>

It was reported that the country beyond the Hyphases (Beas) was exceedingly fertile, and that the inhabitants were good agriculturists, brave in war, and living under an excellent system of government, for the multitude was governed by the aristocracy who exercised their authority with justice and moderation. It was also reported that the people there had a greater number of elephants than the other Indians and that those were of superior size and courage.

The reference is obviously to the people of Haryana renowned for their martial spirit and sound agrarian economy.

Chandragupta and Chāṇakya on their way to Taxila passed through Haryana. Taxila had earlier formed a part of Janamejaya's kingdom and had developed subsequently into a renowned centre of learning and military education.<sup>53</sup> Youngmen from different parts of the country received education here and Bimbisāra, the Magadhan king, is even known to have established diplomatic relations with Pukkusālī (Puskara-sārin), the king of Gandhāra, whose kingdom probably included Taxila.<sup>54</sup> Chāṇakya, also a resident of Taxila, got his pupil Chandragupta educated at that place.<sup>55</sup> It was here that Chandragupta got an opportunity to see Alexander and afterwards is said to have declared 'that Alexander might easily have conquered the whole country, as the then king was hated by his subjects on account of his mean and wicked disposition'.<sup>56</sup> Chandragupta's first-hand study of the political conditions of northwest India, and the training which he received at Taxila must have stood him in good stead while expelling the foreign enemy from the Punjab. According to the *Mahāvamśatikā*<sup>57</sup> (a commentary on the Ceylonese Buddhist work), after the completion of Chandragupta's studies at Taxila, he along with his teacher Chāṇakya started enlisting recruits for the liberation army, which included many a warrior communities having republican



system of government whom Baudhāyana<sup>58</sup> (c. 500 B.C.) and *Mahābhārata*<sup>59</sup> term as 'kingless' (*Araṭas*). Kautilya describes them as 'martial' (*śāstrapajivi*) and most heroic (*pravira*)<sup>60</sup>, while Pāṇini<sup>61</sup> includes among them the Kauravyas, the ancient warrior community of Haryana. It would thus appear that the main force of Chandragupta's liberation army was recruited from Punjab and Haryana. As Haryana or the ancient Kuru *janapada* had formed a part of the Nanda empire<sup>62</sup>, it seems most likely that the people of this region also took part in Chandragupta's wars waged for the expulsion of the Macedonian garrisons and the overthrow of the oppressive Nanda rule of Magadha. That Chandragupta succeeded in this venture is clear from Justin's account<sup>63</sup> :

India after the death of Alexander had shaken, as it were, the yoke of servitude from its neck and put his governors to death. The author of this liberation was Sandrocottus (Chandragupta). This man was of humble origin, but was stimulated to aspire to regal power by supernatural encouragement; . . . (and) acquired a throne when Seleucus was laying the foundation of his future greatness.

After the defeat of Seleucus in 305 B.C. Haryana became a part of the extensive Mauryan empire and was included in the administrative division called Uttarāpatha with its headquarters at Taxila. The discovery of NBP (Northern Black Polished) Ware in Rupar, (Ambala district), Sugh, Kurukshetra, Panipat, Sonapat, Rohtak and the Mauryan terracottas recovered at several places further confirm Mauryan control over the region.<sup>64</sup> It enjoyed peace and security with no fear of impending foreign invasion.

During the Mauryan period India maintained contacts with the western world and several of the Greek envoys—Megasthenes, Deimachus and Dionysus, who left invaluable accounts on India,<sup>65</sup> must have passed through Haryana on their way to the imperial city. It was again through this very region Aśoka's missionaries carried his message of peace to the outside world.<sup>66</sup> In his early life Aśoka had to pass through this region at the head of a large army to pacify the rebellious people of Taxila.<sup>66</sup>

The importance of Haryana as a stronghold of Aśokan administration is confirmed by the Topra edict,<sup>67</sup> pillars at Hissar,<sup>68</sup> and stūpas at Sugh,<sup>69</sup> Chaneti<sup>70</sup> and Thanesar<sup>71</sup> which were constructed during that period. The Topra edicts, raised at a village bearing that name on the river Yamunā in Ambala district was removed earlier by Firuz Shah Tughluq in 1356 (which is presently fixed on the roof of the three storied citadel, Kotla Firuz Shah, outside Delhi gate to the southeast of New Delhi).<sup>72</sup> Shams-i-Siraj,<sup>73</sup> the historian of Firuz Shah, vividly describes its installation on its present site. It bears Aśoka's seven edicts of which the last and longest is unique, while other specimens of the first six have been discovered elsewhere.

Aśoka's stress on the cultivation of many virtuous deeds (*bahu kayāne*), compas-

sion (*dayā*), liberality (*dāne*), truthfulness (*sache*) and purity (*śochaye*)<sup>74</sup> reflects his deep concern about the moral degeneration of the people, reminiscent of similar profound feelings of the great King Kuru who flourished centuries before him. Aśoka greatly encouraged the planting of banyan trees and mango groves (for providing shed to men and cattle), the construction of wells and the setting up of drinking booths for travellers.<sup>75</sup> The inscriptions bear eloquent testimony to the king's notion of the erection of the pillars of morality (*dhammathambhāni*), the appointment of special officers (*mahāmātras*), and his proclamations for the material and spiritual happiness of the people.<sup>76</sup> The other pillar at Fatehabad (Hissar) was most probably brought from some nearby place of antiquity like Agroha (Hissar district) or Hansi. Firuz Shah had an ardent passion for removing columns and planting them at his favourite resorts in order to perpetuate his name. The Aśokan epigraph has been deliberately effaced, and replaced by Firuz Shah's own genealogy.<sup>77</sup>

In his account of *Su-lu-kin-na* (Śrughna or Sugh) Hiuen Tsang<sup>78</sup> mentions Aśokan *stūpa* containing sacred relics of Buddha and his disciples Sāriputta and Maugalyāyana. At present no *stūpa* is traced at the site. The whole area is heavily eroded by the *nullahs* of Yamunā and it is not unlikely that the *stūpa* was washed away in course of time.<sup>79</sup> About 3 kms. towards the northwest of the site of Sugh is Chaneti with its domical structure, measuring approximately 40 metres in diameter and 20 metres in height, a construction of solid burnt bricks ( $12'' \times 12'' \times 2\frac{1}{2}''$  in size). The domical nature of the construction and the provision for a shaft hole at the top of the solid structure (evidently meant for enshrining relics) suggests the possibility of a *stūpa*.<sup>80</sup> On the basis of the size and colour of bricks Devendra Handa<sup>81</sup> assigns it to Dhanabhūti and dates it to the Mauryan period. The Chinese pilgrim also gives an account of the location and importance of Aśokan *stūpa* at Thanesar. He relates<sup>82</sup> :

To the northwest of the city (Sthāneśvara) 4 or 5 li is a *stūpa* about 200 feet high, which was built by Aśokarājā. The bricks are all of a yellowish red colour, very bright and shining, within is a peck measure of the relics of Buddha. From the *stūpa* is frequently emitted a brilliant light and many spiritual prodigies exhibit themselves.

From the account of Hiuen Tsang it appears that the *stūpa* was located towards the Aujasa *ghat* near the Sarasvatī bed where still a few mounds are seen thickly covered with large broken bricks 'of a reddish yellow, or yellowish red colour, exactly like that of a Gosain's freshly-dyed clothes'.<sup>83</sup> In the absence of archaeological excavation, it is not possible to say anything more on it. Cunningham also stated<sup>84</sup> :

It is probable that the smaller mound may be the remains of the *stūpa* from



which all the large pieces of the bricks have been carried away, and the larger mound may be the ruins of an extensive monastery.

## 2. Foreign inroads

After the fall of the Mauryas the region was subjected to the Indo-Greek invasion. According to Strabo<sup>1</sup> 'The conquests in India by the Bactrian Greeks were achieved mostly by Menander (a Greek commander of the second century B.C.) and he probably advanced beyond the Hypanis (Beas) as far as the river Imaus or Isamos (usually identified either with the Yamunā or the Son).

These invasions are mentioned in the *Pāṭāñjalamahābhāṣya*<sup>2</sup> (written about the middle of the second century B.C.), Kālidāsa's play *Mālavikāgnimitram*,<sup>3</sup> and the *Gārgīśaṃhitā*.<sup>4</sup> Patañjali refers to a Yavana king besieging Śāketa (Ayodhyā) and Madhyamikā (near Chitor),<sup>5</sup> while Kālidāsa<sup>6</sup> narrates the conflict on the river Sindhu where a Yavana (Greek) force was defeated by Vasumitra, grandson of Pushyamitra Śuṅga, the Magadhan king and a patron of Patañjali. More details of the Greek invasions are available in the historical section of the *Gārgīśaṃhitā*, the *Yugapurāṇa*. It states<sup>7</sup> :

The cruel and wicked Yavanas after invading Śāketa, Pāñchāla and Mathurā reached the mud fortifications of Pāṭaliputra; the people became confounded and there was disorder. However, the invaders quarrelled among themselves, and as a result of fierce fighting between them, the Yavanas could not remain in Madhyadeśa.

In view of this it appears that the Greek invasion was just a passing phase and did not affect the life of the people very much. There was infighting and also because of their defeat at the hand of Vasumitra, the Greeks had to retreat from this region. The classical writers, possibly for the same reasons, do not mention any lasting Greek success here. The discovery of Greek coins east of Ravi does not indicate, as rightly put by Whitehead<sup>8</sup> and Allan<sup>9</sup>, the establishment of their rule in this region but the popularity their money had gained. This is further supported by the Greek influence on the Audumbara and Kuṇḍa coins of this region.<sup>10</sup> The main cause of the decline of the Greek power in this region and Madhyadeśa according to A.K. Narain<sup>11</sup> was that :

These areas had been connected with the fabric of the Mauryan body-politic more closely and for a longer duration than Gāndhāra and other parts of the northwest . . . By the time the Indo-Greeks reached the climax of their power in the northwest, the areas east of the Ravi were probably the scene of vigorous political activity.

The Buddhist work *Divyāvadāna*<sup>12</sup> preserves the memory of Pushyamitra's cruel persecution of the Buddhists at Sākala (Sialkot). It is not possible, in the absence of any corroborative evidence, to say whether Pushyamitra's rule extended up to Sākala, which according to *Milindapañho*<sup>13</sup> (another Buddhist work) was the capital of the kingdom of Menander. But from the archaeological evidence of the Śuṅga period in Haryana, it appears that the Śuṅgas maintained their hold, if not their direct rule, over the region.

Ancient Sugh seems to have developed into an important centre of terracotta art during the Śuṅga period. The human figurines found here are mostly of females and generally represent Mother Goddess. 'The heavy ornamentation, transparent drapery and shallow relief' of the moulded plaques reveal the characteristics of the Śuṅga art tradition. An interesting find of this period besides silver and gold ornaments, is the plaque depicting a child learning alphabets (in early Brāhmī script) on a wooden plate. The head of the child who is shown seated in very natural pose, is mutilated. The plaque depicts vowels from *a* to *n* written in early Brāhmī script.<sup>14</sup> A few more Sugh terracottas of this variety are preserved in the Gurukul Jhajjar Museum. These are in a better condition and depict both vowels and consonants in the same characters.<sup>15</sup> Among the animal figurines which are found in abundance, and invariably installed by hand are—bulls, horses, rams, dogs, birds and elephants. The elephants with prominent temples and slightly raised heads, recall the Dhauli elephant in its vigour and elegance.<sup>15\*</sup> The figure of ram with turned horns (now preserved in K.U. Museum) showing power and vitality is yet another fine specimen of the Śuṅga art.<sup>16</sup>

The most interesting evidence of the Śuṅga artistic activity in the region comes from Amin (a village in Kurukshetra district) and Palwal (in Gurgaon district). At Amin were discovered two inscribed red-stone rectangular pillars which were probably preserved in the Thakurji shrine on the west bank of the tank, Suraj Kund.<sup>17</sup> D.B. Spooner<sup>18</sup> on palaeographical grounds placed them in the Kushāṇa period. This, however, has been challenged by scholars on the ground that the depiction of dress and ornaments of persons so finely carved on these pillars could not but be the work of some Śuṅga artists. Anand Coomaraswami<sup>19</sup> and R.C. Agrawala<sup>20</sup> have associated these pillars with the Śuṅga period.

These art pieces give a fairly good idea of the dress and ornamentation of people during those days. The typical Śuṅga turban of the male figure on the left side pillar, the necklace, ear ornaments, and the style of wearing *dhoti* tightened up with a waist cloth are particularly interesting. The person holds a lotus in his right hand on the right chest, and above his head two full-bloomed lotuses are beautifully carved. The right-side column depicts an amorous couple. The smiling lady wears a typical head dress of the Śuṅga period. She is wearing necklace of clearly visible beads, and her ears are adorned by Kuṇḍalas (ear ornaments). Like the present day Rajasthani ladies, she is wearing bangles from the elbow to the wrist while the lower portions of



her legs up to ankles are covered with rings. The style of her *dhoti* resembles that of the Marathi ladies. She puts on a girdle, and also a waist cloth, tied above with ends hanging down below. The male figure whose dress and ornaments are similar to that of the first column holds a wine cup.<sup>20a</sup> V.S. Agrawala<sup>21</sup> has traced the portrait of Yakṣa *mithuna* (couple) in this panel.

The Yakṣa statue from Palwal (Gurgaon district) is another interesting find of the Śuṅga period. It consists of the head and bust of a colossal Yakṣa image of red sandstone. V.S. Agrawala who has given a detailed description of the image writes :<sup>22</sup>

The figure is wearing on the head a conical turban with tiered folds, big round discs in cloven ear-lobes, a double flat crescent-shaped torque, a flat triangular necklace, armlets with triple vertical projections and four heavy wristlets. The right hand is raised towards the shoulder and holds a conch-like tapering object, now mutilated. There are traces of a scarf looped on right elbow. On the back are shown pendant tassels of the necklace. The style of the turban, the torque and the necklace and the armlets with feathered projections seen in the side view, all point to the image being an early Yakṣa type that may be assigned to the early Śuṅga period, about second century B.C.

Other Yakṣa images of this period come from Mehrauli (near the border of Gurgaon district), Bhadas and Hathin (both from Gurgaon district). The Mehrauli sculpture represents a female figure (a yakṣī) under a tree, embracing the trunk of a tree with her left hand suggesting thereby a *śālabhāṅjikā* pose, while at Bhadas the Yakṣa is carved in red sand stone on a railing pillar. Hathin Yakṣa, also a similar railing pillar, depicts legends concerning Buddha's life.<sup>22a</sup>

The *Manusmṛiti*<sup>23</sup> which was written sometime during this period mentions parts of Haryana—Kurukshetra and Brahmāvarta as the most sacred land on the earth associated with sages and gods. It was the seat of culture and religion which set forth the 'model and the standards of piety and good conduct, worthy of emulation by humanity all over the world'.<sup>24</sup> It would thus appear that Haryana was closely connected with the cultural and artistic activity of the Śuṅga period.

After Pushyamitra's death the republican people of Haryana seem to have asserted their independence. Among these were—the Agras, Yaudheyas, Audumbaras and Kuṇḍas, whose coins, seals and sealings were discovered at various places. The Agra<sup>25</sup> or Agācha (San. Agreya, i.e. the people of Agroha) were settled in the region covering Agroha, Barawali, Naurangabad (all in Hissar district), and Rājā Karṇa Ka Qilā as is evident from the discovery of coins at these places.<sup>26</sup> These coins, mostly of copper and few of silver, bear the legend *Agodaka Agācha Janapadaśa* i.e. coins of the Agratya (or Agra) *Janapada* (issued from Agrodaka).<sup>27</sup> The view of D.C. Sircar that the term Agāchamitra or Agrodaka represented a god of that name does not hold good in the absence of any evidence to support it.<sup>28</sup> The Agratyas issued coins during the second century B.C. and had their capital at Agroha (in district Hissar).<sup>29</sup> The



Yaudheyas were another republican tribe of Haryana who were perhaps known as *Adraistai* to Arrian<sup>30</sup> and *Arāṣṭras* to the *Mahābhārata*.<sup>31</sup> They were an ancient martial tribe traditionally associated with Yudha, the wife of the king Nṛga or with Yudhiṣṭhira, the eldest of the Pāṇḍavas.<sup>32</sup> They were included by Pāṇini<sup>33</sup> among the warrior communities of the northwest of India. Their capital was at Rohtak, referred to in the *Mahābhārata*<sup>34</sup> as a renowned seat of Kārtikeya worship. Their earliest coins are found at Khokrakot, Naurangabad, Hansi, Hissar, Bhiwani and Behat,<sup>35</sup> which shows the limit of their territory. Furthermore, these coins also refer to the titles of their rulers, the name of the people, as also their land which was known as Bahudhāna or Bahudhānyaka (i.e. rich in corn). It has recently been suggested that 'the Yaudheyas . . . ruled over the region of Haryana till they were conquered by the Indo-Greeks towards the end of the second century B.C. or in the beginning of the first century B.C.'<sup>36</sup>

The Indo-Greek rule over the region may have lasted for a short period, but the discovery of quite a large number of coins from Sugh,<sup>37</sup> Jagadhari,<sup>38</sup> Naraingarh,<sup>39</sup> Sadhaura,<sup>40</sup> Rājā Karna-Kā-Qilā,<sup>41</sup> Theh-polar<sup>42</sup> (district Karnal) Sonapat,<sup>43</sup> Agroha,<sup>44</sup> Khokrakot,<sup>45</sup> and coins moulds from Naurangabad<sup>46</sup> (district Hissar) leaves no doubt that the Greeks attacked the region during the Śuṅga rule and after. The legends of these coins bear the names of as many as fourteen Indo-Greek kings<sup>47</sup>—Menander, Antialcidas, Amyntas, Apollodotus, Antimachus, Diomedes, Polyxenus, Philoxenus, Lysias, Strato, Heliocles, Hermaeus, Agathocles i.e. more than half of the known Indo-Greek kings of both the lines. The discovery of Greek coins may not indicate the establishment of their power in this region but it is possible that after Pushyamitra's death, the independent republics of this region 'might have been attacked and subjugated by the Indo-Greeks during the second or first century B.C., and they ruled there until they were supplanted by the Śakas'.<sup>48</sup>

The Śaka conquest of Punjab variously attributed by scholars to Maues,<sup>49</sup> Azez II<sup>50</sup> and Rājuvula<sup>51</sup> possibly included parts of Haryana. Two coins of the last mentioned ruler were recovered from Ambala by Rodgers which bear his title *Māhākṣatrapa*.<sup>52</sup> The Śakas who initially began their rule in Taxila and eastern Punjab also became the *Mahākṣatrapas* of the Mathurā region, a fact which could be possible only after their conquest of the entire territory from Ghaggar (Sarasvatī) to Yamunā. It follows that 'the Indo-Greek rule in this region might possibly have ended with the coming of the Śakas probably towards the last quarter of the first century B.C. or in the beginning of the first century A.D.'<sup>53</sup> The Śaka rule over this region also finds support in the *Viṣṇudharmottarapurāṇa*<sup>54</sup> (a work of 5th-6th century A.D.), in the discovery of copper coins of the Śaka rulers of Mathura namely Hagāmaśa, Hagāna and Śoḍāsa from Ahranva (Gurgaon district).<sup>54a</sup> and in the adoption of the Śaka title of *Mahākṣatrapa* by the Yaudheyas.<sup>55</sup> Jai Prakash<sup>56</sup> suggests that the expression *svāmīno* in the coin-legends of the Yaudheyas also indicate that these coin-types were issued by them after they became independent of the Śaka Kṣatrapas.



In view of the above and the Junagadh rock inscription claiming that Mahāk-ṣatrapa Rudradāman destroyed the Yaudheyas 'who would not submit because they were proud of their title of heroes among the Kṣatriyas'<sup>57</sup> and also the Buddhist tradition<sup>58</sup> stating Rudradāman's empire to have extended up to Sialkot, the precise date of the Śaka rule in this region is somewhere between c. 20 B.C. and 150 A.D., admitting, of course, that they did not rule all this period.<sup>59</sup> The major difficulty in the reconstruction of the chronological framework is the absence of Śaka and Yaudheya coins from the region during this period. The tentative explanation is that the overlordship of the Śakas was nominal which did not allow them to issue either their coins in the territories of the Yaudheyas or to permit the latter to issue coins in their name, which would have meant their virtual independence.<sup>60</sup>

Haryana formed a part of the Kushāṇa empire which extended as far as Mathura and Varanasi.<sup>61</sup> This finds support in the discovery of Kushāṇa coins from the districts of Ambala,<sup>62</sup> Kurukshetra,<sup>63</sup> Karnal,<sup>64</sup> Sonapat,<sup>65</sup> Jind,<sup>66</sup> Sirsa<sup>67</sup>, Gurgaon,<sup>68</sup> Bhiwani,<sup>69</sup> Rohtak;<sup>70</sup> Kushāṇa terracottas from Sugh<sup>71</sup> and Hissar<sup>72</sup> and stone sculptures from Hissar and Rohtak.<sup>73</sup> Coin-moulds of Kanīṣka are recovered from Naurangabad.<sup>74</sup> The coin-moulds from Rohtak was perhaps used according to V.S. Agrawala,<sup>75</sup> to cast some coins of Huviṣka, the great Kushāṇa king. Theh Polar<sup>76</sup> (Karnal district) has yielded some coins of Kushāṇa Vāsudeva, and two debased copper coins bearing the Kushāṇa type of a king at an altar. The Kushāṇa sway over this region is also attested by the recent discovery of a hoard of 5,000 copper coins from Sonapat,<sup>77</sup> which relates to the times of Kanīṣka I, Huviṣka, Vāsudeva, the Kushāṇa chiefs, and also the Yaudheyas. From Rājā Kaṇā-Ka-Qilā<sup>78</sup> were also found antiquities belonging to this period. These include large size bricks (measuring 14 to 14½ inches in length, 9 to 9½ inches in breadth and 2½ to 3 inches in thickness) and terracotta objects—sealing depicting a beautiful Indian bull on one side and an inscription 'probably in Kharoṣṭhī script', a fragmentary dish and a votive tank depicting musicians with cymbals, flute and tabor and other instruments in their hands. A fragmentary stone inscription<sup>79</sup> in the Kharoṣṭhī script, belonging to this period, is said to have been found in Karnal, and refers to the construction of a pond (*puṣkariṇī*) by one Kṛṣakavi. A large number of crucibles and copper and iron lumps and slags in the cuttings at Sugh shows that metal work was a flourishing industry during the early centuries of the Christian era. The tradition of metal work at Jagadhari, a famous centre of that industry today, can thus be traced back to much older times.<sup>80</sup>

The most interesting art objects of this period were found at Sugh and Rohtak. The Sugh terracottas show the art in its exuberance. The human figurines are generally mould made, while those of the animals are hand modelled as in the previous period. The female figurines, which are more popular than the male ones, show rationalisation in ornamentation and drapery and exquisiteness in hair-styles. Some of the figurines have approached the classical idiom in the delineation of the thin transparent drapery showing thin schematic ribs for folds and the plastic quality of the limbs. The



animal toys include elephants, bulls, horses and rams, though the elephant is not as popular as in the earlier days.<sup>81</sup> The terracotta plaque from Naurangabad<sup>82</sup> (Hissar district) depicts a warrior killing a lion. A Buddhist sand-stone sculpture representing Padmapāṇi was recovered from a temple at Lalkot<sup>83</sup> (3 kms. northwest of Rohtak). The deity seems to be holding in his upward right hand some conical or a cup shaped object in between the thumb and the fingers. The deity is wearing ear ornaments and a necklace touching the chest. The face is completely damaged but for its slightly raised hairs falling on the back. The female figurines, one on each side, and the lotus halo at the back of the head are partially damaged. The sculpture was found from the level where Kushāṇa coins have also been recovered.<sup>84</sup> Other sculptural remains are from Nuh, Ahranva, Sondh and Sanghel (Gurgaon district). At Nuh and Ahranva were discovered terracotta male heads and Yakṣa Vāmanaka figurines respectively, while at Sondh a red stone representation of Chaturbhuja Viṣṇu was found, while the art style, use of red stone, plastic execution, the poise and inert motion, natural accomplishment and archaic features of the Mahiṣamardini image at Sanghel suggest its creation sometime in the late Kushāṇa age.<sup>85</sup> But the more interesting is the life-size sculpture of seated Lord Buddha in the white-spotted Mathura stone acquired from Brahmanavas village in district Rohtak.<sup>86</sup> One of the rare pieces of art in this part of the country, it belongs to the Śaka-Kushāṇa times. Its details are as follows :<sup>87</sup>

The Buddha is shown seated in Padmāsana pose. The upper portion is broken and on its pedestal is engraved inscription in Kushāṇa Brāhmī character : *Buddha Kanaka Muni*. . . . . The feet of the deity are decorated with wheel (*chakra*) and a floral design (*padma*).

From the mound of Khokrakot<sup>87</sup> (in Rohtak) was discovered a carved lion-capital fragment measuring 3 feet in width and 18 inches in height. It is now preserved in the National Museum, Delhi. Carved out of white spotted red sand-stone of the Kushāṇa period, it represents four loins, two in front and two on the back side. Perhaps executed in first-second century A.D. it is 'far superior to the inscribed loin-capital from Mathura exhibited in the British Museum, London'.<sup>88</sup> Like the Mathura specimen, the Khokrakot pillar also depicted two winged loins in seated pose facing opposite direction (a motif, which reminds one of the more excellently executed at Sanchi on its eastern Gateway). The back side loins are devoid of wings but instead show a lady (Yakṣi) to the left and to the right a male (Yakṣa) in a happy mood extending his right hand holding a cup of wine to his spouse. Following the traditional pattern, both of them hold the reins of the loins.<sup>89</sup> R.C. Agrawala, who has made a detailed study of this art specimen, compares it with capitals found at Nasik, Pitalkhora and Karle, and also sees Persian influence over it.<sup>90</sup> Other noteworthy features of the column are the *swastik* carving below the ear of every lion, and the big hole in the centre of the fragment on the top probably intended as 'a socket to



support some heavy sculptural relief from above'. It was in all probability an upper part of some Kushāṇa gateway or a pillar at Rohtak.<sup>91</sup> It stands undoubtedly a rich addition to the collection of National Museum and ancient art of Haryana in particular.

### 3. The heroic traditions

The Yaudheyas, who had already appeared on the political scene by striking their coins in the late second century B.C. challenged in due course the Kushāṇa hold over this region.<sup>1</sup> It seems quite probable that during the Indo-Greek raids east of Ravi and parts of Haryana, Yaudheyas along with others offered stiff resistance to their further advance. This explains as to why in the Junagadh inscription (A.D. 150) of *Mahākṣatrapa* Rudradāman tributes are paid to their heroism. The Yaudheyas remained a republican people as is indicated by their coin-legend *Yaudheyānām Bahudhānyake* (of Yaudheya belonging to the Bahudhānyaka country); *Bahudhānyaka* was the name of their country meaning 'rich in corn'. The symbols of elephant and bull represent their military strength and their progress in agriculture. Their material interests are revealed in their coins where Skanda or Kārtikeya, the general of the gods, is depicted as their protecting deity with the coin-legend *Yaudheyabhāgavatasvāmīno Brahmanyadevasya* (of Brahmanya, the divine lord of the Yaudheyas).<sup>2</sup>

During the times of Kanīška and Huviška (A.D. 78-138) when the Kushāṇa power was at its height, the Yaudheyas could not fight the foreigner. In the middle of the second century A.D. they attempted to do so but were checked by the powerful Śaka Rudradāman. Some local rulers also seem to have asserted their independence as is evident from a rare large copper coin at Rājā-Karṇa-Kā-Qilā<sup>3</sup> bearing the name *Rajno Yajñajitasya* (of king Yajñajita) in the second or third century A.D. script.<sup>4</sup> According to A.S. Altekar<sup>5</sup>, 'the Yaudheyas made a second bid for independence towards the end of the second century A.D., came out successful in their venture and succeeded in freeing their homeland and ousting the Kushāṇas beyond the Sutlej'. The Yaudheya coins of this period have been found in conjunction with the Kushāṇa coins from places like Sonapat, Anwali, Lao Majra, Achaja, Kharkhoda, Baland (in Rohtak district), Hansi (Hissar district), Sirsa and other places.<sup>6</sup> This shows that in this region the Yaudheyas replaced the Kushāṇas. This is further attested to by the discovery of more coins from Rājā Karṇa-Kā-Qilā<sup>7</sup>, Theh Polar<sup>8</sup> (it includes a hoard of 232 copper coins) and Asandh<sup>9</sup> (district Karnal), Abohar,<sup>10</sup> Sirsa,<sup>11</sup> Jaijivanti,<sup>12</sup> Jind,<sup>13</sup> Hansi,<sup>14</sup> Hissar,<sup>15</sup> Panipat,<sup>16</sup> Sonapat,<sup>16a</sup> Bhagaula<sup>17</sup> (district Gurgaon), Rewari<sup>18</sup> (district Mahendragarh), besides Rohtak<sup>19</sup> which was their capital.

From what has been stated above, it will become clear that foreign rule in Haryana completely disappeared towards the beginning of the third century A.D. It is likely that certain local rulers like Yajñajita after the fall of the Kushāṇas gained



power and issued coins under their name, but they soon surrendered themselves to the Yaudheyas.

The terms 'dvi', 'tri' on the Yaudheya coins have been variously interpreted by scholars as denoting three tribes, sections, confederating units or their administrative divisions.<sup>20</sup> Agroha seal<sup>21</sup> and Vijaygadh inscription<sup>22</sup> throw interesting light on their administrative structure. Both these records show that the head of the republic bore the titles *Mahārāja*, *Mahākṣatrapa*, *Mahāsenāpati* and was appointed or selected by the republic (*gaṇa*). The Agroha seal states ;<sup>23</sup>

(the seal) of one who is appointed by (*Puraskṛta*) Yaudheyagaṇa, of one who was adopted (*gṛhita*) by (*Mahārāja*) *Mahākṣatrapa Mahāsenāpati* Indramitra, of one who was *Mahārāja Mahākṣatrapa Senāpati* and *Apratihataśāsana* and of Dharmamitra Nandavarman.

The ultimate victory of the Yaudheyas in their struggle against the Kushāṇas is evident from the new type of coins showing the standing figure of war-god Kārtikeya with spear in right hand, the left placed on the hip, a peacock nearby, and on the reverse the figure of a goddess with the right hand raised. Their success over the Kushāṇas is also attested by their coin-legend *Yaudheya-gaṇasya jayaḥ* (victory of the Yaudheya Republic). Their seals found at Sunet and Naurangabad testify to their reputation as invincible warriors—the holders of the charm of victory (*Jayamantra-dhara*).<sup>24</sup> Under the Yaudheyas the region witnessed the revival of ancient values : martial spirit, love of Sanskrit learning, and the curious blend of material and altruistic interests.

Other republics which collaborated with the Yaudheyas were the Audumbaras and the Kuṇindas. Audumbaras were an ancient people referred to by Pāṇini.<sup>25</sup> Their coins bearing their name have been recovered from an extensive area from Ravi to Kangra.<sup>26</sup> They are also mentioned in the Purāṇas<sup>27</sup> and the *Bṛhatsamhitā*.<sup>28</sup> The Purāṇas associate them with Viśvāmitra and the Kauśika gotra.<sup>29</sup> Two of their coins which are rare, are preserved in the British Museum, London and the Lahore Museum respectively, showing a human figure putting on a beard with the legend 'Viśvāmitra'.<sup>30</sup> This shows that these people worshipped the Vedic sage Viśvāmitra, the priest of the Puru-Bharatas evoking thereby the martial traditions of the region. The region of Buria, Sugh, Jagadhari, has yielded several coins of king Amoghabhūti (a famous chieftain of the Kuṇindas in the early century of the Christian era).<sup>30a</sup> Kuṇinda coins were procured also from Naraingarh,<sup>31</sup> Sadhaura,<sup>32</sup> Choti Krori,<sup>33</sup> Badi Krori,<sup>34</sup> Madalpur<sup>35</sup> and Karnal<sup>36</sup> and bear the legend Kuṇinda or Kuṇindagaṇa. Settled between the Sutlej and the Yamunā, the Kuṇindas also seem to have struggled with the Kushāṇas. Some of their coins are cast on Kushāṇa model bearing the figure of Śiva with trident and the symbols of deer, tree and river.<sup>37</sup> They are referred to as an ancient people by Pāṇini,<sup>38</sup> the Purāṇas,<sup>39</sup> Ptolemy<sup>40</sup> and Varāhamihira.<sup>41</sup>



In course of time the Audumbaras and the Kuṇindas lost their independent existence probably because of their fusion with the expanding republic of the Yaudheyas. This receives additional support from the Allahabad inscription of Samudragupta,<sup>42</sup> which does not mention either the Audumbaras or Kuṇindas, though it refers to the Yaudheyas. Thus by the end of the third and early fourth century A.D. the Yaudheyas who repulsed the Kushāṇas, dominated the region of Haryana.

The Yaudheyas, although removed from the political scene after the rise of the Guptas, were remembered as a brave and cultured people of the past. Their folk culture for instance, was popular even in far off regions of the country. A Jaina text speaks of 'the drummers of Rohtak who attracted crowds of hundreds by their folk-music, played in Yaudheya tunes to the accompaniment of lutes, set with sheets of bronze, in the bazaars of distant Ujjain';<sup>43</sup> while the *Divyāvadāna*<sup>44</sup> describes the ancient town of Rohtak as well fortified, thickly populated and inhabited by prosperous nobles and merchants. The material prosperity of the region under the Yaudheyas also finds confirmation in the works of Pushpadanta<sup>45</sup> and Somadeva<sup>46</sup> (the Jaina authors who flourished during the tenth century A.D. under the patronage of the Rāṣṭrakūṭas of the Deccan). Somadeva while paying glowing tributes to the Yaudheyas wrote<sup>47</sup> :

The Yaudheya country was like an ornament of the earth, and was replete with all requisites of good and happy life. Its people having all objects, necessary for the pursuit of religion (*dharma*), material gain (*artha*), lived as it were in heaven. Its villages were full of cattle wealth, cows, buffaloes, goats, sheep, camels and horses. Abundance of irrigation works rendered them free from the vagaries of rains (*adevamātrika*). Their well-watered field of black soil (*Kṛṣṇa-bhūmayāḥi*) settled by subjects of all the eighteen categories, were green with harvests and gardens. They yielded such bouncing harvests that the farmers were unable to beat and stock them properly.

Somadeva adds further :<sup>47</sup>

The bulk of the people consisted of the working classes, artisans and peasants, who were hospitable and large hearted. However, the burden of taxation on them was severe which they bore patiently. They were loyal to their rulers, and were devotees of Kārtikeya, the generalissimo of the gods. Their villages and settlements had no rocks, stones and thorns and bushes. Their ladies, beautiful and robust, laden with ornaments, and dressed in tight garments worked in farms and fields, and attracted travellers. They led a peaceful and quiet life without social frictions; and caste remained intact, and people respected the *varṇāśrama dharma*.

Somadeva calls the metropolis of the Yaudheyas as Rājapura possibly identical with modern Rajpura near Ambala<sup>48</sup> or Rajor or Rajorgarh (Alwar district).<sup>49</sup> This was perhaps their second capital, other than the famous Rohitaka (Rohtak) mentioned in the *Muhābhārata*. This description gives us a vivid and sensitive picture of the peace, affluence and culture of Haryana under the Yaudheyas.

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4. G.P. Malalasekera, *Dictionary of Pāli Names*, I, p. 641; Rhys Davids, *Buddhist India*, p. 27.
5. *Sutasoma Jāt.* IV, 361, V, 457.
6. *Jāt.* II, 366, III, 400; IV, 450; VI, 260 etc.
7. *Ibid.*, IV, 361.
8. *M.N.*, II, 65f (PTS).
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12. *A.N.*, 6th edn., p. 29.
13. Silak Ram, *op. cit.*, p. 105.
14. *Ibid.*
15. Malalasekera, *op. cit.*
16. Silak Ram, *op. cit.*, p. 105.
17. *Ibid.*
18. *Ibid.*
19. *Papanhasudani*, III, p. 722.
20. *Theragāthā* (Bombay University Pub.) pp. 56-57.
21. *D.V.*, I, verses 43-44.
22. The Anotatta lake mentioned here may possibly be the Anyatahplakshā of the *Śat. Br.* (IX, 5.1.4).
23. *Dh.P.*, *Atthakathā*, I, 199 (PTS).
24. *Ibid.*, III, 242.
25. XII, 1.9. For the identification of Aggalapura with Agroha see J. Przyluski, *Ancient People of the Punjab* (Eng. trans. Chitrabhanu Sen), p. 11. The *Divyāvadāna* (ed. P.L. Vaidya, Darbhanga, 1959) also informs us about the expansion of Buddhism in northwest including Agroha and Rohtak (*Ibid.*, p. 67f).
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27. *Jāt.* IV, 444.
28. *Ibid.*, VI, 329.
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30. *A.N.* V, 29-32; *S.N.* II, 92-93; 107ff; *M.N.* I, 55ff, 501ff; II, 54ff, 261ff; *D.N.*, II, 55ff; *Theragāthā* verses 769-93; Mrs. Rhys Davids, *Psalm of the Sisters*, pp. 51-8; B.C. Law, 'Kurukshetra in Ancient India', *Belvalkar Fel. Vol.*, p. 259.



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32. *Ibid.*
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34. *Kurudhamma Jāt.* (No. 276), Malalasekera, *op. cit.*, p. 643; V.S. Agrawala, *Ī Pāṇini Kālina Bhāratavarṣa*, p. 113.
35. *Kurudhamma Jāt.*, *op. cit.*
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39. *Ibid.*
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52. McCrindle, *Invasion of India by Alexander the Great*, p. 121.
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56. Mookerji, *op. cit.*, pp. 5-6; Plutarch, *The Invasion of Alexander*, p. 311.
57. *Mahāvamśatikā*; Mookerji, *op. cit.*, p. 22.
58. *Dh.S.*, I, 1.2, 13-15.
59. *Mbh.* VIII. 44.2070.
60. *Arthasāstra*, VII, 10, 14; VIII. 14.
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71. *Buddhist Records of the Western World*, p. 186.
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73. Elliot and Dawson, *History of India as told by its own Historians*, III, p. 350-51.
74. Hultzsch, *op. cit.*, p. 136.
75. *Ibid.*, pp. 134-135.
76. *Ibid.*, p. 134.
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## 2. Foreign Inroads

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- 84a. Punia, *op. cit.*
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86. *Ibid.*, pp. 222-23.
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89. *Ibid.*, p. 27.
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### 3. The heroic traditions

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- 16a. *Ibid.*, see also Allan, *op. cit.* cli; Cunningham, *op. cit.*, p. 76 etc.
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*Teṣāṃ Gotrāṇi bahudha kauśikānām mahātmanām*
30. Allan, *op. cit.*, clii; Whitehead, *CCPM*.
- 30a. Rodger's Report, List. pp. 3-4; *JASB*, XLIV., p. 82; *Pro. A.S.B.*, 1875, p. 85; Cunningham, *ASIR*, XIV, p. 138-39.
31. Rodgers, *op. cit.*, p. 3.
32. *Ibid.*, pp. 3-4.
33. Manmohan Kumar, *op. cit.*
34. *Ibid.*
35. *Ibid.*
36. *JASB*, XLIV, p. 82; *Pro. A.S.B.*, 1875, p. 85.
37. Buddha Prakash, *Haryana Through the Ages*, Kurukshetra, 1970, p. 19.
38. *Aṣṭādhyāyī*, IV. 2.113; IV. 3.93.
39. *Vīy* (Wilson, II, Hall's ed., p. 180), *Mar* etc. as quoted by Cunningham, *Coins of Ancient India*, Varanasi, 1971, p. 71.
40. McCrindle, *Ancient India as described by Ptolemy* (S.N. Majumdar Sastri ed.), p. 109.
41. *Bṛhatsaṃhitā*, IV. 24, XIV. 30, 33; A.M. Shastri, *op. cit.*, p. 84.
42. Allahabad Pillar Inscription, lines 22-3.
43. *Chaturbhāṣī* ed. V.S. Agrawala and Motichandra, p. 168; Buddha Prakash, *op. cit.*, p. 26.
44. *Divyavadāna*, ed. P.L. Vaidya, Darbhanga, 1959, pp. 67-68.
45. *Jasahara-Chariu*, cr. edn. P.L. Vaidya, 1931, pp. 4-5. Puṣpadanta describes the Yaudheya country as the very heaven on earth, its citizens as prosperous having multi-storied houses full of grains.
46. *Yasastilakacampū* (ed. Sundarīal Shastri, Varanasi, 1960), Eng. Tr. Buddha Prakash, *Haryana Research Journal*, 1966.
47. *Ibid.*, pp. 8-9.
48. Buddha Prakash, 'Glimpses of Ancient Hariyana', *HRJ*, 1966, I, No. 1, p. 14.
49. M.K. Sharan, *Tribal Coins—A Study*, p. 90.

## CHAPTER IV

# Emergence of Political Power

### 1. The rise of Pushpabhutis

Haryana, known as Śrīkaṇṭha *janapada* during the 'Classical Age' of the Guptas and the Pushpabhutis had its capital at Sthānaviśvara (modern Thanesar) named after the famous deity worshipped by the ruling dynasty of the Pushpabhutis. The earliest historical reference to Thanesar is in Ptolemy's 'Betaing-Kaisar'<sup>1</sup> which Cunningham reads as 'Satan Aisar'<sup>2</sup> and which approximates to Sthānaviśvara in Sanskrit, or to *Sa-ta-ni-ssu-fa-lo*<sup>3</sup> in Chinese mentioned by Hiuen Tsang.

The name Sthānaviśvara is derived, either from Sthāna, meaning an abode of Śvara (Mahādeva), or from an amalgamation of the names of Sthāṇu and Śvara, or from Sthāṇu and *sara* (a lake).<sup>4</sup> Thus the place is connected with lord Śiva. The *Matsya Purāṇa*<sup>5</sup> mentions an abode of goddess Bhavānī Durgā at Sthāneśvara, while the *Mahābhārata*<sup>6</sup> states that the god Sthāṇu (Śiva) had himself appeared in a form there. The *Mahāvagga*<sup>7</sup> mentions Sthūna or Thūna, a Brahmin village in the west (*pacchimāya disāya*); while the *Dīvyāvadāna*<sup>8</sup> adds Upasthūna, and describes them both as Brāhmaṇa villages (*paśchimena sthūnopasthūnakau brāhmaṇagrāmakau*). This accords with the account of the Chinese traveller Hiuen Tsang<sup>9</sup> who regards Thanesar as the western most country of Buddhist Madhyadeśa. The *Vṛhatsayambhū Purāṇa*<sup>10</sup> names the place as Sthāneśvara and its association with the Śrīkaṇṭha *janapada* can be gathered from the Buddhist work *Āryamañjuśrīmālakalpa*.<sup>11</sup> Further, the recent discovery of clay seals and sealings at Daulatpur<sup>12</sup> (about 15 kms. from Thanesar) recording the legend 'Sthāneśvarasya' i.e. of the lord Sthāneśvara, in the Brāhmī character shows that Thanesar had already grown into a centre of Śaivism by 4th-5th century A.D.

The *Harshacharita*<sup>13</sup> of Bāṇa makes it sufficiently clear that Sthānaviśvara, the capital of Śrīkaṇṭha *janapada*, was situated near the bank of the river Sarasvatī. The region Śrīkaṇṭha derived its name from a *nāga* (cobra).<sup>14</sup> Bāṇa presents a graphic picture of Śaivism which was popular in Thanesar, though its tāntric form was not then unknown. His account, though exaggerated, is valuable on the religious life of



the people under king Pushabhūti, an ardent devotee of Śiva, and whose example was emulated by his subjects. Bāṇa writes<sup>15</sup> :

... from boyhood upwards he (Pushabhūti) untaught by any man, entertained a great, almost inborn, devotion towards Śiva, the adorable, readily won by faith, creator of creatures, annihilator of existence . . . . The dispositions of his subjects also were conformable to their monarch's mind. Thus house by house, the holy lord of the Cleaving Axe was worshipped, the winds blowing in those pure districts were fragrant with much resin melted in the sacrificial pits, they dropped a rain of dew from the milk used for bathing, they whirled along petals of Bel twig chaplets. It was with gifts and presents customary in Śiva worship that the king was honoured by citizens, dependants, councillors, and neighbouring sovereigns . . . .

Bāṇa's *Harshacharita* (The Deeds of Harsha) written about early seventh century A.D. gives a detailed account of the king's interest in tāntric practices and his close associations with a Southern Śaiva Āchārya Bhīrava.<sup>16</sup> The Śaiva influences in the region can also be gathered from *Vāmana Purāṇa*<sup>17</sup> (c. A.D. 700) which provides a detailed account of various Śivaliṅgas in conjunction with their legendary associations. It seems that most of the Śivaliṅgas disappeared with the advent of Muslim invaders, but there seems little doubt that the region had great impact of Śaivism. The mention of a hundred Deva (or Mahādeva) temples by Hiuen Tsang<sup>18</sup> co-relates with the evidence in the *Vāmanapurāṇa*. The popularity of Śaivism in Śrīkaṇṭha *janapada* was also due to the royal patronage. The literary and epigraphic evidence shows that Harsha was a devotee of lord Maheśvara (*Paramamāheśvara*).<sup>19</sup> This special feature of devotion to Śiva explains why the capital was named as Sthānviśvara, and why Bāṇa who enjoyed Harsha's patronage presents a vivid and detailed account of the royal city though quite different was Hiuen Tsang's description. When the Chinese pilgrim reached Thanesar, it was no longer the royal seat, and, as was natural, his interest primarily lay only in places of Buddhist importance. So he paid scant attention to details such as character of the people, their social and economic life, and the entire history of the antiquity and religious importance of the region. The influence of Vaiṣṇavism can be traced at Taxila as early as the first century B.C.,<sup>20</sup> but this is not possible in the case of Haryana before 4th century A.D. Most of the Vaiṣṇava images discovered in the region belong to the Pratihāra-Tomara-Chāhamāna period (c. A.D. 800-1100).

Haryana formed a part of the Gupta empire. It was partly included in the dominion of the Hūṇas also, who were repulsed by the Guptas and the Pushabhūtis and in this they followed the Mauryas, the Śuṅgas and the Yaudheyas. Haryana under the Pushabhūtis turned for the first time into a centre of political power with Thanear as its capital. But later on with the transfer of the Vardhana capital to



Kanauj, its political importance somewhat declined though it maintained its religious character throughout the ages.

With the rise of Samudragupta, Yaudheya domination in Haryana came to an end for the Prayāga *Praśasti* informs us that the latter carried out 'his (Samudragupta's) furious commands by paying all tributes, obeying his orders, and offering salutations'.<sup>21/22</sup> According to R.C. Majumdar, 'Samudragupta's empire extended up to Punjab in the west, which included probably its eastern districts between Lahore and Karnal'.<sup>23</sup> This receives some support from the discovery of 33 gold coins of Samudragupta (including one rare Battle-Axe type described by M.S. Vats) from Mitathal<sup>24</sup> and one acquired by Rodgers<sup>25</sup> from Jagadhari as also from the diplomatic relations which he established with foreign rulers of the northwest of India.<sup>26</sup> Gupta hold over the region continued during the reign of Chandragupta II Vikramāditya whose expeditions to Punjab and Bactria are recounted in the Mehrauli inscription.<sup>27</sup> His silver coins found in plenty all over the eastern Punjab as far as the banks of Chenab,<sup>28</sup> recent discovery of his coin<sup>29</sup> from Kurukshetra with figure, inscription 'Chandra' on obverse and Lakshmi on the reverse, inscriptions from Tusham (in Hissar district)<sup>30</sup> and Mathura<sup>31</sup> (dated A.D. 380) all in Gupta characters leave no doubt that Chandragupta Vikramāditya consolidated the northwestern dominions of the Gupta empire from Jullundur *doab* to Mathura.<sup>32</sup> Despite these measures, the region was, however, lost to the Gupta empire much before Skandagupta's accession, possibly during the closing part of Kumāragupta's reign, when the empire, threatened as it was by external as well as internal dangers, succumbed to the Hūṇa incursions into this area. The Bhitari stone inscription<sup>33</sup> refers to Skandagupta's victory over the Hūṇas, while the Junagadh rock inscription<sup>34</sup> describes his conquest of the mlechchha countries. It has been suggested that the battle with the Hūṇas was fought either on the bank of the Sutlej or on the plains of western India.<sup>35</sup> Altekar,<sup>36</sup> on the basis of the discovery of Bayana (in Rajasthan) hoard, believes that the battle took place on the bank of the Yamunā. If Altekar's contention is valid then it follows that the region of Haryana also suffered the Hūṇa invasion during this period. However, Prince Skandagupta rose equal to the occasion, and by his courage and heroism suppressed the Hūṇas before the Gupta year 138 i.e. A.D. 457-58.

After Skandagupta's death in c. A.D. 467-68, the Hūṇas made forays into the region. Under their able commanders, Toramāṇa (c. A.D. 500-515) and Mihirakula (c. A.D. 515-550), the Hūṇas had no difficulty in establishing their rule over an extensive area. Hūṇa inscriptions<sup>37</sup> and coins<sup>38</sup> show that their empire included Kashmir, Punjab, parts of Haryana, Rajasthan, Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh and Uttar Pradesh. That Toramāṇa's kingdom included Punjab is proved by the Kura inscription<sup>39</sup> and the Jaina work, *Kuvalayamālā*.<sup>40</sup> An inscribed stone seal of this ruler in Brāhmī character was discovered at Sugh<sup>41</sup> while his coins together with those of his successor Mihirakula were collected by Rodgers<sup>42</sup> at Ambala. The *Topographia Christiana*<sup>43</sup> of Kosmos, an Alexandrian merchant who visited the western parts of



India in about A.D. 535 states that in his time, the white Hūṇas controlled the northern parts of India. From *Si-yu-ki*<sup>44</sup> (the records of the travels of Hiuen Tsang) it is clear that Mihirakula had his capital at Sākala (modern Sialkot) and he ruled over a larger territory in India. The *Pāṇḍarītaka* of Śyāmilaka,<sup>45</sup> the *Āryamañjuśrīmālaka*<sup>46</sup> and the *Rājatarāṅgi*<sup>47</sup> furnish us with details of his various campaigns. His inscription<sup>48</sup> dated A.D. 530 from Gwalior, and the recent discovery of his seal from Kauśāmbi<sup>49</sup> indicate that his empire extended to Madhya Pradesh and Uttar Pradesh, including of course, parts of Haryana as the numismatic evidence from the district of Ambala would suggest. No epigraphic or numismatic evidence supporting Hūṇa rule over other districts of Haryana has so far been discovered. Mihirakula's imperial designs, however, were short lived for they were checked by Narasimhagupta Bālāditya, the king of Magadha, and Yaśodharman, the ruler of Malava. The period, which witnessed the disintegration of the Gupta empire, also saw for the first time the emergence of a political power in Haryana.

During this period of struggle for political power in northern India, there arose a new dynasty founded by Pushpabhūti in Haryana which was then known as Śrīkaṇṭha *janapada*. The early rulers of this dynasty probably served under the Guptas but with changing circumstances, they demonstrated their allegiance also to the Hūṇas, who as shown earlier, were gaining ascendancy in this region. After the defeat of the Hūṇas, the Pushpabhūtis might possibly have established their independent principality. According to the *Harshacharita*<sup>50</sup> of Bāṇa, Pushpabhūti was the founder of the dynasty. Although the name of the founder does not appear in Harsha's inscriptions, the reverent tone in which Bāṇa refers to Pushpabhūti makes us believe that he must have based his account about the dynasty on some reliable evidence. On the basis of the account of Hiuen Tsang,<sup>51</sup> and the Buddhist work, *Āryamañjuśrīmālaka*<sup>52</sup> the Pushpabhūtis belonged to the *Vaiśya* caste (*Fei-she*) which appears to Cunningham<sup>53</sup> as incorrect. It must be remembered that the Chinese pilgrim's eye-witness testimony does not fail to mention the castes of a number of Indian rulers, whose kingdom he visited, and these appear to be quite true, and hence there seems hardly any justification to question his observation on the dynasty of his patron, Harsha.<sup>54</sup> Bāṇa describes Pushpabhūti as 'a remote and semi-legendary figure' a *rājā* and a *bhūpāla* (a king), indicating that he was probably a feudatory of Samudragupta or his successor. Of particular significance is Bāṇa's expression *Śūrasena ākramaṇe* where he alludes to Pushpabhūti's invasion of Śūrasena (the region of Mathura) possibly connected with the Śrīkaṇṭha *nāga* killed by him.<sup>55</sup> The genealogy of the dynasty as provided in Harsha's inscriptions is as follows<sup>56</sup>: Naravardhana=Vajrinidevi, Rājyavardhana I=Apsarodevi, Ādityavardhana=Mahāsenaguptādevi, Prabhākara-vardhana=Yaśomatidevi, Rājyavardhana II and Harshavardhana. In Bāṇa's account the early rulers do not find any place, but he specifically mentions Prabhākara-vardhana in order to give a background of his master and patron Harsha. Similarly, Bāṇa's portrayal of Pushpabhūti was also necessary to acquaint the reader with the



founder of the dynasty to which Harsha belonged. First three rulers of the dynasty assumed the title of Mahārāja only which indicates their feudatory status. They were probably the feudatories of Hūṇas, the Guptas and also the Maukharis at different periods.<sup>57</sup> According to R.C. Majumdar they flourished between A.D. 500-580.<sup>58</sup>

Although Harsha's inscriptions provide us with names of the queens of these rulers, it is not possible in the present state of our knowledge to specify the dynasties to which they belonged. Ādityavardhana, the third ruler, was highly influential for his queen Mahāsenagupta, as the name would indicate, was the sister of Mahāsenagupta, a later Gupta ruler of Magadha, who is mentioned in the *Harshacharita* as a contemporary of both Prabhākaravardhana and Harshavardhana, and whose two princes Mādhavagupta and Kumāragupta stayed in the Vardhana Court.<sup>59</sup>

This matrimonial alliance soon gave to the Pushpabhūti an imperial status. Prabhākaravardhana, the son and successor of Ādityavardhana, was a powerful ruler. The inscriptions<sup>60</sup> of Harsha and Bāṇa's *Harshacharita*<sup>61</sup> provide a graphic account of this ruler's courage, beneficent disposition, military campaigns, his patronage of religion and above all, the peace and prosperity enjoyed by people under him. According to Harsha's inscriptions:<sup>62</sup>

(His) glory reached beyond the confines of the four oceans, who by his valour and gentle behaviour had brought to submission all other rulers, who was actively engaged in the establishment of the *varṇa* and *āśrama* system, and in removing the suffering of the people like the single-wheeled chariot (of the Sun), the great devotee of Āditya, Paramabhaṭṭāraka Prabhākaravardhana . . . .

An elaborate account of Prabhākaravardhana's achievements is found in Bāṇa's *Harshacharita*. The poet relates :<sup>63</sup>

. . . . there was born in course of time a king of kings, named Prabhākaravardhana, famed far and wide under a second name Pratāpaśīla, a lion to the Hūṇa deer, a burning fever to the king of the Indus land, a troubler of the sleep of Gurjara, a bilious plague to the scent-elephant, the lord of Gandhāra, a looter to the lawlessness of the Lājas, an axe to the creeper of Mālava glory . . . . broad paths of his armies seemed to portion out the earth for the support of his dependants . . . . his greatness was made to grow by the fire of his valour, his success was digested by the heat of his courage . . . . Beneath his rule the golden age seemed to bud forth . . . . the evil time to flee . . . . Dharma to blossom in white pennons waving over temple minarates, the villages to bring forth a progeny of beautiful arbours erected on their outskirts for meetings, alm's houses, inns and women's marquees . . . .

Bāṇa's *Harshacharita* is a valuable source of ancient tradition and record of



contemporary history. It informs us that Prabhākaravardhana was also known as Pratāpaśīla,<sup>64</sup> who cemented political alliances with his contemporary powers. He embarked on a bold policy which made him the greatest ruler of this part of India, and his name stirred reverential awe in the kingdoms of Sindhu, Gandhāra, Hūṇa, Mālava, Lāṇa and Gurjara.<sup>65</sup>

Pratāpaśīla (a title used by Bāṇa for Prabhākaravardhana) is identical with the Pratāpaśīla of the coins found in the village Bhitaura<sup>66</sup> (in Faizabad district of Uttar Pradesh). The discovery of these coins with those of Śīlāditya (a title of Harsha) and of Maukharis support such an identity.<sup>67</sup> That Harsha was also known as Śīlāditya is confirmed by Hiuen Tsang.<sup>68</sup> There is further evidence to show that Harsha did issue coins in his name,<sup>69</sup> and the Pratāpaśīla coins might have been issued by him in memory of his father after the transfer of his capital to Kanauj. This explains the absence of Pratāpaśīla coins in this region.<sup>70</sup>

During the closing years of Prabhākaravardhana's reign, the region was threatened by another Hūṇa invasion and Rājyavardhana was sent to repulse it.<sup>71</sup> Harsha also left Thanesar to assist his brother, but had to return hurriedly when he learnt about the sudden illness of his father.<sup>72</sup>

The *Harshacharita*<sup>73</sup> gives a poetic account of king's serious illness, sufferings and parting words, queen Yaśomati's entering the fire on the banks of the Sarasvatī, the funeral procession of the king, and the gloom that descended upon the royal capital.

Harsha found Thanesar absolutely quiet and forlorn. 'Its sounds of triumph were departed, sunk (was) the booming of its drums, checked its minstrelsy, its festivity expelled'.<sup>74</sup> People prayed, fasted and performed sacrifices for the safety of their beneficent ruler. The palace presented a sad picture—the Brahmins reciting the vedic mantras, servants speaking in hushed tones about the impending doom, the physicians fighting a losing battle, and the king's advisors, priests, friends, feudatories and bodyguards all looking morose and utterly helpless.<sup>75</sup>

Prabhākaravardhana lay on a couch restlessly tossing, and the physician's anticipating the symptoms of death.<sup>76</sup> And near him sat Queen Yaśomati with 'her eyes swollen with ceaseless weeping'.<sup>77</sup> And even in those moments when Prabhākaravardhana was fighting for his life, he radiated unbounded affection while embracing his son 'forgetting all the torment of the fever'.<sup>78</sup> After a long and deep sigh, the king consoled his son and said his final say:<sup>79</sup>

Upon you my happiness, my sovereignty, my succession, and my life are set, and, as mine, as those of all my people . . . In their people, not in their kin are kings rich in relatives. Rise therefore, and once more attend to all the needs of life.

When the prince learnt about his mother Yaśomati's resolve to enter fire,<sup>80</sup> he

fell at her feet and said, 'Mother, do you also abandon hapless me ? Be merciful and turn back'.<sup>81</sup> His mother looked absolutely a shattered woman, she wanted to say something, but due to grief, her voice was choked, and her 'lips quivered with agony'. When she collected herself a little, she raised her son from the ground and wiping his tears, said :<sup>82</sup>

It is not dear, that you are unloved without noble qualities, or deserving to be abandoned . . . . I am the lady of a great house . . . . one whose virtue is her dower. Have you forgotten that I am the lioness mate of a great spirit, who like a lion has his delight in a hundred battles ? I cannot endure, like the widowed Rati, to make unavailing lamentations for a burnt husband . . . . Not in the body, dear son, but in the glory of loyal widows would I abide on earth. Therefore, dishonour me no more, I beseech you, beloved son, with opposition to my heart's desire.

'Having embraced her son and kissed his hand', says Bāṇa, the queen proceeded to the Sarasvatī's bank where 'having worshipped the fire with the blooming red-lotus she plunged into it, as the moon's form enters the adorable sun'.<sup>83</sup> His mother's death gave Harsha a terrible blow, and he departed with his kinsmen to his father's side, where another misfortune awaited him. By now his father had gained some consciousness and seeing Harsha near him, he said softly 'you should not be so, my son. Men of your mould are not infirm of heart. Strength of soul is the people's mainstay, and second to it is royal blood', and a little later he closed his eyes.<sup>84</sup> Prabhākaravardhana was no more.

The funeral procession of the king was largely attended by feudatories and townmen, who took upon their shoulders the bier of the king and carried him to the river Sarasvatī, where 'a pyre befitting an emperor solemnly consumed all but his glory in the flames'. The family priest had performed the obsequies.<sup>85</sup>

And Harshvardhana, passing his night in melancholy thoughts over the fleeting nature of the universe, was consoled next day by his friends.<sup>86</sup> He went over to the bank of the Sarasvatī, and having bathed in the river, offered water to his father.<sup>87</sup> After the funeral bath, he did not stay even 'to wring his hair', but having put on a pair of white silk robes, proceeded towards the palace 'umbrellaless with none to clear his path', and 'though a horse was led up', he preferred to walk.<sup>88</sup> Harsha was deeply wounded by the tragic death of his parents which left him completely shattered.

Thus passed away Prabhākaravardhana, the great ruler of Haryana. He was a skilful military leader well versed also in the art of diplomacy. The alliance he formed with the Maukharis of Kanauj by marrying his daughter Rājyaśrī to Grahavarman had significant results. This brought Vardhana princes into the politics of the kingdom of Kanauj, and subsequently the union of the two kingdoms took place. The date of



Prabhākaravardhana's death cannot be determined, but possibly it occurred sometime in A.D. 605.

Rājyavardhana, the next ruler, led a short life full of suffering. While busy fighting the Hūṇas he learnt about his father's death and after reaching Thanesar he was told about the murder of his brother-in-law, Grahavarman of Kanauj, and the imprisonment of his sister Rājyaśrī by the king of Mālava who was in league with Śaśāṅka, the Gauḍa king.<sup>89</sup> This was surely a challenge to the prestige of the Imperial house, which Rājyavardhana accepted. After taking a vow to wreck vengeance upon the king of Mālava and his ally, he embarked on his expedition with Bhaṇḍi (his cousin) and an army of 10,000 horsemen.<sup>90</sup> Harsha was advised by Rājyavardhana to stay back, and manage the kingdom.<sup>91</sup> Although Rājyavardhana defeated the king of Mālava and recovered Kanauj, he fell a victim to the wily designs of the Gauḍa king who treacherously murdered him.<sup>92</sup> The tragic death of Rājyavardhana is described in the Madhuvana and Banskhera inscriptions<sup>93</sup> of Harsha, by the commentator Śaṅkarārya,<sup>94</sup> and is also attested by Hiuen Tsang.<sup>95</sup>

Rājyavardhana was deeply influenced by Buddhist philosophy; and this was a cause of great worry to Harsha who feared that his brother might renounce the world like Buddha on hearing their father's death. Harsha's reflections on his brother's leanings is described by Bāṇa as follows :<sup>96</sup>

Pray heaven my brother, when he learns of our father's death, a type of the worlds dissolution, may not after a bath of tears assume two robes of Bark or seek hermitage as a royal sage or, man-lion as he is, enter a mountain cave ! Though his lotus eyes brim with a flood of tears, may he yet look upon the lordless earth. Tormented by the poisonous pangs of a first loss, may the best of men yet remember himself. Never may indifference due to the transitoriness of things lead him to slight the advances of sovereign glory. All aflame with fire of direful pain, may he have recourse to the coronation bath. Once arrived here may he not, when pressed by the kings, display contrary mind.

This finds confirmation in Canto VI, in Rājyavardhana's address to Harsha :<sup>97</sup>

. . . . At sovereignty my eyes grow disordered . . . . My mind seeks to avoid a glory, which, as if belonging to outcasts, is of not noble sort . . . . I desire therefore in a hermitage to purge with the pure waters of pellucid streams that run from mountain tops, this fond defilement which clings to my mind as to a garment. Therefore do you receive from my hands the cares of sovereignty, a gift not high esteemed indeed . . . . I have abandoned the sword.

The spiritual disposition of Rājyavardhana's mind as reflected in the above passage is sufficient to explain the Buddhist title 'Pramasaugata' (great devotee of Buddha) attached to his name in Harsha's inscriptions.<sup>98</sup> It may be noted that Hiuen Tsang particularly mentions the Buddhist monasteries of the kingdom of Thanesar;<sup>99</sup>



and it is not unlikely that in the early years of his life Rājyavardhana too might have come across some of the renowned Buddhist scholars of the region who changed his outlook on life.

Such was the life of Rājyavardhana, tragic and forlorn, in the history of the Pushpabhūti of Haryana. Though his short life falls into relative insignificance before the lustrous career of his successor Harshavardhana, it cannot be denied that Rājyavardhana by his victory over the Hūṇas and the Mālavas, paved the way for his successor's imperial policy of consolidation and further expansion.<sup>100</sup>

Harshavardhana ascended the throne of Thanesar sometime in A.D. 606 which devolved great responsibility on him. Firstly, he had to take revenge of his brother's murder; secondly, to recover his sister, Rājyaśrī; and thirdly, to solve the question of succession to the kingdom of Kanauj. Although these problems do not have any direct bearing on the history of Haryana, yet they are important in so far they led to the shifting of Pushpabhūti capital from Thanesar to Kanauj. And the solution of these issues much complex as they were, depended mainly on the diplomatic skill and the military strength of Harsha, who was hardly sixteen years old when he became a sovereign. When Hiuen Tsiang visited India, Harsha was already settled at Kanauj and that may perhaps be the reason why in his account Prabhākaravardhana and Rājyavardhana are mentioned in the genealogy of the rulers of Kanauj.<sup>101</sup> On the advice of the Bodhisatva Avalokiteśvara (Buddhist saint), Harsha agreed to rule over the kingdom of Kanauj on behalf of his widowed sister, Rājyaśrī.<sup>102</sup>

According to Bāṇa, Harsha took an oath at the feet of his grand old minister Simhanāda for the subjugation of the Gauḍas (people of Bengal) and other 'haughty and proud rulers'.<sup>103</sup> Hiuen Tsang<sup>104</sup> also refers to this event or some other which took place at Kanauj, we do not know. Bāṇa's mention of Harsha's oath is before the latter's embarking on his military expedition to punish the Gauḍas, the common enemy of the Pushpabhūti and the Maukharis. It is likely that the Chinese pilgrim might have heard of it. There is no doubt that Harsha's main object was to punish the enemy for the murder of Grahavarman and Rājyavardhana.

Details of Harsha's war of revenge resulting in the extension of his rule over the five divisions of north India are available in Hiuen Tsang's account.<sup>105</sup> The *Harsha-charita*,<sup>106</sup> on the other hand, tells us about the chance recovery of Rājahśrī by Harsha in the Vindhya forests when she was about to immolate herself. These later events of Harsha's life have no direct bearing on the history of Haryana. Suffice it is to say that in view of the political exigencies, Harsha had to shift his capital to a central place like Kanauj whence it could be convenient to establish control over a large part of northern India. Thus the ruler of Haryana emerged as the supreme lord of northern India (*Sakalottarāpathanātha*).

When the Chinese pilgrim visited the kingdom of Kanauj much time had already elapsed since the transfer of the Vardhana capital. This explains his ignorance of Vardhana rule in Thanesar. The transfer of the capital is also attested by the



numismatic evidence, i.e. the discovery of Pratāpaśīla and Śīlāditya coins in conjunction with those of the Maukharis. It must be remembered that no Vardhana coin has been discovered so far in Haryana, Vardhanas' ancestral kingdom.

## 2. The reflection of a Court Poet

The *Harshacharita* of Bāṇa, although suffering from poetic exaggerations and fantasy, is the only detailed source of information on the social, economic and cultural life of the people of Haryana during the seventh century A.D. It is not clear whether Bāṇa visited this region but this much is certain that he travelled widely, and had authentic knowledge of the contemporary political events.

According to Bāṇa the secret of the prosperity of the region was the fertility of its soil, abundance of crops and vegetation, the cattle-wealth and above all, the hospitality and generosity of its people.<sup>1</sup> It was like 'heaven descended upon earth', full of lotuses and sugar-cane enclosures; and on every side of it were seen corn-heaps. Rice crops stretching over the land were watered by the 'pots of wheel'. On the uplands were seen wheat crops dense with ripe Rājamāsa (Rajamā) patches. Singing herdsmen were seen mounted on buffaloes with bells bound to their necks and roaming herds of cows in the forests (the delightful sight which is familiar to us even these days). Thousands of spotted antelopes were met with in the region. Round the villages were seen *Ketaki* beds, pot-herbs and plaintains; and everywhere were seen young camels loitering about and flocks of sheep and wandering droves of mares. There were vine-arbours and pomegranate orchards, where travellers could sleep after drinking the juice of fresh fruits. It was a pleasure 'to see parrots attacking the seeds of fruits, and monkeys climbing up the trees'. There were 'groves of coconut, and date-trees, and forest pools encircled with tall *Arjuna* trees'. The land resources could be judged by its 'animal world'. Such was the land of Śrīkaṇṭha where 'false doctrines faded away', and 'vanished were the sinful ways'. Caste confusion ceased, and calamities ended. There was rule of law, and 'mishap did not arise.'<sup>2</sup>

Bāṇa's account suggests that in this country of plenty, people were dutiful, broad-minded, and cared little for caste distinctions. They followed virtuous conduct, condemned false doctrines, and avoided sin. Healthy in body and mind they suffered no disease, epidemic, or premature deaths, and led a life of creative activity and high ideals.

The capital of this region was the splendid city of Sthāṇīśvara.<sup>3</sup> The poet Bāṇa has given us a beautiful account of its sages and soldiers, its trading community and artists, its scientists and philosophers, its temples and monasteries, its bazaars and emporiums, its palaces and forts, its schools and colleges. Thanesar appeared like the 'encampment of the *Kṛta* age with thousands of flaming sacrificial fires', like rival to the northern Kurus it thronged with 'hundreds of great rivers uproarious with

tumult'.<sup>4</sup> Bāṇa depicts the variety, richness and abundance of life at Thanesar. He relates :<sup>5</sup>

Sages entitled it a hermitage, courtesans a lover's retreat, actors, a concert hall, foes the city of death, seekers of wealth the land of the philosopher's stone, sons of the sword, the soil of heroes, aspirants to knowledge the perceptor's home, singers the *Gandharva's* city, scientists the great *Artificer's* temple, merchants the land of profit, bards the gaming-house, good men the gathering of the virtuous, refugees the cage of adamant, libertines the Rogue's meet, wayfarers the reward of their good deeds, treasure-seekers the mine, quietists the Buddhist monastery, lovers the *Apsara's* city, troubadours the festival congress, Brāhmaṇas the stream of wealth.

Bāṇa, a sensitive poet, was greatly fascinated by the women of Thanesar about whom he writes :<sup>6</sup>

There are women like elephants in gait, yet noble-minded; virgins, yet attached to worldly pomp; dark, yet possessed of rubies; their faces are brilliant with white teeth, yet is their breath perfumed with the fragrance of wine; their bodies are like crystal, yet their limbs are soft as *acacia* flowers; . . . wide are their beautiful hips, yet are they possessed of thin waists; lovely are they, yet honeyed in speech; they trip not, yet have a bright and captivating beauty; they are without curiosity, yet wedded. Their eyes are a natural *mūḍmālā* wreath, the garlands of lotus leaves are mere burden. The images of their curls in the convex of their cheeks are ear-pendants that give no trouble. . . The talk of their dear ones forms happy ear-ornaments; rings and the like are but affectation. Their cheeks alone give a perpetual sun-shine; for pomp only have they jewelled lamps by night. . . Their voices alone are their sweet lutes, harp-playing is but an irrelevant accomplishment. Laughs are their exceeding fragrant perfumes; needless is camphor powder. The gleam of their lips is a more brilliant cosmetic, saffron unguent is a worthless blot upon their loveliness. Their arms are the softest of playfully smiting wands; purposeless are lotus stalks. Drops of the sweet of youthful warmth are their artful bosom ornaments, necklaces but a burden. Their laps are broad squares of crystal slabs for their lovers; jewelled couches in their mensions a needless means of repose.

This graphic description of the poet sufficiently reflects the material as well as spiritual advancement of the ancient people of Haryana under the Pushpabhūti.

### 3. The Chinese observations

*Si-Yu-Ki* or *Buddhist Records of the Western World* of Hiuen Tsang is another



vital source of information on the contemporary history of the region. The account, though brief, gives some idea of the economic, social and cultural conditions of the region at the time of Hiuen Tsang's visit in A.D. 634<sup>1</sup>. Hiuen Tsang makes a special mention of Thanesar (*sa-ta-ni-ssu-fu-lo*) about which he wrote :<sup>2</sup>

The kingdom is about 7000 li in circuit, the capital 20 li or so. The soil is rich and productive, and abounds with grain (cereals). The climate is genial, though hot. The manners of the people are cold and insincere. The families are rich and given to excessive luxury. They are much addicted to the use of magical arts, and greatly honour those of distinguished ability in other ways. Most of the people follow after worldly gain, a few give themselves to agricultural pursuits. There is a large accumulation here of rare and valuable merchandise from every quarter. There are three Sanghārāmas in this country with about 700 priests. They all study (practice or use) the little Vehicle (Hīnayāna). There are some hundred Deva temples, and sectaries of various kinds in great number.

Hiuen Tsang's knowledge of distances is wrong. According to him, Thanesar was more than 500 li (about 166 miles) to the northeast of Mathura, whereas it was about 190 miles. The name of the kingdom was Śrīkaṣṭha, and not Thanesar as wrongly attributed by him, but he is quite right in regarding it as the capital. The description of the land, its fertility and abundance of crops<sup>3</sup> fits with the description in the *Harshacharita*.<sup>4</sup> The interest of the people in magical arts as mentioned by Hiuen Tsang also agrees with the influence of tāntric practices as mentioned by the poet Bāṇa. Hiuen Tsang's account suggest the declining conditions of Buddhism in the kingdom of Thanesar for it had then only three monasteries with about 700 Hīnayānists.<sup>5</sup> These monasteries were located by Cunningham<sup>6</sup> in the directions given by the Chinese pilgrim at the village Bahari about one mile from the fort. There are still quite a few mounds there containing large bricks of 'reddish yellow', or 'yellowish red' colour. The existence of about 100 Deva (or Mahādeva) temples corroborate the evidence of Bāṇa about the growing influence of Śaivism there.<sup>7</sup> The reference to the numerous non-Buddhists living in Thanesar is also quite significant. The manners and customs quite contrary to the description of Bāṇa, appear to the Chinese pilgrim as 'illiberal'. It seems that the picture portrayed by Hiuen Tsang is quite realistic as it shows the materialistic tendencies of the inhabitants, whereas Bāṇa's description was quite an idealised one.

According to the Chinese pilgrim<sup>8</sup> 'on every side of the capital within a precinct of 200 li in circuit is an area called by the men of this place *The Land of Religious Merit*'. This description evidently stands for the land of the Kurus which was also known as Dharmakshetra. The traveller further quotes a tradition about the war fought long ago between the two powerful sovereigns of northern India. The reference obviously is to the famous battle of the Mahābhārata.<sup>9</sup>



Hiuen Tsang's account, despite its historical intent, is fanciful. He was not familiar with the Brahmanical literature. He relied either on his imagination or based his conclusion on some Buddhist source like the *Jātakas* which offer a distorted picture of the epic personages such as making Jarāsandha the king of Kurukshetra, and describing Dhananjaya as the king of Indapatta and his defeat at dice.<sup>10</sup> The references to the clever Brahmin, and the king's conspiracy through him in the composition of a Dharmaśāstra only reveals the mock derision with which the Chinese pilgrim viewed the whole corpus of non-Buddhist literature. The use of the rolls of silk as writing material is typical Chinese and was unknown to India, at least before Hiuen Tsang's visit. But there is no doubt that the contents of the Dharmaśāstra whose central idea was to induce people to a right course of action has close resemblance with the teachings of *Śrīmadbhagavadgītā*. Reference to the dead bodies heaped together testifies to the fact that a great battle was fought on the fields of Kurukshetra and corroborating thereby the Purāṇic reference to the site of Asthipura<sup>11</sup> (or the city of bones) which was probably the place, where the dead bodies of those who fell in the battle were cremated. Local tradition still points to this site in the plain to the west of the city towards Aujasghat.

Long before Hiuen Tsang's visit Kurukshetra grew into a place of great religious sanctity and a place of salvation for those who abandoned their lives there.<sup>12</sup> Its fame was not confined to the borders of India, but spread as far as Laos.<sup>13</sup> According to a Purāṇic tradition, stay at Kurukshetra and performing penance, and charitable deeds there was considered as of special religious merit.<sup>14</sup> Hiuen Tsang's perceptive comment that 'constant tradition of the country, therefore, has called this (meaning Kurukshetra) the field of religious merit', if viewed in this light becomes highly significant. The whole passage, offers a completely distorted version of the epic story but, its values as corroborative evidence cannot be underestimated. It is for the first time that a foreign traveller testifies to the importance of Kurukshetra as Dharmakshetra, supports the historicity of the battle of the Mahābhārata, and finally, though indirectly refers to the theory of *Karma* (cycle of the life and death and *mukti*) resembling closely to that expounded in the *Śrīmadbhagavadgītā*.

As Hiuen Tsang's stay in India was rather short for any objective assessment, his observation may possibly have been based on what he learnt from unworldly ascetics passing their life in the monasteries. Had it not been so he would have certainly mentioned the famous Brahmasara and its importance which attracted the special attention of the Arab historian Al-Biruni at a later period.<sup>15</sup> This seems to be an extraordinary omission on his part.

Hiuen Tsang does not mention the ruling dynasty of Thanesar. This too seems somewhat odd because he is otherwise meticulous about giving details on the ruling dynasty wherever such information was available to him. Still more surprising is the fact that he mentions Prabhākarvardhana and Rājyavardhana in the line of the rulers of Kanauj.<sup>16</sup> Had he made personal contacts with the local people here he would



certainly have been enlightened on this point. That the memory of the rule of Harshavardhana did not fade away from this part of the country then becomes clear from the Pehoa inscription<sup>17</sup> dated in the Harsha era during the reign of Pratihāra Mihira Bhoja (A.D. 836-890). The only explanation offered is that Harshavardhana had already shifted his capital to Kanauj as a result of which the political importance of Thanesar, though forming part of the kingdom of Kanauj, began to decline. Besides, this, as stated above, Hiuen Tsang's stay must have been too short to allow any time for on-the-spot inquiry. Secondly, the purpose of his mission was not political, but religious i.e. to visit Buddhist places of pilgrimage, centres of learning, and the study of Buddhist religion and philosophy. Whichever place served this purpose, he treated it with great interest and reverence, and the rest he ignored.<sup>17a</sup> His description of Gokaṇṭha monastery at *Ku-hun-t'u*<sup>18</sup> (i.e. modern Guhana between Vyāsasthali and Nisanga) and the *Su-lu-kin-na* (Sugh in district Ambala) further illustrates the point.

Above 100 li south from Thanesar the pilgrim locates the *Ku-hun-t'u* monastery with 'high chambers in close succession and detached terraces', and the Buddhist Brethren herein of 'pure strict lives'.<sup>20</sup> The kingdom of Śrughna and its capital is described in more details by Hiuen Tsang. He relates :<sup>21</sup>

It was above 6000 li in circuit, bounded on the east by the Ganges and on the north by high mountains, and that through the middle of it flowed the river *Xen-mo-na* (Jumna). The capital, above 20 li in circuit, was on the west side of the Jumna, and was in a ruinous condition. In climate and natural products the country resembled Sthāneśvara. The inhabitants were naturally honest, they were not Buddhists, they held useful learning in respect and esteemed religious wisdom. There were five Buddhist monasteries and above 1000 Buddhist ecclesiastics, the majority of whom were Hinayānists, a few adhering to 'other schools'. The Brethren were expert and lucid expounders of abstract doctrines, and distinguished Brethren from other lands came to them to reason out their doubts. There were 100 Deva-temples, and the non-Buddhists were very numerous.

Hiuen Tsang describes an Aśokan *stūpa* at Sugh containing sacred relics of Buddha and 'some tens' of other great Buddhist saints at a spot where the Master in olden times had delivered his message.<sup>22</sup> It may be recalled that Buddha's visit to Śrughna also finds confirmation in the *Divyāvadāna*<sup>23</sup> and the *Sarvata Vinaya*.<sup>24</sup> The Chinese pilgrim further adds :<sup>25</sup>

After the Buddha's decease the people of this country had been led astray to believe in wrong religions and Buddhism had disappeared. Then Śāstra-masters from other lands defeated the Tirthikas and Brahmins in discussion, and the

five monasteries already mentioned were built at the places where the discussions were held in order to commemorate the victories.

The *life* further informs us that at Śrughna the pilgrim enjoyed the learned company of Āchārya Jayagupta.<sup>26</sup> Hiuen Tsang stayed here 'one winter, and half of the following spring' and studied the entire *Vibhāṣa* text of the Sautrāntika Buddhist school.<sup>27</sup> It would thus appear that Śrughna developed into an important centre of Buddhist religion and culture. Although it maintained a good number of Buddhist scholars, but their faith was on the decline giving way to Brahmanical religion. The city probably lost its importance after seventh century and the name survives in a localized form as the only memory of its former glory.<sup>28</sup>

#### 4. Religion and Art

With the transfer of the Vardhana capital to Kanauj, the political importance of this region somewhat declined but it continued to retain its religious importance. Due to the rise of *bhakti* (devotion) which pre-supposes image worship, the number of *tirthas* and temples in the region increased. Most of the temples have disappeared because of the Muslim invasions, but the few fragmentary specimens which have survived, and the terracotta art suggest that much artistic activity of the 'Classical Age' took place in this region.

From *Rājā-Kaṇa-Kā-Qilā* were discovered a small terracotta mould for casting figures of Śrī (the goddess of prosperity), a broken part of a terracotta relief showing the lower half of a male and a female, and the images of Trivikrama and three faced Viṣṇu<sup>1</sup>. A stone slab depicting four armed Gaṇapati with Śiva and Pārvatī seated to his proper left (assigned to the late Gupta period) was found at Amin.<sup>2</sup> Two sculptures—one an image of Trivikrama Viṣṇu attended by the Āyudhapuruṣas, Goddess Lakshmi, Bhūmi and Brahmā, Maheśa and Indra riding an elephant and also the Saptarṣis, and the other a *trimukha* Viṣṇu (two of which are Varāha and Nṛsimha) holding a mace, lotus, conch and wheel have adorned the Kashipuri temple at Kaithal.<sup>3</sup> The famous Tusham (Hissar district) rock inscription in the Gupta characters throws welcome light on the contemporary religious history.<sup>4</sup> It refers to the construction of a reservoir and temple of lord Viṣṇu by one Āchārya Somatrāta, the great grandson of Ārya Sātvata Yogāchārya Yaśastrāta. The wheel engraved below the inscription represents 'the wheel of Viṣṇu and not a Buddhist *dharmachakra* or a mere sun symbol as Fleet has suggested'.<sup>5</sup> Rodgers found at Brahmasara (in Kurukshetra) lower part of an image, probably a standing Buddha<sup>6</sup> and at Sitalpur (in Kaithal) a broken but 'beautifully sculptured image of Goddess Kālī'.<sup>7</sup> Theh Polar<sup>8</sup> (Karnal district) has yielded some seals. The emblems on these are important for the study of religious beliefs and practices of the people represented in the forms



of human feet, *triśūla*, *chakra*, *padma*, bull, fire and altar. Some of these seals bear inscriptions in the Gupta characters.

At the Asthipura site of Thanesar, Cunningham<sup>9</sup> has brought to light broken parts of a terracotta plaque, showing the figure of two wrestlers, in a charming and natural pose. They are wearing *dhotis*, and the upper parts of their bodies are uncovered. The folds of the drapery and the knots below their naval portion with one end hanging down between the thighs are beautifully set. The man on the left side is seen holding the arms of the other man with a necklace, rather an unusual feature with a wrestler at work. The long hairs of the left side wrestler and the curly hairs of the other who bears an expression of pain on his face are well executed.<sup>10</sup> Cunningham<sup>11</sup> had obtained another terracotta plaque from Pehowa in a fairly good condition which showed some royal personage in a sitting pose with his right hand placed on the right thigh. He wears trousers and a full-sleeves shirt. Over his long coat covering the upper portion of his body appears a *dupattā* (wrapper) which hangs down below so as to cover the thigh portion too. Although showing some Gāndhāra influence, the plaque was executed under the Gupta style. The *tilaka* mark on his forehead and the crown studded with circular jewels (like the head-dress of the court judges) are particularly interesting. There is a fine jewelled garland (or necklace) round the neck, but on the shoulders it hangs on his chest. His eyes are open, and the moustaches add dignity to the carriage.<sup>12</sup> Of equal importance in the typical Gupta style is the terracotta plaque from Pehowa<sup>13</sup> (now preserved in the Archaeological Museum, Kurukshetra University, Kurukshetra). Measuring about 28 × 21 cms. this plaque is damaged in its lower portion. It depicts some royal personage in a standing pose. As the two hands are damaged it is difficult to know what he was holding in them. He is wearing an embroidered full-sleeve coat and also putting on a belt round his waist and tied with it appears to be a sword. The frizzled locks of hairs falling on the shoulders look elegant. He is wearing the *Kuṇḍalas* and a torque having a twisted rope design.

The artistic activity of the age can also be noticed at Sugh and Rohtak. The terracotta plaques recovered at Sugh represent both male and female figurines with a variety of hair styles, elegant charming faces, sharp pointed nose, lotus-shaped eyes and oval contour. With less ornamentation and elaborate hair-dresses, the human forms of the Sugh terracottas are indeed among the best products of the classical age.<sup>14</sup> Head of a female figure from district Rohtak is also considered to be a masterpiece of the Gupta terracotta art. A model of a fine red levigated clay, it portrays the head of a robust lady with a prominent nose, broad eyes, round face, magnificent plaited curly hair style and above all a dignified countenance. The graphic and graceful treatment of subject displays high skill attained by the craftsman.<sup>15</sup> Yet another is a terracotta medallion discovered at Khokhrakot <sup>15a</sup> (district Rohtak) which is interesting from the view point of art history. The medallion which is mould-made, depicts on obverse three human (male) figures with a common head



while on the reverse a decorative design comprising a blossomed flower in the centre encircled by flower-and-leaf design. Stylistically it has been assigned to c. 4th-5th century A.D. Figurines with common head or body, purely art motif, has been traced back to the proto-historic times in India. In the present object the artist has tried to represent an animal in three different attitudes in a single composition, i.e. looking forward or behind or eating something placed on the ground. The continuity of such enigmatic motifs is found in the relics of historical periods from different sites. The present medallion, an addition to our knowledge about such art motifs, bespeaks of the creative mind of the local craftsman in executing the motif faithfully.<sup>16</sup> Other important finds are : sand stone sculptures of Mahiṣāsūramardini<sup>17</sup> and Anantaśāyī Viṣṇu<sup>18</sup> from Bhiwani and Sonapat districts respectively and sculptural bricks from Agroha and Nachatarkhera (Hissar district) depicting scenes from Rāmāyana which probably formed part of a railing of the temple of the Gupta period.<sup>19</sup> Interesting sculptural remains have also been discovered in district Gurgaon. The sites of Sanghel<sup>20</sup>, Ahranva<sup>21</sup> and Sondh<sup>22</sup> have brought to light figurines of female attendants, elephants and mother and child. But the most noteworthy is a fragmentary sculpture in red sandstone with white spots from Harnol<sup>23</sup> (72 kms. south of Gurgaon). The frieze represents a beautiful and interesting image of Lord Śiva with his vertical third eye visible on the fore-head. His *jatā-mukūta*, hair style, prominent eye-brows and nose displays balance and distinct features, while the effect of eminence imparts dignity to the expression in perfect concentration. Its style and execution places it in the early Gupta period.<sup>24</sup>

## 5. The Holy of the Holies

The *Dharmaśāstra* literature laid an emphasis on visits to *tirthas* because of the prevailing belief that a holy place was the abode of some divinity. The *Purāṇas* provide us details of these centres of pilgrimages with their natural setting, sacred rivers, forests, *āśramas*, and, above all, the life of meditation, penance and austerity that was led there.

The *Mahābhārata*, the *Nāradiya* and the *Vāmana Purāṇas* elaborate on the *tirthas* or places of pilgrimage in Kurukshetra, the holiest of the holy places in Haryana. They provide a detailed account of its sacred rivers, forests, *āśramas* (hermitages) and various cults.<sup>1</sup>

The sacred rivers of this holy tract are enumerated in the *Mahābhārata*<sup>2</sup> and the *Vāmana Purāṇa*<sup>3</sup> : the Sarasvatī, Āpagā, Aruṇā, Dṛśadvatī, Kauśikī, Vaitaraṇī, Oghavati and Hiraṇvatī. Most of these rivers are extinct now. The Sarasvatī and the Dṛśadvatī, have dried up but once much cultural activity hung round them can be gathered from archaeological discoveries (i.e. the remains of pre-historic and historical settlements) on their ancient courses. The *Purāṇas* also mention the towns situated on their banks. There were also *āśramas* and the forests in this region where *ṛsis*



meditated. According to the Purāṇic tradition, the sacred *vanas* (forests) of Kurukshetra were as follows<sup>4</sup> :

Kāmyaka (Kamoda, a village in Kurukshetra), Dvaita (close to the river Sarasvati), Phalaki (Pharral, a village in Kurukshetra), Aditi (Amin), Vyāsa (Baras or Basthali, villages in Karnal district), Surya (Sanjuma in Jind district), Madu (Mohna in Kurukshetra), Sita (Sivana in Kurukshetra) Pṛthu (Pehowa) and Śālavana (Salwan in Karnal district).

The *Mahābhārata* provides a vivid, though somewhat exaggerated account of Dvaitavana (a sacred forest) and the hermitage of the sage Dadhichi across the Sarasvati.<sup>5</sup>

The Dvaitavana was covered at the end of the summer, with *śālas*, palms, *kadambas*, *sarjas*, *arjunas* and *karmakāras*. The peacocks, *atyūhas*, *chakoras* and *kokilas* sat on the top of the trees and poured forth sweet notes. In that forest were also seen the 'leaders of elephant herds, gigantic like hills with temporal juice trickling down in the season of rut and accompanied by the herd of the elephants'. And there lived many ascetics of accomplished piety in that forest 'in the hermitages of pious and purified souls, wearing bark and matted locks'. The Dadhichi *āśrama* resounded with the hum of bees as if they were reciting *sāmas*. It echoed melodious notes of male *kokila* and *chakora*. The buffaloes, bears, deers and *chamaras* ambled leisurely. The place also echoed with the loud roar of lions and tigers, who lay stretched in caves and glens.<sup>6</sup> The *Vāmana Purāṇa*<sup>7</sup> places in Kurukshetra the hermitages of Viśvāmitra and Vasiṣṭha, the Vedic sages. These hermitages used to be seats of learning where pupils from distant parts of the country gathered together for instruction in Divine knowledge.

This graphic and poetic account throws light on the spiritual temper of the people who passed their lives in meditation, penance and austerity.

Kurukshetra is associated with cults of the Yaksas, Goddesses and Nāgas. Near the Brahmasara lived the famous Yakṣī, called Paiśācī in the *Mahābhārata*.<sup>8</sup> According to V.S. Agrawala<sup>9</sup>, she was 'the tutelary deity of some primitive tribe and that she lived on a non-vegetarian diet'. According to the *Mahābhārata* she warned the pilgrims not to stay there for more than a day, but in case one liked to stay for the second night, he would find just the contrary to what he had experienced during the previous night.<sup>10</sup>

The *Vāmana Purāṇa* alludes to various divine protectors of the place :<sup>11</sup>

The protection of the region, Nārāyaṇa entrusted to the Yakṣa named Chandra, the Pannage Vāsuki, the Vidyādhara Śaṅkukarna, the great demon Sukeśi, the King Ajāvana and the Pāvaka Mahādeva. Since then they and their stout and strong servants and other followers have been guarding Kurujāṅgla from all



sides. Eight thousand mighty archers are ever engaged in maintaining the sanctity of the region by preventing the most wicked sinners from entering it or taking bath there.

The *Matsya Purāṇa*<sup>12</sup> mentions that Bhavānī was connected with Sthānēśvara, and Devamātā with the Sarasvatī. The *Mahābhārata* alludes to Takṣaka, the great Nāga king's association with the region.<sup>13</sup> The nāga association of Kurukshetra is further confirmed by the existence of various *nāgatīrthas*. The Vana Parva refers to Nāgatīrtha, and Sarpadarvī.<sup>14</sup> Nāgatīrtha is Nagadu (in district Jind) and, Sarpadarvī, the 'most excellent of the nāga tīrthas', stands for Safidon (in district Jind) known for three ancient *tīrthas* and temples—Nāgeśvara Mahādeva, Nāgadamānī Devi and Nāga Kṣetra, connected with Parīkṣhita, Janamejaya and Takṣaka.

The most important gods associated with Kurukshetra are : Brahmā, Śiva, Viṣṇu, Indra, Agnī, Kārtikeya, Sūrya and Vāmana.

Kurukshetra (also called Brahmāvarta and Brahmakshetra) was considered the birth place of Prajāpati Brahmā and the seat of his creation.<sup>15</sup> It is believed that Prajāpati created the primeval waters, and deposited in them his seed which took the form of a golden cosmic egg. This happened at the lake Sannihati in Kurukshetra. A similar tradition is recorded about Pṛthūdaka.<sup>16</sup> Sarasvatī is said to have assisted Brahmā in his creation by giving the faculty of speech to living creatures.<sup>17</sup> It was also the seat of the *Yajñas* of Brahmā (Prajāpati)<sup>18</sup> which became the foremost and highest form of duty for gods as well as for men.<sup>19</sup> Lord Śiva humbled the pride of the sage Maṅkanaka at Saptasārasvata (a village Mangna in Pehowa).<sup>20</sup> The *Vāmana Purāṇa* provides a detailed description of the Śaiva tīrthas of Thanesar against their mythological setting.<sup>21</sup> It elaborates on the religious importance of Sthāṇutīrtha, Sthāṇuvaṣa and Sthāṇuliṅga. Further, the *Purāṇa* in the garb of a legend refers to the choking up of Sannihita tank by the western winds of the advancing Rajasthan deserts necessitating as many as seven successive restorations of the Sthāṇuliṅga (which must be then very close to the tank).<sup>21a</sup> As very rightly put by V.S. Agrawala 'conditions of humility once prevailed all along the lower course of the Sarasvatī . . . but later on the Rajasthan desert began to lick up the area with its flaming tongues and conditions of desiccation moved the east until they reached Kurukshetra and turned the same into a barren tract of sand overgrown with *pilu*, *śami* and *acacia* trees. This phenomenon may have taken several centuries probably between the fourth and the seventh century A.D.'<sup>21b</sup>

The *Mahābhārata*, *Padma* and *Vāmana Purāṇas* mention the association of Viṣṇu in his Vāmana form with Kurukshetra.<sup>22</sup> Śaravana or the forest of reeds (in Kaithal) is connected with Kārtikeya,<sup>23</sup> the war god who had led the Gods against *asuras* (demons) at Teijasa tīrtha (a village Urnaich in Thanesar) and Somatīrtha (situated in the north of Thanesar).<sup>24</sup> The popularity of Kārtikeya worship in Kurukshetra finds confirmation in the discovery of Kārtikeya type of Yaudheya coins in the



region.<sup>25</sup> Surya performed a sacrifice (at the Āditya tirtha) on the Sarasvatī and acquired supremacy over the stars.<sup>26</sup> Viṣṇu killed the demons Madhu and Kaiṭabha at Savana (a village Sivana near Kaithal).<sup>27</sup> In his Nṛsimha form he is said to have killed the demon Hiranyakaśipu at Kṛtaśaucha<sup>28</sup> (a village Barahban in district Jind). Lord Indra performed austerities at Indratīrtha (in Thanesar) and on the Sarasvatī (at Indrabari in Safidon).<sup>29</sup> Varuṇa was anointed by the Gods at Taijasa tīrtha.<sup>30</sup> Uśana Śukra attained his position among the planets by worshipping Parmeśvara at Kapālamochana.<sup>31</sup> He performed austerities and planned the Devāsura Sangrāma here. God Agni is known to have performed austerities at Agni Prācī (in Thanesar) and Agnitīrtha (in Pṛthūdaka).<sup>32</sup> Ilāyāspada (Idaspada in Kaithal) and Mānuṣa (Manas in Kaithal) are associated with Agni.<sup>33</sup> At Vyāsasthali (Basthali, in district Karnal) lived Vyāsa, the compiler of the Vedas and the traditional author of the Purāṇas.<sup>34</sup> According to the *Brahma Purāṇa*,<sup>35</sup> Vyāsa was visited here by the nine sages—Kaśyapa, Jamadagni, Bharadvāja, Gautama, Vasiṣṭha, Jaimini, Dhaumya, Mārkaṇḍeya and Vālmīki. The *Kārma Purāṇa* also mentions a tīrtha named after him on the Sarasvatī.<sup>35a</sup> These associations of Kurukshetra are purely legendary with no historical basis but nevertheless they emphasise the religious importance of the place. During the post-Maurya period with the rise of *bhakti* (devotion) and construction of temples, the importance of Kurukshetra as a centre of pilgrimage grew and together with its various tīrthas it came to be associated with various Gods and Goddesses.

Kurukshetra gained wide reputation as a holy place during the 'Classical Age' of the Guptas. Through a messenger, the cloud in rainy season, hovering over Brahmāvarta, Kālidāsa, the poet, describes Kurukshetra as follows :<sup>36</sup>

With your shadow, you shall reach that field of the Kurus, reminiscent of the feuds of warriors, when the wielder of the Gāndīva bow showered at the faces of the princes hundreds of sharp arrows as you would at the lotuses your torrents of rain.

Gentle one, pure inside but black in colour, will you be on taking a draught of the waters of the Sarasvatī which Balarāma, descontinuing the battle through his love of kinsmen, restored to forswearing the liquor whose taste was cherished by him and which bore the reflection of Revatī's eyes.

That it inspired the poet shows that even in Kālidāsa's time the tradition of battle and of religious sanctity of Kurukshetra persisted.

The very sight of Kurukshetra was regarded as the remover of all sins. Even its very dust scattered by winds was considered as 'a giver of salvation to the worst miscreants'.<sup>37</sup> Kurukshetra was regarded as a place of salvation for those who 'abandon their life here'.<sup>38</sup> Even the Gaṅgā is compared with Kurukshetra.<sup>39</sup> According to the *Nārada Purāṇa* 'planets, constellations, and stars are subject to the



danger of falling down (from the sky) in course of time, but in case of those that die in Kurukshetra there is no falling on the earth again (i.e. they would not be born again).<sup>40</sup> Kurukshetra was held as the most important of all *tirthas* on earth. A visit to Kurukshetra was always fruitful. Kurukshetra enjoyed the merit of performing various Vedic sacrifices.<sup>41</sup> Rewards were also gained by bathing and visiting other *tirthas* in Kurukshetra. The religious merit thus acquired was considered equal to the gifting away of thousand cows.<sup>42</sup> Kurukshetra was the most suitable place for offering oblations to one's ancestors.<sup>43</sup> It was again here that Paraśurāma, after having a dip at Samantapañchaka, propitiated his ancestors.<sup>44</sup> It was a place frequently visited by sages, gods, Brahmins, *Gandharvas* and *Yakṣas*.<sup>45</sup> It was also visited by Vairocana Bali and where Balarāma bestowed many gifts.<sup>46</sup>

A bath at the holy *tirthas* in Kurukshetra was considered as the remover of all sins, and the promoter of religious merit. Equally purifying was the effect of a dip at Sannihit, and the river Sarasvatī. Kurukshetra was a sacred place for the performance of sacrifices and penances (*tapahkṣetra*). That is why it was called *Dharmakshetra* or the land of piety. The *Mahābhārata* calls in *Puṇyatamadeśa*,<sup>47</sup> while the *Vāyu Purāṇa*<sup>48</sup> refers to a big sacrifice on the banks of the holy river Dṛṣadvatī in Dharmakshetra-Kurukshetra. King Kuru too performed a *yajña* here. Samantapañchaka was regarded as the best place for obtaining religious merit.

Because of these associations, Kurukshetra came to be known as Brahmadevi, Brahmayoni, Brahmāvarta, Brahmarshideśa, Uttaravedi, Samantapañchaka, Dharmakshetra etc. The region abounded in sacred forests, rivers, tanks, hermitages, towns and villages. V.S. Agrawala attributes the special religious merit of Kurukshetra to its geographical situation between the rivers Sarasvatī and Dṛṣadvatī which had rather 'an assured supply of water and therefore was the scene of much green vegetation and habitable condition accompanied with forests and plantations'.<sup>49</sup>

The sacred ponds of this region are located at Pehowa (Pṛthudaka), Pharral (Phalgu), Bahloipur (Parāśara) and Kurukshetra (Sthāṇu, Sannihiti and Brahmasara). The various Yakṣa shrines : Arantuka (in Pehowa), Tarantuka (near Pipli), Kapila (in Kaithal) with his wife Ulūkhalā (at Pundri) and Machakruka (near Jakhal), denote four points of pilgrimage of the region. The more important places of pilgrimage of the region mentioned in Purāṇa tradition are : Pauṇḍarika (Pundri), Sarpīdadhi (Safidon), Kapisthala (Kaithal), Pṛthudaka (Pehowa), Sthāṇu vaṭa (Thanesar), Phalakīvana (Pharral), Vimala (Saga), Pāriplawa (near Balu), Daksāśrama (Dachor), Śālukīna (Salon), Varāhatīrtha (Baras), Yugandhara (Jagadhari), Bhūtālaya (Buria), Ramahṛada (Ramrai), Lokodhāra (Ladwa), Gavāmbhavana (Gohana), Sangini (Sinkh), Mānuṣatīrtha (Manasa), Rudrakoṭi (Radaur). Nāgaḥṛda (Nagadu), Pāṇikhāta (a village in tehsil Kaithal), Pavanahṛada (Uplana), Saptasārasvata (Mangna) and Kurukshetra. This outer ring or *parikramā* of Kurukshetra covers an area of forty-eight *krośas* or about hundred miles.<sup>50</sup>

Authorities differ widely about the number of *tirthas* in the holy region, Prof.



P.V. Kane<sup>51</sup> pointed out that the list of *tirthas* given in the *Mahābhārata* and *Purāṇas* do not tally with those mentioned in the *Brāhmaṇas* and *Śrautasūtras*. This shows that 'the Vanaparva account of Sarasvatī and Kurukshetra was composed some centuries later than that of the *Sūtras*'.<sup>51a</sup> The *Nāradya* gives the number of the *tirthas* as 100<sup>52</sup>, while the *Māhātmyas* mention 180, though the popular belief is that there are 360 *tirthas*. A recent survey conducted by Kurukshetra Development Board shows that many of the *tirthas* are extinct now, and presently the exact number of the *tirthas* is 104.<sup>53</sup>

The *Matsya*, *Padma* and *Vāmana Purāṇas* and also the *Mahābhārata* refer to the merit of visiting and taking bath in the sacred *tirthas* at Kurukshetra during solar eclipse.<sup>54</sup> This Purāṇic tradition of the sanctity of Kurukshetra is also confirmed by foreign travellers.<sup>55</sup> The *Bṛhadsamhitā* refers to the effect of an eclipse on Kurukshetra region.<sup>56</sup> According to *Śrīmadbhāgavata*, at the time of eclipse Kurukshetra was visited by people from all walks of life—sages as well as rulers. *Śrīmadbhāgavata* relates :<sup>57</sup>

Knowing that the solar eclipse was at hand, people from all over the country assembled there before the scheduled time of the eclipse. They were extremely anxious to attain *puṇya* and so they observed fast, had their bath at Kurukshetra and distributed garlands and cows among Brāhmaṇs. The great assembly on this occasion included even the rulers of various states and countries, i.e. Matsya, Uśīnara, Kosala, Vidarbha, Kuru, Sranjaya, Kambuja, Kekaya, Madra, Kunti, Ānarta, Kerala. Besides this, they had their relations too with them.

The importance of the visit to Kurukshetra during eclipse may be due to its central position for astronomical calculations,<sup>58</sup> but the tradition continues even today when on the occasion of the recent solar eclipse (16th February, 1980) about fourteen lakh people are reported to have taken dip in the sacred waters of Kurukshetra.

According to the literary tradition, Kurukshetra was thus a magnificent place where the gods resided (*Devabhūmi*), performed sacrifices (*Devayajana*) and undertook prolonged austerities (*tapahkṣetrā*). It was natural that the region came to be identified with heaven. The *Mahābhārata*, therefore, declares that 'those who live in Kurukshetra in reality live in heaven'.<sup>59</sup> Favoured by gods and sages Kurukshetra became sacred and 'nothing short of heaven itself'.<sup>60</sup>

The fame of this region was not only confined to India but spread to other countries as well. It seems beyond doubt that Kurukshetra, its holiest part, enjoyed great reputation as a seat of religion and spiritual benefit. A stone inscription<sup>61</sup> found in Laos shows how the king Mahārājādhirāja Śrī Devānika (second half of the fifth century A.D.), who was compared to Indra, Yudhiṣṭhira, Dhanañjaya, Indradyumna and Śibi, determined to set up a *Mahātirtha* (great place of pilgrimage) to be known as a new Kurukshetra.<sup>62</sup> It begins with an invocation to Brahmā, Viṣṇu and Śiva.

This *Kurukshetra Māhātmya* in Laos would show how the sanctity of Kurukshetra was held in great reverence.<sup>63</sup>

The three identical verses (XI, XII, XIII) both in the inscription and in the *Mahābhārata* (one of which is also found in the *Matsya Purāṇa*), show that the eulogy of Kurukshetra in Devānīka's record must have its foundation in some Indian authority. The invocation of the Trinity (Brahmā, Viṣṇu and Maheśa) and the description of the king leaves no doubt that the poet was familiar with Sanskrit literature in general, and 'the religious-cum-ritualistic texts in particular'. Here it would be pertinent to quote Dr. R.C. Majumdar who delivered a talk on Kurukshetra. He pointed out<sup>64</sup> :

It is difficult to believe that they would have composed the verses in honour of Kurukshetra without the authority of some Indian religious text.

He adds :<sup>65</sup>

The existence of such a *Kurukshetra Māhātmya* is indicated by the common verses both in the *Mahābhārata* and the inscription specially the one which puts Kurukshetra above all other holy places of pilgrimage . . . The record was composed in the second half of the fifth century A.D.; and the text of the *Kurukshetra Māhātmya* on the lines of the record may be easily presumed to have composed at least not later than the fourth century A.D. which is generally assumed to be the beginning of Purāṇa literature.

The people of Haryana served their adopted country very well is confirmed by a later record found at Prah Vihāra<sup>66</sup> (in Cambodia) dated 1037-38 A.D. stating that the keeper of Royal Archives Sukarman was a native of Kurukshetra, who for his excellent services in that capacity was recommended by King Śūryavarman for the grant of the territory of Vibheda. The English version of the Sanskrit verse which is found in the middle of the inscription written in old Khmer states :<sup>67</sup>

The village named Vibheda was given by the king of the kings Śrī Śūryavarman to Sukarman who came from Kurukshetra and because of this (the village) was called Kurukshetra.

The inscription points out the adventurous spirit as well as the scholarly temperament of the people of Haryana. The rise of Sukarman to the position of State Archivist testifies to his erudition and his administrative acumen which won him royal favour; but the thing which deserves special mention is Sukarman's unbounded love for his native place, which inspired him to name the place of his settlement as Kurukshetra. The tradition of the cultural sanctity of the region thus stands immortalized to this day on a stone slab in Cambodia.<sup>68</sup>



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3. Rodgers, *ASR*, 1888-89, pp. 9, 20.
4. J. Fleet, *CII*, III, pp. 269-70, plate XL.
5. J.N. Banerjee, *Journal of the Indian Society of Oriental Art*, Calcutta, 1945, XIII, p. 56; *HSHC*, p. 35.
6. Rodgers, *Report*, p. 9.
7. *Ibid.*, p. 20.
8. *ASR*, 1930-34, Pt I, pp. 143f wherein H.L. Srivastava dates one of these seals towards the 5th or 6th century A.D.; *HSHC*, pp. 36-37.
9. *ASIR*, XIV, p. 98; R.C. Agrawala, *op. cit.*, *HSHC*, p. 32.
10. *Ibid.*
11. Cunningham, *op. cit.*, p. 102; Agrawal, *op. cit.*, pp. 32-33.
12. *Ibid.*
13. Kurukshetra University Museum Catalogue (MS).
14. U.V. Singh, 'Terracottas from Sugh', *JHB*, VI, Nos. 1-2, 1974, p. 12.
15. Silak Ram, *op. cit.*, pp. 232-33.
- 15a. S.P. Shukla, 'A terracotta medallion from Khokhrakot, District Rohtak', *JHS*, V, Nos. 1-2, 1973, pp. 7-8.
16. *Ibid.*
17. Silak Ram, *op. cit.*, p. 213.
18. *Ibid.*
19. *Ibid.*, p. 203.
20. Dharampal Singh Punia, *op. cit.*, pp. 75-76.
21. *Ibid.*, p. 242.
22. *Ibid.*
23. *Ibid.*, pp. 193-94.
24. *Ibid.*



## 5. The holy of the holies

1. *Mbh.* Van. and Śal; *Vām.* XXIII, Nār. 64, 65 etc.
2. *Mbh.* Vana.
3. *Vām.* XXIII, 13.6-8.
4. *Ibid.*, 3-5 Nār. 65, 4-7, Cunningham, *ASIR*, XIV, p. 91.
5. *Mbh.* III, 25, 26, 27; 90.12-18.
6. *Ibid.*, 98.12-18.
7. *Vām.* 18.14, 19.1f; also see *Mbh.* III. 81-120.
8. *Mbh.* III, 129, 8-10.
9. V.S. Agrawala, 'Hindi Hindustan Weekly', New Delhi, April 18, 1954, p. 19f; V.S. Agrawala, *Vāmana Purāṇa : A Study*, p. 67; R.C. Agrawal, *IHQ*, XXXI, No. 1, p. 7.
10. *Mbh.* III, 129, 10; R.C. Agrawal, *op. cit.*
11. *Vām.* XXIII, 39-42.
12. *Mat.* XII. 31, 44; R.C. Agrawal, *op. cit.*, p. 20; *Pd.* V. 17.195, 208.
13. *Mbh.* I. 3.139-41.
14. *Ibid.*, III. 81.12; *Vām.* 13-23.
15. Nār. 64.13; *Vām.* 22, 17ff.
16. *Vām.* XXIII. 44.
17. *Śat.* 2.5.4.6; *Āit.*, 2.24; 6, 7.
18. *Mbh.* III. 81.177; *Pad.* 27.91; *Vām.* 1.13-14 (Saromāhātmya).
19. *RV.* X. 90.16.
20. *Vām.* Saro. 17.16; *Mbh.* Van. 18.107; *Pd.* Ādi. 27.4ff.
21. *Vām.* Saro. 24, 25.
- 21a. *Ibid.*, 45; V.S. Agrawala, *Vāmana Purāṇa : A Study*, Varanasi, 1964, pp. 90-91.
- 21b. Agrawala, *op. cit.*
22. *Mbh.* Van. 81.86; *Vām.* 15.65, 78.
23. *Mat.* 146.3.
24. *Mbh.* Śal, 43-45; Van. 81.143; *Vām.* 20.7.
25. V.A. Smith, *Catalogue of coins in Indian Museums*, Calcutta, I, Pt. XXI; *ASIR*, 1930-34, p. 143ff etc.
26. *Mbh.* Śal. 48.16-17; Van. 81.161, *Vām.* 25.32.
27. *Ibid.*, Śal. 48.21.
28. *Mbh.* III. 81.17; *Vām.* 13.37.
29. *Ibid.* Śal. 48.5; *Vām.* 25.36; Cunningham, *op. cit.*, pp. 100, 105.
30. *Mbh.* Śal. 45.92; 46.9-10.
31. *Ibid.*, 38, 4-6, Van. 81-116; *Vām.* 18.1.
32. Van. 81.119, Śal. 46-12; *Vām.* 18.13.
33. *RV.* III. 23.4.
34. *Vām.* 15.60; *Mbh.* III. 81.81; Nār. II, 65.83; *Pd.* I. 26.90-91.
35. *Brah.* 26.6ff.
- 35a. *Kā.* II. 37.29; *Bd.* III. 13.69; Kane, *op. cit.*, p. 685.
36. Kālidāsa, *Meghadūta*, Pūrvamegha, verses 49-50.
37. *Pd.* Ādi. 27.88, 90; Van. 81.174, 176.
38. Śal. (Satav. ed.) 53.6, 53.7-8 etc.
39. Kane, *History of Dharmatāstra*, IV, p. 684.
40. Nār. II. 64.23-24; *Vām.* 12-16; Kane, *op. cit.*, 684, fn. 1554.
41. Vana. 81.1.

42. Kurukshetra Māhātmya in Laos, Verse 16, *JHS*, 1-2, 1972, p. 10.
43. *Ag.* 117.63.4.
44. *Mbh.* I. 1.2-12.
45. *Mbh.* Vana (Roy. edn.) 83.5-8; 109-9; *Vām.* 57.51-3, 89.1-3; R.C. Agrawala, *op. cit.*, p. 23.
46. *Mbh.* Śal (Satav. edn.) 55; *Vām.* 62.1.
47. *Ibid.*, Vana, 126.42; Kane, *op. cit.*, p. 684, fn 1553.
48. *Mat.* 50.65-67; *Vām.* I. 12.
49. V.S. Agrawala, *Vāmana Purāṇa : A Study*, p. 185.
50. *Mbh.* Van. and Śal; *Vām.* XXIII; *Nā.* 65.
51. Kane, *History of Dharmasāstra*, IV, p. 684.
- 51a. *Ibid.*
52. Uttara. 65, Kane, *op. cit.*
53. *Kurukshetra Ke Pāvana Tīrtha.*
54. *Mat.* 199.12 (Calcutta edn., p. 318); *Pd.* Ādi, 27.78; *Mbh.* 81.167; *Vām.* Saro, 13.50, 20.9.
55. *Akbarnāmā* (ed. Beveridge), II, p. 422f; William Foster, *Early Travels in India*, 1968, p. 157-58; Francois Bernier, *Travels in Mogul Empire*, 1972, pp. 301-03 etc.
56. V. 78; XI. 57.
57. Govindadass ed. II, Chap. 82, p. 450ff; R.C. Agrawala, *IHQ*, XXX-1, p. 28.
58. *Siddhāntasiromani*, Goladhyaya 24; *Al-Beruni's India*, E. Sachau, I, p. 308.
59. *Pad.* Ādi. 27.88; *Mbh.* 3.81.175.
60. *Mbh.* (Gita Press edn.) Śalya.
61. *JBBRAS*, Vols. 34-35; *JHS*, IV, 1972, pp. 9-10.
62. R.C. Majumdar, 'The Antiquity and Importance of Kurukshetra', *JHS*, p. 6.
63. *Ibid.*, p. 9ff.
64. *Ibid.*
65. *Ibid.*
66. Inscription of Prah Vihāra (K. 360), Verse VI, *Inscription du Cambodge* ed G. Coedis, VI, 261, as quoted in Kalyan Kumar Sarkar's monograph, *Early Indo-Cambodian Contacts*, *Vishva Bharati Annals*, Vol. XI, 1968, pp. 16-17.
67. *Ibid.*
68. Buddha Prakash, *Haryana Through the Ages*, pp. 36-37.



## CHAPTER V

# *The Fateful Years*

### 1. The Pratihara Domination

The period from the death of Harṣa to the establishment of the Turkish rule is significant not only for the early history of Haryana but also for the whole of northern India. In Haryana it marked the dominance of three powerful dynasties—the Pratihāras, the Tomaras and the Chāhamānas—whose history may be characterised as a history of successive attempts at preserving the integrity and sanctity of the country against foreign invaders.

The reconstruction of the history of Haryana immediately after Harṣa's death sometime in A.D. 647-48 is rather a difficult task. From the Chinese sources<sup>1</sup> it appears that Harṣa's minister *A-la-na shuen* (Arjuna or Aruṇāśva) usurped the throne of Kanauj, but nothing is known about the fate of the kingdom of Thanesar. It is generally held that the political importance of this region declined in the early years of Harṣa's reign due to the shifting of his capital from Thanesar to Kanauj, but a reference to the existence of a Bhaṇḍikula in a Pratihāra inscription<sup>2</sup> tends to modify this view.

It is evident from Bāṇa's account that Bhaṇḍi was the son of Harṣa's maternal uncle.<sup>3</sup> It is not clear whether Harṣa left any successor. Since Bhaṇḍi was his only nearest relative who had been associated with his military campaigns, it is not unlikely that Harṣa left him in control of Thanesar. After Harṣa's death when anarchy prevailed over large areas of North India, probably Bhaṇḍi or his successor, established himself over the Kurukshetra region; and later his family continued to rule there until the time of the Pratihāras.<sup>4</sup>

Haryana seems to have formed a part of the kingdom of Kanauj under Yaśovarman (c.A.D. 690-740). The poet Vākpatirāja describes the march of his army through Marudeśa (Rajasthan desert), Śrīkaṇṭha and Kurukshetra and places connected with Bhārata war.<sup>5</sup> The same work alludes to Yaśovarman's victory over the Pārasikas (the Arabs) which implies, as we have stated elsewhere, that Yaśovarman marched through Haryana along with his feudatory Pratihāra Nāgabhaṇa I (a ruler

of Rajasthan in A.D. 725-56) to stem the tide of Muslim invaders.<sup>6</sup> It is interesting to note that Nāgabhaṭa is also known to have defeated the Arabs<sup>7</sup> while the Korean Buddhist pilgrim Hui-Ch'ao confirms Tājika (i.e. Arabs) invasion of western India about A.D. 725.<sup>8</sup> Further, the Nalanda inscription of Yaśovarman refers to his minister-in-charge of northern regions (*Udichapati*), who acted as the warden of the marches (*mārgapati*) and excelled Tikina (i.e. tegin, a title used by Turkish rulers).<sup>9</sup> Yaśovarman's hold over this region was, however, short lived for the *Rājatarāṅgiṇī* of Kalhaṇa informs us of his crushing defeat at the hands of Kashmir ruler Lalitāditya Muktapīṭha, who succeeded in bringing the region under his subjection for sometime.<sup>10</sup>

Under Pratihāra Vatsarāja (A.D. 775-792), the grandson of Nāgabhaṭa I, Haryana passed on to the new masters. According to the Gwalior inscription, Vatsarāja 'with strong bow as his companion wrested the empire from the famous Bhaṇḍi clan, hard to overcome by reason of the rampart of infuriated elephants'.<sup>11</sup> This inscription specifically mentions Bhaṇḍikula as *khyāta* (renowned) which could only be the family of Bhaṇḍi referred to in the *Harṣacharita*. The word *sāmrajya* (empire) need not be taken literally, which simply denotes the kingdom of Bhaṇḍi which was brought into submission by Vatsarāja. Secondly, the inscription in question refers to the elephant forces of the Bhaṇḍis, a feature which may be noted also in connection with the military forces of Harshavardhana and later of the ruler of Thanesar at the time of the Ghaznavid invasion. The geographical location of this kingdom is not difficult to determine, for it must be close to that of Vatsarāja, the ruler of Gurjaratrā in Rajasthan towards east of which lay the kingdom of Kanauj under its ruler Indrāyudha, while towards the south there were the Rāṣtrakūtas who had conquered Mālava and Lāṭa regions, and towards the west there was Sind, the Arab principality. The only direction which now remained accessible to Vatsarāja's expedition was the north-east i.e. Haryana. Vatsarāja, who was ably assisted by the Chāhamāna Durlabharāja of Śākambharī (Sambhar in Rajasthan) probably brought it under his dominion. Since Vatsarāja is also known to have defeated the Pālas of Bengal perhaps on behalf of his overlord Indrāyudha (the king of Kanauj), it appears that the defeat of Bhaṇḍis was his earlier achievement. Vatsarāja, however, could not keep the region under his control for long. Following his defeat at the hands of Rāṣtrakūṭa Dhruva in the Ganga Valley, he sought refuge in the desert of Rajasthan. Dharmapāla of Bengal (A.D. 770-810), Pratihāra Vatsarāja's rival in the north, seized the opportunity to fulfil his political ambition. With a large army he proceeded towards the Gangā valley, defeated Vatsarāja's nominal overlord Indrāyudha, and installed his own nominee Chakrāyudha on the imperial throne of Kanauj. At the grand assembly of Kanauj, this political transaction was approved by the rulers of north. As a king of the Kuru clan was also present on this occasion, it seems that Haryana continued to owe allegiances to the kingdom of Kanauj.<sup>12</sup>

With the accession of Nāgabhaṭa II (A.D. 792-833) also known as Āma-Nagāvaloka, a new era dawned upon Haryana. He defeated Dharmapāla with his protege,



Chakrāyudha, and established the seat of his power at Kanauj. From the account of his conquest as furnished by the Gwalior inscription,<sup>13</sup> it appears that his empire had flung far and wide. Further, the *Skanda Purāṇa* informs us that Brahmāvarta (the region between the Sarasvatī and Dṛśadvatī was in his possession.<sup>14</sup> According to the Gwalior inscription<sup>15</sup> and the Jain *Prabhāvakacharita*<sup>16</sup> which mention his conquest of Rājagiri (identified with Rajauri) it appears that his empire even extended up to Punjab.<sup>17</sup>

Mihira Bhoja (A.D. 836-890), the grandson of Nāgabhaṭa II, is known to have sent an expedition to North-west India under his feudatory Harṣarāja Guhila, the commander, who presented horses to his master as trophies of the war.<sup>18</sup> Pratihāra empire under him spread up to Takkadeśa<sup>19</sup> (south-eastern Punjab) including, of course, the region of Haryana as the testimony of inscriptions from Pehowa,<sup>20</sup> Sirsa<sup>21</sup> and Delhi<sup>22</sup>, coins and coin moulds from district Rohtak<sup>23</sup> would suggest. Pehowa's Garibnath temple inscription dated in (Harsha) Samvat 276 (A.D. 882) records<sup>24</sup> :

An agreement mutually entered into by certain pious traders who had met at a horse fair at Pehowa, with a view to imposing upon themselves and their customers certain taxes, the proceeds of which were to be distributed among some temples, priests and sanctuaries in duly specified proportions.

The inscription not only points out that Haryana formed a part of the Pratihāra empire under Bhoja but also establishes that Pehowa had grown into a well-known commercial and cultural centre for the horse-dealers who were assembled there came from different parts of the country. This also explains the reference to Bhoja's numerous horses in the account of Sulaiman<sup>25</sup>, the Arab traveller. The Sirsa inscription of this Pratihāra ruler is important from religious point of view. It refers to the influence of Pāśupata Śaivism and mentions its Āchāryas one of whom constructed a magnificent temple of Yogīśvara Śiva,<sup>26</sup> while the fragmentary Delhi inscription<sup>27</sup> refers to the acquisition of some land and the construction of a *Devakula* (temple). The second Pehowa inscription<sup>28</sup> of the time of Bhoja's successor Mahendrapāla (A.D. 890-910), gives the genealogy of the Tomara kings of the Kurukshetra-Thanesar region, who were the feudatories of the Pratihāras. The earliest of these rulers was Rājā Jāula, who 'obtained prosperity by looking after the affairs of a king'. In this family was later on born Vajraṭa who probably acknowledged Pratihāra Bhoja's supremacy. His successor was Jajjuka, who was again succeeded by his son Bhūnātha Gogga, Pratihāra Mahendrapāla's feudatory. Gogga and his two step-brothers, Pūrṇarāja and Devarāja, built three temples of Viṣṇu in Pṛthudaka on the banks of the Sarasvatī.<sup>29</sup> The inscription also provides a beautiful description of Kurukshetra and the holy Sarasvatī. It states<sup>30</sup> :

May the field of Kuru (i.e. Kurukshetra) effect your advancement, free from all



troubles,—(the field) which is capable of removing the taint of various kinds of sins, which is inhabited by sages whose happiness on having destroyed the dense darkness (of ignorance) by an advanced knowledge of Self is conspicuous.

And may that (beautiful) water of Sarasvatī cut your bonds of misery from all sides (the water) which is a boat for crossing the ocean of the cycle of mundane existence, a chariot for journeying along the path of the gods (i.e. heaven), a cloud such as appears on the destruction of the world, with its copious showers falling on the fire of (the miseries) of the virtuous (people), and sun to destroy the slushy darkness of a concatenation of various diseases.

The suzerainty of the Pratihāras over north-west of India was challenged by Śāhīs and the rulers of Kashmira. And Mahīpāla (c. A.D. 912-944) Mahendrapāla's son had to deal with them with a firm hand. The Khajuraho inscription of Chandela Yaśovarman informs that 'Herambapāla (i.e. Mahīpāla) invaded the Śāhī kingdom with a vast army of horses and elephants and acquired from him an image of Vaikuṇṭha (Viṣṇu) which he had obtained from the king of Kīra (Kangra) and the latter from the lord of Tibet'.<sup>31</sup> Consequently Mahīpāla had also to deal with the rulers of Lohara and Kashmir who were the allies of Śāhīs. Rājasekhara (Mahīpāla's court poet) in his *Bālabhārata*<sup>32</sup> refers to his patron's victories over Kuluta (Kulu) and Ramaṭha (a people of northern India) while Ārya Kṣemīśvara (another of his court poets) wishes that 'the glory of Kārtikeya (i.e. Mahīpāla) may spread in the northern regions even beyond the milky ocean'.<sup>33</sup> Further, the reference to Chandela Yaśovarman's victory over Khasa and Kashmira and Kurus mentioned in the aforesaid inscription,<sup>34</sup> possibly indicate his achievements at the instance and command of his overlord Mahīpāla. This explains why *Hudūd-al-Ālam*,<sup>35</sup> the tenth century Persian work, describes Vayhind and Kashmira as 'dependencies of the Ray of Qinnauj'. The Pratihāras, under Mahīpāla also succeeded in checking the advance of the Muslim rulers of Multan for a fairly long time. This finds confirmation in the observation of the Arab writer Al-Masudi<sup>36</sup> that 'Baura (Mahīpāla) kept an army of seven to nine hundred thousand strong in the north to fight with the Muslims of Multan'. Subsequently when after Mahīpāla the Pratihāra power declined, the Muslims began their incursions into their territories in Punjab, Haryana and other parts of India.<sup>37</sup>

It is rather difficult to establish the relationship between the Tomaras of Haryana (referred to in the Pehowa inscription) with those of Delhi who were defeated in course of time by the Chāhamānas of Śākambharī, but in view of the later epigraphic evidence<sup>38</sup> and the bardic tradition<sup>39</sup> associating the Tomaras with Delhi, it is reasonable to believe that the Tomara family of Haryana was connected with the region formerly known as the Delhi division of Punjab. The Palam Baoli inscription (1280 A.D.) for instance, states that 'the land of Hariyāpaka was first enjoyed by the Tomaras, and then by the Chāhamānas',<sup>40</sup> while according to the



Delhi museum inscription (1328 A.D.) 'there is a country called Hariyānā, a very heaven on earth. There lies the city called Dhillikā (Delhi) built by the Tomaras'.<sup>41</sup> From the above it follows that the Tomaras were settled in Haryana at least from the 9th century A.D. when they came under the sway of Pratihāra Empire. But with the decline of the Pratihāras about the middle of the tenth century A.D. a section of the tribe probably founded an independent principality around Delhi.

## 2. The Ghaznavid incursions

Because of its special geographical and strategical location, Haryana had to bear the brunt of the attack of Muslim invaders, who were determined to capture Delhi. In this task, the Tomaras of Kurukshetra—Thanesar were helped by other Rajput princes, specially the Tomaras of Delhi whose kingdom was comprised of a considerable portion of Haryana. This becomes clear on the eve of Mahmud of Ghazni's invasion when the Tomara ruler of Delhi considered it his duty to protect the kingdom of Thanesar from the advancing Muslim marauders.

This was a period of gloom and much perplexity in the history of India in general and of Haryana in particular. In A.D. 986, Sabuktigin, the Turkish ruler of the kingdom of Ghazni, attacked the kingdom of Jaipāla, the most powerful ruler of north-west India, and in a subsequent raid occupied Peshawar. Mahmud, who succeeded him in A.D. 997 embarked on a definite policy of raiding the rich and the politically unstable kingdoms of India. In A.D. 1000 he defeated and captured Jayapāla who committed suicide. Jayapāla's son Ānandapāla with many others combined against Mahmud, but the disunited Indian forces basing their strategy on the obsolete methods of warfare and relying mainly on dilatory tactics and untrustworthy elephants, were vanquished near Peshawar by a smaller, yet more mobile and compact Muslim army. The road to Delhi and the Gangetic plains lay open to Mahmud.

Mahmud raided Thanesar in 1011 A.D.<sup>1</sup> This expedition which formed a part of his plan of India's invasion has been commented upon by a number of quite well-known Muslim writers such as Al-Bīrūnī<sup>2</sup>, Al-Utbi<sup>3</sup>, Isāmi<sup>4</sup> and Firishta<sup>5</sup>. Al-Bīrūnī accompanied Mahmud during his Indian expedition and wrote his famous book on India (*Kitābul Hind*) about 1030 A.D. when Mahmud died. Al-Bīrūnī, however, did not make any direct reference to the contemporary events. This deliberate silence need not be construed as evidence against the historicity of events which were also mentioned elsewhere. Al-Bīrūnī says quite a few illuminating things about Kurukshetra and Thanesar, their religious sanctity and geographical location. He wrote<sup>6</sup> :

Thanesar lies between the two rivers to the north both of Kanauj and Mathura (Mathura) at a distance of nearly 80 *farsakh* (1 *farsakh* = 6.4 kms) from Kanauj, and nearly 50 *farsakh* from Mathura.



The city of Thanesar is highly venerated by the Hindus. The idol of that place is called Cakraśvāmin, i.e. the owner of the cakra, a weapon. . . . It is of bronze, and is nearly the size of a man. It is now lying in the hippodrome in Ghazna, together with the lord of Somnāth. . . . This Cakraśvāmin is said to have been made in the time of Bharata as a memorial of wars connected with this name.

Al-Bīrūnī's observation is valuable. He does not refer directly to Mahmud's attack on Thanesar, but his reference to the idol of Cakraśvāmin lying in the hippodrome in Ghazni is to Viṣṇu's image which has highly venerated by the Hindus. The statement that it was made of bronze cannot be verified, for we do not have any evidence of bronze images having been made in Thanesar during this period; but about its size there need not be any doubt. Pieces of Viṣṇu's image of man's size have been discovered from nearby Pehowa<sup>7</sup>, and it is not unlikely that similar images were made in Thanesar during that period. The location of the image might be somewhere in the area popularly known as *Harshavaradhana-Kā-Qilā*. Al-Bīrūnī's observation about the image being made during the time of Bhārata as a memorial of the Bhārata war is based on local tradition but Al-Bīrūnī's reference to the story of king Kuru and the Bhārata war demonstrates not only his knowledge of Purāṇic literature, but also shows that even during his time these stories greatly fascinated people from all over the country. Al-Bīrūnī further refers to an old tradition basing astronomical calculations (as of longitude) on a straight line from Lanka to Meru passing through Ujjain, Rōhitaka, Kurukshetra, Mathura and Himavant.<sup>8</sup> Quoting Āryabhaṭa and Pṛthuśvāmin who do not accept the authority of Puliśa in this matter, Al-Bīrūnī maintains that the latitudes of places mentioned in the tradition are erroneous.<sup>9</sup> However, it may be pointed out that Bhāskarāchārya (12th century), a well known authority of the subsequent period, also confirms the tradition in his work on astronomy—the *Siddhāntaśiromaṇi*.<sup>10</sup> The importance of Kurukshetra during eclipse may possibly be due to its central position for astronomical calculations, but the tradition continues even today when on the occasion of the recent solar eclipse (February 16, 1980) about 14 lakh people are reported to have taken dip in the sacred waters of Kurukshetra.<sup>11</sup> Al-Bīrūnī, on the authority of Varāhamihira also points out the religious merit of taking bath at the sacred tanks of Kurukshetra during eclipse.<sup>12</sup>

Al-Uṭbī<sup>13</sup>, another contemporary writer, points out the aim of Mahmud's Thanesar expedition. He explains also the strategy which brought him victory. According to him, Mahmud had decided in Ghazni to attack Thanesar in order to acquire 'elephants of Silman (Ceylonese) breed' and 'to plant the standards of Islam and extirpate idolatry'.<sup>14</sup> Firishṭa<sup>15</sup> confirms this story, which though of a much later period (1607), is valuable for its additional information. About Mahmud's expedition, Firishṭa wrote :<sup>16</sup>



It had reached the ears of the king that Thanesar was held in the same veneration by idolaters as Mecca by the faithful; that they had there set up number of idols, the principal of which they called Jagasom, pretending that it had existed since the creation.

Utbi indicates that there was strong resistance from some chief who is not named. The elephants for which Mahmud principally had come were captured. There is no reference to idol breaking but Utbi in the beginning did mention it as one of Mahmud's great passions. In his account Utbi<sup>17</sup> describes Mahmud's troops crossing a river (either Sarasvatī or Dṛśadvatī), but since Utbi describes Mahmud's crossing the stream near Thanesar with its precipitous banks, the reference is possibly to the Sarasvatī. It may be noted that both the Ghaggar and the Sarasvatī rivers which have their sources in the valley to the north of Siwālik range, are prone to sudden floods.<sup>18</sup>

It is probable that Mahmud rushed to Thanesar through the desert via Multan. The reference in Utbi to Mahmud's march through a desert should be understood in this context.<sup>19</sup> Firishta<sup>20</sup> places the expedition in 1011 A.D. He relates that when Ānandapāla, the ruler of Punjab learnt about Mahmud's resolve to attack Thanesar, and to desecrate Jagasom, the famous idol, he submitted a 'respectful protest' and promised 'an annual tribute' from the people and on his part 'fifty elephants and jewels to a considerable amount' to be paid to the latter. Mahmud reacted sharply to Ānandapāla's gesture, and said that 'the followers of the religion of Mahomet exerted themselves in the subversion of idolatory to obtain reward in heaven'. The Rājā of Delhi thereupon called other rulers of India to his aid in order to defend Thanesar.<sup>21</sup> This agrees with the evidence of Isāmi<sup>22</sup> (a writer of thirteenth and early fourteenth century) according to whom Mahmud's Thanesar invasion was aimed at 'crushing the Hindu confederacy' which was being formed 'to protect Thanesar'. But Mahmud attacked Thanesar before any resistance could be offered. He took the city, treated it with extravagant violence, destroyed the temples, and sold the inhabitants in slavery.<sup>23</sup> It was too heavy a blow to have dealt.

Firishta has described the results of the battle of Thanesar in more details. He wrote :<sup>24</sup>

... The city was plundered, the idols broken and the idol Jagsom was sent to Ghaznin to be trodden with foot . . . immense wealth was found in the temple. According to Haji Muhammad Khandahari, a *ruhy* was found in one of them, weighing 450 miskal (1 miskal=40 rattis), the equal of which no one had ever seen or heard of.

Mahmud then decided to march on Delhi but his nobles opposed as it was unwise before entire Punjab was conquered and annexed to the Ghaznavid empire. Much of what Firishta says is fanciful as Delhi was not then in such a strong position



as to call on the rulers of the whole of India for help. Nor was Delhi then an important place, it was only the seat of the kingdom of Tomaras. Its political importance really grew with its occupation by the Chāhamānas. That may be the reason why Delhi is not mentioned in the contemporary works of Al-Birūnī or Al-Uṭbī. The Muslim accounts say nothing about the ruling chief of the kingdom of Thanesar, probably he was a descendant of the local Tomara dynasty (mentioned in the Pehowa inscription of the time of Mahendrapāla) who had political connections with the Śāhīs of Punjab as well as the Tomaras of Delhi whose help he had sought for the defence of his kingdom.

According to Uṭbī, as already stated, this expedition took place after the annexation of Punjab at the battle of Nardin (Nandana) when Ānandapāla was already dead.<sup>25</sup> Firishta names the deity of Thanesar as Jagsom<sup>26</sup>, while Al-Biruni calls it Chakraśvāmin. It is difficult to reduce Jagsom to its Sanskrit equivalent, it was possibly one of those *Yakṣa* images (regarded as guardians of Kurukshetra) which was also subjected to the iconoclastic fury of the invader.

In the following years (A.D. 1018-20) Mahmud again had to march through the region in course of his expeditions to Bulandshahr, Mathura, Kanauj, Gwalior and Kalanjara.<sup>27</sup> The region was subsequently raided by Mahmud's successor Masud.<sup>28</sup> In 1034 Niyaltigin whom Masud appointed Governor of Punjab, passed through this region while on his way to Banaras;<sup>29</sup> and two years later, Sultan Masud himself marched to Hansi which he captured after a strong resistance.<sup>30</sup> As the track was rich in sugarcane his soldiers filled the moat with it and stormed the fortress.<sup>31</sup> He then marched to Sonapat and defeated its governor Dipal Hari.<sup>32</sup> From here he advanced towards the kingdom of Ram Rai who saved himself from molestation by offering him valuable presents.<sup>33</sup> These expeditions brought parts of Haryana under the Ghaznavids and Hansi became their headquarters. Masud's son, Majdud, Governor of the region from Hansi to Indus, refused allegiance to his brother Maudud, the new ruler of Ghazni (1040). Thereupon Maudud despatched an army to punish Majdud who also advanced from Hansi to resist his brother's forces but died at Lahore before the battle (1041), probably he was poisoned. Maudud, now master of the region, consolidated his gains by appointing his own men at Hansi, Thanesar and other places.<sup>34</sup>

The internal dissensions of the Ghaznavids and the impending danger of the Saljuq attack on their territory in the west gave an opportunity to the Hindu rulers to unite. Realising the consequence of Muslim rule, a confederacy under the Tomara ruler of Delhi was formed<sup>35</sup> to liberate this part of the country from foreign occupation. The confederates whom Firishta does not mention belonged to the Chāhamāna, Paramāra, and Kalachuri dynasties.<sup>36</sup> They recaptured Hansi, Thanesar and other dependencies<sup>37</sup> and thus recovered Haryana and Punjab from the Ghaznavids. They further advanced up to Nagarkot and Lahore, the latter they, however, failed to capture. Although the Hindu army was forced to withdraw from its siege of Lahore, it succeeded in wiping out Muslim influence towards the east of Ravi.<sup>38</sup>



The struggle for succession after Maudud's death in 1049 gave some respite to Indians for about a decade. With the accession of Ibrahim in A.D. 1059, the son of Masud I, a policy of aggression followed. In course of several expeditions, he conquered Jullundhur, Ajudhan, Sarhind, Rupor and advanced to Buria (on the Yamunā in district Ambala).<sup>39</sup> Thus he occupied parts of the region which came to be known a little later as Haryana. In A.D. 1075 his son Mahmud, the Governor of Punjab also entered the region in course of his expeditions to Agra, Kanauj, Kalanjara and Ujjain.<sup>40</sup>

In this time of trouble when the region was frequently raided by foreign invaders the Lohara kings of Kashmir also decided to make capital out of it. Kalhana, the Kashmiri historian, mentions the impact of King Ananta's oppressive rule as far as Kanauj;<sup>41</sup> while Bilhana, another Kashmiri poet, refers, though obliquely, to his son Kalaśa's expedition to this region, specially his attack on Kurukshetra, and his advance up to the Yamunā. He wrote :<sup>42</sup>

That conqueror (Kalaśa) of the whole earth, filling the earth with his fame resembling the Himalayas or Śeṣanāga (in its white glory) reached Kurukshetra where the earring of fame of the lord of the Kurus (Duryodhana), dropping from the ear (or from that of Karṇa the third commander-in-chief of his army) on account of the blows of the arrows of Arjuna, seek in the mire of blood.

The intrusion of Kashmir rulers in Haryana was, however, short lived due to their dynastic squabbles and secondly, because the Tomaras probably came to terms with the Ghaznavids (as indicated in the *Pārśvanāthacharita* of Śrīvara).<sup>43</sup>

### 3. The Tomara-Chahamana interlude

The fragmentary Chāhamāna *praśasti* of Ajmer Museum, describing Arjorāja, makes a special mention of his 'carrying Chāhamāna arms up to the Sindhu and Sarasvatī rivers and his expedition into the Haritānaka'.<sup>1</sup> This finds confirmation in Hemachandra's *Dvāśraya Mahākāvya*<sup>2</sup> (a contemporary Jain work), wherein mention is also made to the assistance offered to Arjorāja by the rulers of Eastern Madra and of Vāhikadeśa. Furthermore, the epithet *Udichyarāt* applied to him in the same work suggests that Arjorāja by his attack on the Sindhu and the Sarasvatī also brought Haryana under his subjection<sup>3</sup>, which was then ruled by the Tomaras. The Chāhamāna *praśasti* further corroborates it while making a specific mention that 'his (Arjorāja's) soldier's march rendered the waters of the river-Kālindī (Yamunā) muddy and the women of the Haritānaka country shed tears'.<sup>4</sup> As stated earlier, Haritānaka or Haryana with its capital at Dhillikā (Delhi, which stands on the right bank of the river Yamunā), was ruled by Tomaras before its conquest by the Chāhamānas. The reference is, therefore, to a fight between Arjorāja and the Tomaras of Haryana wherein



the latter were defeated but not decisively because the Tomaras continued to fight for their survival until the reign of Vigraharāja IV.<sup>5</sup>

According to the Bijolia inscription<sup>6</sup>, Vigraharāja defeated the Bhādānakas and captured Delhi and Hansi. As in the *Kāvyamīmāṃsā*<sup>7</sup> of Rājasekhara, the Bhādānakas are mentioned in conjunction with the inhabitants of Maru (Thar desert) and Takka (south-eastern Punjab) as speakers of Apabhramśa, they must have lived somewhere near these regions 'comprising the tract including the present district of Gurgaon, a part of the Alwar state, and the Bhiwani Tehsil of Mahendragarh district of Haryana' as suggested by Dasarath Sharma.<sup>8</sup> This region was most probably ruled by Ahīrs for they were intimately connected with Apabhramśa, 'a dialect which has affinities with both Rājasthāni and Haryāṇavī and which still preserves the tradition of the Tomaras who were determined to fight the Chāhamāna Bīśala (Vigraharāja IV) and Prthvirāja III.<sup>9</sup> According to the *Skanda Purāṇa*<sup>10</sup> the Bhādānaka kingdom was comprised of 100,000 villages. It may be recalled that parts of Haryana were known to the *Mahābhārata* as *Bahudhānyaka* which was ruled by the Yaudheyas with their capital at Rohtak (Rohitaka). It is these people who came to be known to the aforesaid inscription as Bhādānakas, which was in all probability a corrupt form of the original *Bahudhānyaka* meaning 'rich in corn'. The location of their territory as known to Rājasekhara does not militate against this suggestion keeping also in view the find spots of the Yaudheya coins recovered from this region. Delhi was in possession of the Tomaras before the Chāhamānas took it. Hansi was recaptured by the Tomaras from the Ghaznavids and probably remained with them until its conquest by the Chāhamānas.

This Chāhamāna-Tomara struggle probably ended with the capture of Delhi and Hansi by Vigraharāja.<sup>11</sup> It began with Chandana, and some success was attained during the reign of Arjorāja but 'it was Vigraharāja who dealt a *coup de grace* to Tomara independence'.<sup>12</sup> The Tomaras, weakened as they were by continuous struggle against Muslims, Gāhaḍavālas as well as Chāhamānas, submitted to the last mentioned power but continued to hold a feudatory status. The contemporary Tomara ruler who helped Prthvirāja in resisting the advance of Muhammad Ghori was possibly a descendant of Madanapāla.<sup>13</sup> That Haryana formed a part of the Chāhamāna kingdom under Vigraharāja is clear from the Delhi Siwalik inscription<sup>14</sup> on the Aśokan pillar originally found at village Topra (in Ambala district), which Firuz Shah Tughluq shifted later to Delhi. The inscription dated A.D. 1164 contains eulogy of the Śākambharī King Viśaladeva (Vigraharāja IV), the son of Aṇṇalladeva (Arjorāja), who subdued the whole region from the Vindhya to the Himalayas and exterminated the *Mlechehhas*. The *prāśasti* was written at the king's orders in the presence of an astrologer Tilakarāja by Gauḍa Kāyastha Śrīpati when Rājaputra Sallakṣaṇa was serving as *mahāmantri*.<sup>15</sup> The inscription gives an idea of the role which Haryana played in resisting the Muslim invaders, and shows how it formed a part of the Chāhamāna administrative system.



From the Hansi inscription<sup>16</sup> of Pr̥thvirāja II it appears that as a precautionary measure to resist the Muslim (Hammīra) incursion, he (Pr̥thvirāja) appointed his maternal uncle Kilhaṇa, of the noble Guhilota family, as guardian of the fort of Hansi (Āsikā) who built there a strong high gateway (*pratoli*) having majestic towers with pointed flags appearing as it were a challenge to the valour of Hammīra. He also built there two spacious store-houses for keeping captured enemy's wealth.<sup>17</sup> Kilhaṇa is further mentioned as having defeated the chief of Pañchapura (i.e. Panjaur, an old town near Kalka) who submitted, offering a valuable pearl necklace as homage to the Chauhāna ruler.<sup>18</sup>

The next ruler in this line associated with Haryana was the famous Pr̥thvirāja III, the son of Someśvara. Soon after his accession Pr̥thvirāja had to deal with Nāgārjuna, one of his near relatives, who, taking advantage of his young age and inexperience, rose against him and captured the town of Guḍapura (Gurgaon).<sup>19</sup> Pr̥thvirāja advanced towards him with an army consisting of innumerable horses, elephants, camels and foot soldiers and laid siege to Guḍapura. Nāgārjuna, however, managed to escape leaving behind his wife, mother and followers, with a large amount of booty which fell in the victor's hands. The soldiers who continued to fight were slain to the last man.<sup>20</sup> The ruined fort at Badshahpur (about 5 kms. south of Gurgaon), according to local tradition, belonged to the Chauhāna kings which might possibly have been a construction of Vighraharāja, and later occupied by his younger son Nāgārjuna.<sup>21</sup> Pr̥thvirāja next fought with the Bhādānakas of Haryana. The event is recounted by the Jain author, Jinapati Sūri (A.D. 1181) as follows : <sup>22</sup>

How should we describe the incomparable lustre of the valour of Pr̥thvirāja whose armies fill the quarters in every direction, on whose entry attends the goddess of Victory, and struck by whose sharp missiles, the elephants of the Bhādānakas form indeed the figure of the Svastika, with the rows of pearls trickling down from their temples.

O Pr̥thvirāja, the gladdener of numerous subjects, where is the ground for competition between hostile rulers and thee who are verily the Sun on account of thy intense splendour, and who has, acting like a lion, with thy hand bearing a sword, torn as under even the irresistible elephant force of the lord of the Bhādānaka land.

The event though somewhat exaggerated is confirmed by another Jain author Jinapāla who regards it as one of the chief achievements of Pr̥thvirāja.<sup>23</sup> Pr̥thvirāja's defeat of the Bhādānakas was final and we hear no more of them as a ruling power.

Having gained his hold over Delhi and Haryana Pr̥thvirāja's next move was to acquire the position of the supreme sovereign (*Chakravartī*) of northern India. Though ambitious and resolute, Pr̥thvirāja lacked foresight. He attacked the Chandelas, the

Gāhaḍavālas, the Chāulukyās and other neighbouring states and thereby incurred their hostility when the urgency was to enlist their support against the formidable Ghoris, who were attacking and ravaging his kingdom. Pṛthvirāja refused to recognise the gravity of the situation due to his conviction in his invincible strength.

#### 4. The coming of the Turks, resistance and fall

The *Tabaqāt-i-Nāsiri*<sup>1</sup> is an important source of information on the Muslim expeditions of this part of India during the last quarter of the twelfth century. It details Muhammad Ghorī's conquests of Multan and Uchchha and Gujarat.<sup>2</sup> At the last mentioned place Ghorī met with reverses at the hands of the Chaulukyās. Surprisingly Pṛthvirāja did not send any help to the Chaulukyās nor did he make any attempt to present a united front against the Muslims, a lapse which proved detrimental to the independence of the whole country. The Muslim invaders then captured Sialkot, and within five years became undisputed masters of the Punjab by overthrowing Khusrāu Malik, the last Ghaznavid ruler of Lahore.<sup>3</sup> From the *Pṛthvirājaviṇaya*<sup>4</sup> it appears that Ghorī sent an emissary to Pṛthvirāja possibly demanding surrender, but the proposal was rejected for Pṛthvirāja regarded the destruction of Muslim invaders as his true mission of life.

There is a much difference of opinion among Hindu and Muslim writers on the number of encounters between the contending parties. According to the *Prabandhachitāmaṇi*, the *Prabandhakośa* and the *Pṛthvirājaraśo*, their number was twenty-one but the *Pṛthvirājaprabandha* and *Hammīramahākāvya* state them as seven.<sup>5</sup> The *Tabaqāt-i-Nāsiri*, Firishta and the *Tabaqāt-i-Akbari* suggest that only two battles were fought, the first in A.D. 1191, and the other a year later.<sup>6</sup> Dasaratha Sharma points out that this discrepancy, in the absence of independent evidence, can be settled by realizing that the Hindu account also includes the success gained by their frontier forces in repulsing the Muslim invaders which the Muslim writers have ignored.<sup>7</sup>

Advancing from Ghazna or his new base at Lahore, Muhammad Ghorī captured Tabarhindh (Bhatinda or Sirhind) in the dominion of Pṛthvirāja and made adequate provisions there.<sup>8</sup> He had received the news that Pṛthvirāja was marching towards Tabarhindh with Govindarāja, the feudatory ruler of Delhi and some other princes with a big force of elephants and horses.<sup>9</sup> Ghorī decided to advance further, and met the Chāhamāna forces at Tarian (a village in district Karnal).

In the encounter that followed the Muslim army was routed by the fierce Hindu attack on its right and left wings. Undeterred by these unexpected reverses, the Sultan collected the remaining troops and attacked the enemy. Seeing Govindarāja (the ruler of Delhi) driving his elephant towards him, he seized a lance, and threw it on the Rājā with such force that two of the latter's teeth were knocked out. But the Rājā who was equally brave, severely wounded the Sultan by his javelin throw. The Sultan nearly fell from his horse but for the timely help of a Khalji soldier who, by support-



ing him in his arms, took him (the Sultan) out of the battlefield. The scattered Muslim army united once again when they heard of the providential escape of the Sultan, and finally went on their way home.<sup>10</sup>

According to the *Hamīramahākāvyā*<sup>11</sup> the battle was fought due to the local rulers' appeal to Pṛthvirāja for protection against Muhammad Ghori. Chandrarāja, the son of Gopālachandra, took a leading part in it. He was possibly the Chandra Puṇḍira of *Pṛthvirājaraśo* 'the head of the Puṇḍarīka clan whose home Pundri is not far from Taraori'.<sup>12</sup>

After his victory and the subsequent capture of the fort of Tabarhindh, Pṛthvirāja could have expelled the Muslims from India once for all but instead—and there lay the tragedy—he spent the time in the company of his newly wedded wife Saṁyogitā and in attacking his neighbouring states.<sup>13</sup> Furthermore, Pṛthvirāja did not even make adequate arrangements for the defence of Tabarhindh which guarded so well his northern frontier. This was followed by dreadful consequences.<sup>14</sup> But Ghori was altogether in a different mood. His defeat rankled in his heart.<sup>15</sup> With a larger army of 1,20,000 Turk, Tājīk and Afghan horsemen he moved in India and reached Taraori again.<sup>16</sup> Pṛthvirāja, who accepted Muhammad Ghori's ultimatum of 'a declaration of war should the Indians refuse to embrace the true faith' was already in the battlefield with an army of 3,00,000 horses, 3,000 elephants, and considerable infantry.<sup>17</sup> One hundred and fifty of the Rajput princes fighting under him swore by the water of the Ganges to conquer their enemy or die as martyrs to their faith. They counselled him to retreat assuring safety, but if he was adamant on fighting, then they warned him that he would be destroyed.<sup>18</sup> Ghori who knew the valour and fighting quality of the Rajputs valued stratagem to force and sent a reply seeking 'a truce till his brother was informed of the situation and his answer was received'.<sup>19</sup> This wily letter produced the desired effect. The Hindus took the Sultan at his word and spent the night languidly in a hilarious mood and consequently had to pay early next morning a heavy price for this short-sighted policy.<sup>20</sup> Muhammad Awfi,<sup>21</sup> a contemporary writer, gives a fairly reasonable account of Ghori's tactics in the second battle of Tarain. According to him Ghori with a view to preventing any possible suspicion of movement kept 'a number of fires burning all the night where his army had encamped during the day, and marched off himself in another direction with the rest of his forces'.<sup>22</sup> The *Tabaqāt-i-Nāsiri* adds :<sup>23</sup>

after leaving the central division of his army, the baggage, the standards and banners, his canopy of state, the elephants (and other things) several miles in the rear, the Sultan marshalled his ranks dividing them into four divisions each consisting of 10,000 mounted archers, and ordered them to attack on the right, left, front and rear of the Hindu army and retire pretending flight.

From the Hindus as well as the Muslim sources it is clear that Rajputs were not



prepared for any encounter.<sup>24</sup> It was early morning when the Muslims attacked. *Pr̥thvirāja* was sleeping, and his soldiers were just pottering about for their daily ablution and other morning duties. Under such circumstances, the Rajputs naturally handicapped, could not resist the invaders. Further, 'the Parthian tactics bewildered and baffled the Hindus. They spent all their energy and time in the futile game of chasing and trying to catch up the elusive Central Asian horsemen before them.'<sup>25</sup> About three o'clock in the afternoon, when the Hindu forces were completely worn out, Ghorī led his final charge with his reserved troops. According to Hasan Nizāmī,<sup>26</sup> the Hindus who were completely routed, lost about 1,00,000 men. Among the slain was Govindarāja (the ruler of Delhi) who was recognised by his head with missing teeth which the Sultan had earlier knocked out. *Pr̥thvirāja*, who joined the battle late, tried to escape but was recognised, pursued, and captured in the neighbourhood of Sarasvatī (Sirsa). He was beheaded later by the orders of the Sultan. *Pr̥thvirāja's* tragic end is also reflected in the *Viruddhavidhividdhavamśa*,<sup>27</sup> a near contemporary work, which states that 'the king (*Pr̥thvirāja*) whose intellect was shrouded by the vice of sleep, who, though alive, was as good as dead in the battle, was slaughtered by the Turushkas (Turks)'. The *Pr̥thvirājaprabandha*<sup>28</sup> and the *Prabandhachitāmaṇi*<sup>29</sup> also attribute his defeat on the fateful day at Taraori to his fatigue, lethargy and drowsiness.

The struggle against the invaders was continued for sometime by *Harirāja* (younger brother of *Pr̥thvirāja* III) with the help of Jatavana, the ruler of Hansi. But the latter was soon slain by Qutb-ud-din on the boarder of Bagara (southern and south-western parts of Haryana) at the orders of Sultan.<sup>30</sup> This helped in the establishment of Muslim authority over Hansi and its environs, a fact which is also supported by archaeological evidence.<sup>31</sup>

Professor J.N. Sarkar attributes the defeat of the Hindus to the following factors :<sup>32</sup>

... the tactical initiative (of the Turks) forced the Hindus to fight on the ground and in the manner of the Turk's own choosing, instead of the defenders delivering any attack, planned and prepared for before. . . . Shihabuddin's plan of battle was to give the Rajput cavalry no chance for their shock tactics which had proved irresistible in his first encounter with them, but to make them move as he willed.

The Hindus had to fight on empty stomachs. . . . In the second battle of Taraori, the Rajputs could take no breakfast; they had to snatch up their arms and form their lines as best as they could in a hurry. (Further) their rigid caste rules also prevented them from being readily refreshed with food and drink in the battle front.

In the second battle of Tarain Indian history took a decisive turn. Haryana and Delhi along with the forts Ghuram, Sirsa, Thanesar and Hansi passed on to the



Turkish rule for centuries to come but it must be admitted that the people of Haryana did not meekly surrender to their foreign oppressors. Even when Muhammad Ghori was alive reports of popular revolt in the region reached his court. And this defiance of the power of oppression continued to be a special feature of the history of Haryana in the succeeding periods.<sup>31</sup>

### 5. The fading glory

In the absence of proper historical information it becomes extremely difficult to reconstruct the administrative structure and socio-economic and cultural life of the people of Haryana from the death of Harsha (A.D. 647-8) to the establishment of Muslim rule over there (A.D. 1193). The brief observations of the Arab writers, the casual reference in literary works (both Sanskrit and Prākṛt) and the archaeological evidence provide only a glimpse of the conditions then prevailing in the region.

From the epigraphic evidence available it appears that Pinjore, Sirsa, Hansi, Thanesar, Pehowa and Gurgaon were perhaps the chief administrative units and Delhi, the capital town. The officers were either appointed by the central authority like the Pratihāras or the Chāhamānas, or were local chiefs having some feudatory status. On the basis of inscriptions (Sanskrit as well as Persian), the literary texts and the account of Muslim writers a few names of administrative and military officers are known: Rājaputra Sallakṣaṇapāladeva, Kilhaṇa, Durganāga, Virachandra, Viṣṇuhari, Gogga, Devarāja, Purṇarāja, Isfandiar, Dipāl Hari, Jatavana and Nāgārjuna.<sup>1</sup> This feudal structure of administration seems to have been continued for sometime even after the establishment of the Muslim rule over the region.

Whether feudalism in the form of a new social order prevailed over the region cannot be precisely said in the absence of evidence but it certainly denoted political disintegration and administrative decentralisation. That a new development in economy, viz., feudalization of trade and commerce marked the administrative structure can be illustrated from the Pehowa inscription of the time of Mihira Bhoja referring to about thirty-six horse-dealers who, assembling from different parts of the country at Pehowa, promised to pay a fixed sum of two *drannas* on the sale of every horse, mule, etc. to six temples. It is not clear whether the horse-dealers paid the king any customs over and above what they paid to the temples.<sup>2</sup> Transfer of royal income from trade and commerce to religious beneficiaries was thus prevalent in Haryana during this period.

The origin and development of feudalism has been traced by scholars to the land grants made to Brahmins which formed a regular mode of payment in early medieval times for religious and secular services. This has been linked with the decline of trade and commerce, decay of towns and lesser use of money. Excepting the last other features do not seem to have prevailed in Haryana during this period.<sup>3</sup>

Some details of social and economic life of the people can be gathered from the works of Somadeva, Kalhaṇa, Pushpadanta and to a certain extent from the inscrip-



tions, sculptures and terracotta representations. Frequent foreign inroads devastated the region and hence education and learning naturally reached a low level. The sculptural and terracotta representations on the other hand speak of the interest of the people in music and dance, and of their dress and ornamentation. Economically the region seems to be in a sound position. Enormous wealth of the people finds mention in literature as well as in inscriptions. The account of Somadeva<sup>4</sup> for instance, speaks of the cattle wealth, abundance of irrigation works, booming harvests, heavy taxes and beautiful buildings, all pointing to the glory of Haryana which was as if it were 'a very heaven on earth' as the Delhi Museum inscription puts it. Discovery of a number of images and the existence of many temples could have only been possible under peaceful and happy conditions.

From the discovery of hundreds of images representing Viṣṇu, Śiva, Umā-Maheśvara, Brahmā-Sarasvatī, Gaṇeśa, Kārtikeya, Sūrya and Isāna it appears that Brahmanism was then the most popular form of religion. It further suggests existence also of beautiful temples all through the region, a fact which also finds confirmation in inscriptions.

The two brick temples at Kalayat, situated on the Kaithal-Narwana road, and associated with the sage Kapila, are perhaps the only surviving relics of the architecture of this period.<sup>5</sup> The first of these, which is in a fairly good condition, shows an excellent carved brick-work. The other temple retains, though partially, its original carvings. 'The intricate floral design worked out in uniform pattern in baked bricks is reminiscent of the Bhitargaon brick temples of the Gupta period'. The third one, which is damaged, has an 'intricately embellished lithic doorway with multiple frames'. On one of the temples is carved 'the design of a peacock in nervous lines, about to fly off'.<sup>6</sup> The style of architecture and sculpture places these temples in the 8th century A.D. This place has also yielded two fine pieces of the sculptures of Gaṇeśa (the elephant God) and Mahiṣamardini (Durgā).<sup>7</sup> The Gaṇeśa, a fine carving of the elephant diety, belongs to the 9th century A.D. The belly of Gaṇeśa is an ingenious device to express 'resilience rather than smug fatness'. The Mahiṣamardini (Durgā) in black granite of the same period is carved with meticulous details. 'The face of the lion is mobile against the dynamic foreleg of the Goddess, and the sword signifies power'. The sculpture is reminiscent of the Himalayan style as found at Bajaura, and is distinguished for 'the delicate lines, masterly execution, and iconographical clarity', which testifies to the attainment of high skill of this craft in this region.<sup>8</sup>

The Pehowa (ancient Pṛthūdaka) inscription<sup>9</sup> of the time of Mahendrapāla refers to the construction of three temples of Viṣṇu. The sculptural remains of the temples which have come to light recently are in two parts, revealing a massive *chakra* and *gadā* indicating the size of the figure of Viṣṇu, which must have been holding them in hands. On the side panels are depicted Śiva-Pārvatī and Brahmā-Sarasvatī in amorous postures. At the top, and on the left are shown attendants in different poses and below is a *makara*. The bull with his head upwards joyously looks on. The features of



the divine couple are 'well-modelled and chiselled, their expression marked by unique composure and serenity'. Similar is the Brahmā-Sarasvatī pose. Brahmā has three heads, and a beard but appears engaged in a serious discussion pose (*vitarkamudrā*); and his beard and moustache lend dignity to the carriage. The whole composition is 'characterized by profundity and equilibrium'. The figure of Brahmā show 'deep integration (Yoga) and the row of attendants invests the scene with cosmic fullness.' The sculptures show maturity in form and expression.<sup>10</sup> Among other remains at Pehowa, mention may be made particularly of a door-frame now fixed on the Sarasvatī temple depicting the river goddesses. Originally found at the nearby mound of Viśvāmitratīrtha, a carving in sandstone it has a ritualistic character. Also shown on the door frame is an awkwardly carved couple showing on extraneous influence, apparently a ritual image of some Nāga cult.<sup>11</sup> In the words of Rodgers 'taking the doorway, the two inscriptions and many fragments into account, we may say that Pehowa had in olden times three stone temples of great beauty'.<sup>12</sup> The construction of temples during this period is also gathered from inscriptions discovered at Sirsa,<sup>13</sup> Gurawara<sup>14</sup> (district Gurgaon), Mohanbari<sup>15</sup> (district Rohtak) and Jodhkan<sup>16</sup> (district Hissar). Of these, the Sirsa inscription refers to the construction of a brick temple of Śiva by Nīlakaṇṭha,<sup>17</sup> while at Gurawara the inscription is engraved on the base part of a Vaiṣṇava votive-temple.<sup>18</sup> Further, recent explorations in the vicinity of Thanesar have brought to light remains of temple complex of Gurjara Pratihāra period at the mound of *Sakhāji-Kā-Tīlā*.<sup>19</sup> The discovery of hundreds of images representing Viṣṇu, Śiva, Umā-Maheśvara, Brahmā-Sarasvatī, Gaṇeśa, Kārtikeya, Sūrya, Iśāna, Revanta, Gaja-Lakṣmī, Tīrthaṅkaras and Buddha from several districts<sup>20</sup> in Haryana suggests the existence also of beautiful temples in the region.

The religious importance of the region can also be gathered from the *Skanda Purāṇa* (a work composed between 9th and 13th century) describing Śrīkaṇṭhadeśa (i.e. Haryana) as a renowned country watered by the divine Sarasvatī and blessed with abundance of herbs and vegetation. It mentions different parts of Haryana as Kurudeśa, Kurukshetra, Kurujāṅgala, Kuru and Kauravakshetra reminding of the close association of the Kurus, the famous Vedic people with the region. It also refers to Sthāneśvara—its capital, as a well known city of ancient times.<sup>21</sup>

Thanesar, the capital of the Puṣyabūti, and one of the important towns there after, continued to be a centre of artistic activity. A few sculptures belonging to this period can still be seen in the northern wall of a *kuṇḍa* (pond) near the Faridkot Gurdwara. This group of sculptures contain Śiva-Pārvatī, Śeṣaśāyī-Viṣṇu, a miniature temple, and a *yoni*, surrounded by attending deities. The first two images are now preserved in the Kurukshetra University Museum.

In the Śiva-Pārvatī image 'trenchant agitation finds expression through the carving and upraised neck of the elastic figure of the bull, and the wavy bends of the limbs of the god and goddess as well as the mobile turns of the drapery'.<sup>22</sup> Other sculptures of Umā-Maheśvara belonging to the post-Harsha period are found at



various places—Pinjor and Kapālamochan (district Ambala), Safidon (district Jind), Bahari (district Kurukshetra), Asthal-Bohar (district Rohtak) and Ata (district Gurgaon).<sup>23</sup> The Ashtal-Bohar image is one of the most superb carvings in sandstone, extant in Haryana, reminiscent of the early Khajuraho chisel of the 10th-11th century. 'The loving embrace of Śiva-Pārvatī shows total grasp of the love embrace radiating inner union showing thereby that the Śiva-Śakti *taṭva* as the manifestation of the power of love was well understood in the creative art of this area.'<sup>24</sup> Images of Śiva in his various forms—Hari-Hara, Ardhanārīśvara, Chaturbhuja, *lalitāsana* etc. have also come to light at several other sites.<sup>25</sup>

The Śeṣaśāyī Viṣṇu at Thanesar is perhaps the first of its kind ever discovered from the region.<sup>26</sup> It measures about 1.5 × .85 metres, the right portion of which is unfortunately broken. In the centre of the composition is a four-armed Viṣṇu, gracefully lying on Ananta Nāga, whose hoods form a canopy over the head of the deity. The long garland *vaijayantimālā* is flowing from over both the arms. In the upper left arm, he is holding a *chakra* having twelve petals, while in the lower is shown *śankha*. The lower right hand holds a *padma* while the upper right hand supports the head besides which lies a rimmed *gadā* (mace). The neck, chest, and shoulders are quite thick with a *Śrīvatsa* (a sacred sign mark) on the left of the chest. The image wears a crown, ear-rings, necklace, armlets, wristlets, and also the sacred thread. On the top left corner Śiva-Pārvatī is shown with the usual iconographic features as mentioned above, while the figure at the top on right side cannot be identified. On the left corner below is seated a lady attendant with folded hands, in a graceful pose. In the bottom panel are shown in a row four male figures holding weapons in their hands, probably representing Madhu and Kaijabha (mythical demons) with their attendants in a fighting mood. It is interesting to note that the *Durgāsaptaśatī*<sup>27</sup> section of the *Mārkaṇḍeya Purāṇa* also associates these demons with lord Viṣṇu in his Śeṣaśāyī pose. To the left of these figures is a basket shaped covered vessel (*aṃṛta kumbha*). As the right portion of the image is broken it would be difficult to say what was depicted there. But it is possible, as suggested by Devendra Handa,<sup>28</sup> on the basis of the terracotta relief of the Bhitargaon temple and the stone relief of the Deogarh temple, that the damaged space had Lakṣmī pressing Viṣṇu's legs. There is difference of opinion about the artistic features and date of the Thanesar sculptures. On the basis of their refined form and delicacy of contours, K.K. Saxena<sup>29</sup> ascribes them to the 7th-8th century A.D., while Devendra Handa<sup>30</sup> would like to place them in c. 10th century A.D.

The four armed image of Viṣṇu, now kept in the Thanesar temple, is remarkable for its balanced form and symmetrical composition. The deity is represented with his two Āyudha Puruṣas, *Śankha* and *Chakra*; and the Vidyādhara couple on either side as an accessory, gliding in the air as it were, to offer garlands to the deity.<sup>31</sup> Another sculpture at this place is that of Viṣṇu in his Varāha or boar incarnation depicted on a small panel majestically uplifting the goddess earth on his tusks.<sup>32</sup> Among other Vaiṣṇava sculptures, the one at Asthal Bohar deserves special mention.



Here Viṣṇu is depicted as seated in the *padmāsana* reminding of Lord Buddha's similar pose. A highly skilled carving it beautifully radiates the grace of the supreme god. 'There is a balance of objective-subjective elements, with the essence of the benign presence as an overall atmosphere. The sculptor recognises the quintessence of the meaning of godhood so that in this work which is similar to many others, one sees a spontaneous flow of grace different from such an evocation in other images'.<sup>33</sup>

Other pieces of art recovered from Thanesar and now preserved in the University Museum include the images of Iṣāna, Sūrya and Revanta<sup>34</sup>. The Image of Iṣāna, one of the Aṣṭa-Digpalas, is superb in its execution of ornaments and drapery. This deity stands in a *tribhanga* pose with his *vāhana*. Sūrya is represented by a torso of the image which originally may have been of life size. The traces of breast plate, *mālā* and lower garments are still visible in the remaining part of the image. A big panel depicts Revanta, the son of Sūrya and his companions. Unfortunately the figure of Revanta has been chopped off.<sup>35</sup>

That sun worship was popular in this region is gathered from the *Harṣa-charita*,<sup>36</sup> while images of the Sun-god discovered in other districts,<sup>37</sup> and sacred tanks dedicated to the deity at Tosham, Kurukshetra and Amin confirm it.<sup>38</sup> A marvellous image of the Sun-god is installed in a modern temple at Tosham.<sup>39</sup> It depicts the deity in a standing pose with a long *kirīṭa*, and Mongolian boots on the feet similar to those found in the image at Konark. Nine planets in anthropomorphic forms are beautifully carved above the head. Down below, between the feet is shown miniature figure of *Uṣā* or *Sāvitrī*, the divine consort of the deity. Two female figures, one each on either side, shooting arrows, symbolise the solar rays dispelling darkness. The god seems to be waited upon by two horse-headed human figures and a Piṅgala and Skanda. Piṅgala holds a book bearing a short epigraph reading *Śrī-Āditya Pratimā* in the Nāgari characters of the eleventh-twelfth century.<sup>40</sup> 'Delicate and intimate modelling by one of the finest carver of high talent with a subtly skilful chisel, makes this a rare-image-icon.'<sup>41</sup> Another standing image of the deity is found at Hansi.<sup>42</sup> Its important features are the nine planets along the halo, the deity in the centre and the inscription, *Āditya Pratimā* in the Nāgari characters of the 10th century A.D. Of the same period is yet other specimen representing the god with his four arms, in *padmāsana* pose and *antardhyāna mudrā*.<sup>43</sup>

Head of a colossal image of Sūrya with beautifully executed *mukuta* is recovered from Pinjor (Ambala district).<sup>44</sup> The central part of the *mukuta* has *Kirtimukha* design and a flower at its flat top, and below—the hair arranged in frizzled locks.<sup>45</sup> The fragments of an *uttarāṅga* containing a standing Sūrya inside an *alto-relievo* is significant from iconographic point of view.<sup>46</sup> It depicts the two armed deity holding lotus flowers and himself standing on a lotus, and the pedestal showing seven horses, a feature which agrees with the description as found in the *Agni*<sup>47</sup> and *Viṣṇudharmot-tara*<sup>48</sup> *Purāṇas*. The dress and the long boots reflects Śaka influence.<sup>49</sup>



Besides Brahmanical religion, Buddhism and Jainism also continued to hold some influence over parts of Haryana during this period. The head of Buddha belonging to the eighth century. A.D. acquired from the village Sanghi<sup>50</sup> (Rohtak district), representing the Master in *Antardhyānamuarā* is chiselled in greyish sand stone and reflects influence of Mathura School of Art. Yadbadri<sup>51</sup> (in Ambala district) has also yielded Buddhist sculptures of which a seated Buddha in *padmāsana* and *dharmachakrapravartanamudrā* belonging to the 11th-12th century deserves mention. In view of very meagre archaeological evidence and the absence of literary evidence it may not be possible to trace the specific causes which led to the disappearance of Buddhism from Haryana. The Buddhist philosophy of life could not be expected to hold the masses, threatened as they were by the frequent foreign inroads, which possibly forced them into adopting martial profession. After Kushāṇas, Buddhism was never a popular religion as is also pointed out by Hiuen Tsiang<sup>52</sup> in his observations on the declining condition of Buddhism at Thanesar, Sugh and other places, which almost died out by the time the Pratihāras established their hold over the region. Whatever little influence remained, it completely vanished with the Muslim invasions as the discovery of Muslim structures at the upper level of the explored Buddhist sites would suggest.<sup>53</sup>

Some influence of Jainism in Haryana can be traced from the time of Buddha.<sup>54</sup> Its main centres were Agroha and later Pinjore. According to literary tradition<sup>55</sup> Rohidaya (perhaps Rohitaka) was blessed by several visits of Mahāvīra and that a shrine of Dharaṇa Yakṣa existed in the *Pudhavivadimsaya* garden of that town. Thereafter, Jainism seems to have gone into abeyance in the region for centuries till the times of the Pratihāras and the Chāhamānas. Many Jain sculptural pieces and architectural remains of this period have been recovered from various places—Pinjor,<sup>56</sup> Kurukshetra,<sup>57</sup> Sirsa,<sup>58</sup> Khokarakot,<sup>59</sup> Asthal Bohar,<sup>60</sup> Satkumbha<sup>61</sup> and Mohanbari<sup>62</sup> (in Rohtak district), and Aharvan,<sup>63</sup> Narhel,<sup>64</sup> Nagram<sup>65</sup> and Somerwala<sup>66</sup> (in Hissar district).

The Jaina images collected from Kabira Chaura and Gogapir mound<sup>67</sup> (all in the Pinjore area) suggest the existence of several temples dedicated to Tirthankaras of which only two—Ādinātha or Ṛṣabhanātha and Neminātha are identified on the basis of their distinguishing marks. These images belong to both the sects of Jainism—Digambara and Śvetāmbara, the latter seems to be not very much popular for a solitary example of a headless torso belonging to this sect and assigned to c. 9th century on stylistic grounds has been recovered.<sup>68</sup> The images of Digambara sect are completely naked and are seated in rigid *padmāsana* pose. These are stereotyped and lack artistic beauty. Of particular interest in the back slab of a marble is a Jina image with delicate carving and minute details.<sup>69</sup> The slab, shaped like half-crescent with *makaras* emitting the Yakṣa figures forming the projection at either end, is beautiful. The central *chhatra* and the lotus halo, *gandharvas* playing the musical instruments, the



elephants carrying full vases of water in their trunks anointing the Tirthaṅkara add divine atmosphere to the entire carriage.<sup>70</sup>

Jain Tirthaṅkara images from Asthal Bohar stand out prominently for their simplicity. These represent Pārśvanātha and Śāntinātha seated in *Padmāsana* with *antardhyānamudrā*, while another image presents Pārśvanātha is a standing *Kāyotsargamudrā*. The Pārśvanātha images are distinct for their snake hoods canopy while on the Śāntinātha image is depicted an umbrella with *Kalpavṛkṣa* like leaves.<sup>71</sup> The Ādinātha images from Binva and Ata (district Gurgaon) belong to a period between A.D. 900-1000 and 1000-1200 respectively. The latter depicts Ādinātha in *dhyānamudrā* but the central Śrīvatsa mark is not quite distinct. The other important features of the images can be seen in the *padmapīṭha* supported by two lions couchant on the front and in between a *dharmachakra*. The hair-locks of the deity falling on both the sides of his shoulders and above branches of a tree possibly *nyagrodha* (banyan) and halo mark as back-drop. The Narnaul sculptures which are of a later period (13th-14th century) only suggest that Jainism continued to flourish to a certain extent in the area even during the early Sultanate.<sup>72</sup>

Jainism in its popular form known as *vidhimārga* was prevalent in Haryana. Hari-bhadra Sūri, the founder of this movement, who was inspired by the rational aspect of Jainism, raised his voice against all immoral practices of the Chaityavāsins (i.e. those living in *haityas*) who were doing practically everything unworthy of a monk.<sup>73</sup> This new creed which subsequently became a living force in central and western India entered Haryana where it came to be known as *Vidhichaitya*.<sup>74</sup> Jinavallabha,<sup>75</sup> the disciple of Jineśvara Sūri and one of the prominent teachers, chose Haryana and Rajasthan the centres of his religious activities. Leaving all his proprietary rights in the *maḥa*, garden and temple at Āsīkā (Hansi), Jinavallabha dedicated his whole life to the propagation of his new creed.<sup>76</sup> As people were still attached to old dogmas and customs, his was indeed a very difficult task.<sup>77</sup> Faults were found with him as well as his methods, wherever a new *Vidhichaitya* was established, attempts were made to capture it even by foul means, sometimes using the influence of local people to meet their end.<sup>78</sup> The followers even had to shed their blood in defence of their rights.<sup>72</sup> Undaunted by these adverse circumstances, Jinavallabha by his sound scholarship coupled with sincerity, simplicity and strict adherence to the faith succeeded in winning over a large following to his mission.<sup>79</sup> The following were the rules observed at a *vidhichaitya* :<sup>80</sup>

Here are followed no rites of those who go against the *Sūtra*. None ever bathes here at night. It is no property of the *sādhus*. Women do not get admission here at night. There is no insistence on the privileges of castes and sub-castes. The worshippers here are given no *tāmbūla* (betel leaves).

Jinavallabha wrote a number of treatises to serve as 'a sound basis of anti-chaityavāsa propaganda'.<sup>81</sup> His style was perhaps 'a bit polemic, and the language sometimes even vitriolic'.<sup>82</sup> Yet this, in his view, was necessary. No reformer can



afford 'to mince matters while dealing religious, social or moral corruption'.<sup>83</sup> Vidhi-chaitya with this sound footing continued to flourish in the region till the advent of the Turks towards the close of the twelfth century A.D.<sup>84</sup>

The ruins of the ancient city of Thanesar can be seen in the extensive mound popularly known as *Harṣavardhana-Kā-Qila* on the bank of the Sarasvatī. In the surrounding area there are other mounds such as Prācī, Bāharī and Madrasā Tīlā. Here the archaeological finds like coins, terracottas, sculptures and bricks belong to different periods of Ancient Indian history. No definite structure belonging to the Vardhana or the later Pratihāra-Tomara period has so far been recovered. As pointed out by S.P. Shukla<sup>85</sup> this may be due to the fact that 'the remains are sandwiched between earlier and later habitational debris'. It is not unlikely that the Tomaras and the Chāhamānas might have fortified the city for its protection against Muslim raids. This suggestion is further strengthened by the evidence of Muslim historians<sup>86</sup> who refer to the fort of Thanesar without mentioning its builders. Further, the Chāhamānas are also known to have built a number of forts in other parts of this region.<sup>87</sup>

Among other towns of Haryana of this period mention may be made of Agroha, Sirsa, Hansi, Pinjor and Delhi. Agroha had already come into prominence as the seat of an oligarchical state in earlier periods. The sculptural remains discovered from this place are Viṣṇu, Varāha, Kubera and Mahiṣāsura-mardini suggesting influence of Bhāgavatism and Śāktism. The most interesting objects recovered from here are a terracotta tablet containing seven *svaras* (*nī, dha, pa, ma, ga, ri, sā*) and a burnt birch-bark *ms* in the 9th century characters. The city was attacked by Masud and later by Muhammad Ghori. A centre of Jainism and Buddhism, its early importance was due to its location on the trade route between Taxila and Mathura.<sup>88</sup> Sirsa was included in the administration of the Pratihāras as is evident from the discovery of an inscription of the time of Bhoja from that place.<sup>89</sup> The record is an important document for the religious history of the region. Recording construction of a brick temple of Śiva by Nīlakaṇṭha, a saint of Pāśupata sect at Sirsa, it also provides information about a few generations of the Pāśupata Āchāryas who flourished here during the 8th and 9th centuries.<sup>90</sup> From Sirsa were recovered a stone sculpture representing Indra with his consort belonging to the early medieval times and a brass figure of Shamji (Sāmadeva) riding the horse on a pedestal bearing the Samvat 1221 (i.e. A.D. 1143).<sup>91</sup> The Bardic tradition attributes the foundation of Hansi to Anangapāla, a Tomara ruler of Delhi.<sup>92</sup> In 1037, Masud, the son of Mahmud of Ghazni, took it by storm and looted it.<sup>93</sup> It was recaptured by the Tomaras of Delhi<sup>94</sup> but finally Bisaldeva Chāhamāna annexed it to his kingdom, in about 1156 A.D.<sup>95</sup> In the Chāhamāna inscriptions it is mentioned as Āsikā.<sup>96</sup> The fortifications are mentioned in the Hansi inscription<sup>97</sup> of Prthvirāja II under whom it developed into a strong hold of Chauhana power to check the frequent Muslim raids of the region. At the northern end of the extensive mound at Hansi,



there is a group of structures popularly known as Khangah, after a revered mausolium of Wali Hazrat Sayyid Shah Nismat Ullah, who died here fighting during the campaign of Muhammad Ghori in 1191-92 A.D. He successfully led the Muslim forces to conquer the fort, though he lost his life fighting on that spot. In course of time, it became a sacred place for the Hindus as well. A fair is held in every March at which much charity is dispensed.<sup>98</sup> Another Muslim warrior saint Hazrat Turkman, popularly known as Shah Wilayat, came to Narnaul in 1137 A.D. 'with jewels in one hand and sword in the other', fought many battles with the native Rathor Rajputs and was killed fighting. A tomb and a mosque, still stand in his memory on the western side of the town.<sup>99</sup>

The stone age finds at Pinjor have already been taken into account. Since then the region seems to have remained uninhabited till the early medieval times when it developed into a township and temples and sacred tanks were laid out.<sup>100</sup> Tradition has it that there were as many as 360 baolis (pools) at Pinjor. Of these a few can still be seen 'gently emitting crystalline water'.<sup>101</sup> Farmers while digging and ploughing the field discover occasionally the ruined wall foundations of buildings and big jars full of ashes.<sup>102</sup> No information is available to throw light on the foundation of the town. It finds mention in the work of Al-Birūnī as 'situated 18 *parasangs* from Sarsara (Sarsawa) which was situated in the valley at the foot-hills'.<sup>103</sup> The Hansi inscription<sup>104</sup> is the first to inform us about its inclusion in the Chauhāna administrative set-up. It is not unlikely that the Tomaras, a powerful and influential people of Haryana during this period, might also have brought it under their subjection. Pinjor and its surrounding area has yielded a rich crop of archaeological findings in the form of broken stone sculptures and architectural remains which are datable to c. 9th to 12th centuries suggesting the development of the place into a centre of religion.<sup>105</sup> The mounds and ruins of many structures suggest the large extent of the town. Many tanks with their worn out steps; speak of its importance as a place of pilgrimage, while carved pillars and great stone lintels suggest the existence of beautiful temples there. The whole area is studded with broken pieces of ancient stone sculptures and architectural fragments. Most of the sculptures are of grey sandstone, only a few in marble possibly imported from Rajasthan, the nearest source of this material. The Brahminical sculptures are related to Śiva, Śakti, Sūrya and Gaṇeśa while the Jain represent *tirthankaras*. The architectural fragments—parts of pillar bases, pillars, pilasters and slabs forming parts of base of domed roofs, windows and door-frames—reflect the maturity of temple style, and excellent carving of the various art motifs together with geometrical design.<sup>106</sup>

In Delhi, once the capital of Haryana under the Tomara-Chāhamāna rule, buried towns of that period have been recovered at the Purānā Qilā site besides some beautifully sculptured sandstone lintels and a railing pillar embeded in concrete roof of Sultan Ghori's tomb, testifying to the existence of a large temple in that area. Some architectural remains of the capital city and its environs can be seen at the

excavated site of the Purānā Qilā, Suraj Kund and an old dam near the village Arangpur (Anangpur). It shows that the area must have studded with several Hindu and Jaina temples which were later demolished after the occupation of Delhi by Qutb-ud-din.<sup>107</sup>

From what has been stated above it would appear that in spite of the devastating Turk inroads, the few remains which have survived bear an eloquent testimony to the architectural perfection of the people of Haryana during the post-Harṣa period. The tradition of art and architecture as cultivated and developed at its various centres—Pehowa, Thanesar, Pinjore, Tosham, Sirsa, Agroha, Hansi, Kalayat and Delhi, stands remarkable for its simplicity, grace, vigour and expression.<sup>108</sup>

#### NOTES AND REFERENCES

##### 1. The Pratihara domination

1. P.C. Bagchi, *Sino-Indian Studies*, I, p. 69; *The Classical Age*, pp. 124-6.
2. *EI*, XVIII, p. 99f, verse 7.
3. *HC*, p. 135.
4. The identification of Bhaṇḍikula with the family of Bhaṇḍi of the *Harṣacharita* was first suggested by G.H. Ojha and later accepted by R.D. Banerjee (B.N. Puri, *History of the Gurjara-Pratihāras*, p. 39).
5. *Gaudavaho*, ed. S.P. Pandit, verse 484.
6. H.A. Phadke, 'Was Pratihāra Nāgabhaṭa I Yaśovarman's Contemporary?', *RJHKU*, I, No. 1, 1967.
7. *EI*, XVIII, pp. 107, 110-111.
8. Buddha Prakash, *Aspects of Indian History and Civilization*, Agra, 1965, p. 105.
9. *EI*, XX, pp. 37, 46, line 4, verse 3; Buddha Prakash, *op. cit.*, p. 106.
10. *Rājatarāṅgiṇī*, ed. Stein, IV, p. 139.
11. *EI*, XVIII, verse 7.
12. H.A. Phadke, 'Haryana and the Gurjara-Pratihāras', *HRJ*, I, 1967, No. 3, pp. 5-10.
13. *EI*, XVIII, p. 99f, verses 8-10.
14. Brahmakhaṇḍa, *Dharmarāṅyamāhātmya*.
15. *EI*, XVIII, *op. cit.*, verse 11.
16. *Prabhāvakacharita*, Singhi Jain Granthamālā (S. 1997), *Bappabhaṭṭicharita*, verses 661-75.
17. H.A. Phadke, 'A Note on Rājagiridurga of the Gwalior Inscription of Mihira Bhola', *JBRs*, 1963, (*Altekar Com. Vol.*)
18. Catsu Inscription of Balāditya, *EI*, XII, pp. 13ff.
19. *Rājatarāṅgiṇī*, I, BK V, verse 151 (Stein, p. 206).
20. *EI*, I, pp. 186ff.
21. *Ibid.*, XXI, pp. 295ff.
22. *ASIR*, 1925-26, p. 183; G.H. Ojha, *An. Rep. Rajputana Museum*, Ajmer, 1923-24, p. 2.
23. These have been discovered at Khokrakot (district Rohtak). The coins all of billion and round in shape, have Varāha (the boar incarnation of Viṣṇu) on the obverse and on the reverse,



- the legend *Śrīmadādivarāha* in bold letters. For details see Silak Ram, *op. cit.*, p. 267; 'Jhajjar Museum', *Jana Sāhitya Special Number*, Dept. of Languages, Patiala, 1965, p. 90.
24. *EI*, I, pp. 184ff; B.N. Puri, *op. cit.*, p. 54.
- The inscription refers to the temple of Viṣṇu in the Yajñavarāha or Boar incarnation. It is to be noted that Mihira Bhoja in whose reign the epigraph was inscribed is also known to have assumed the epithet Varāha or Ādivarāha (*EI*, XIX, p. 175; I. p. 156 v. 22). This epithet is also found on his coins showing the Brāhmī legend *Śrīmad-Ādivarāha* on the obverse and the figure of Boar incarnation of Viṣṇu with *chakra, gadā, padma* and *sakha*, and below the legend an alter on the reverse (*ASR*, I, p. 329).
25. Elliot and Dowson, I, p. 4.
26. *Op. cit.*; Silak Ram, *op. cit.*, pp. 242-43.
27. *Op. cit.*
28. *EI*, I, p. 242f.
29. *Ibid.*
30. *Ibid.*, verses 3-4.
31. *EI*, I, pp. 126-28, 132-34.
32. Rājasekhara, *Bālabhārata*, I, 7.
33. Āryakṣemīśvara *Chanda Kautika* (Bharatavākya); Buddha Prakash, The Gurjara Pratihāras and the Panjab', *Journal of the Oriental Institute, Baroda*, XIII, No. 3, March, 1964, p. 237.
34. *EI*, I, pp. 122ff.
35. Buddha Prakash, *op. cit.*, p. 237; *Hūdūd-al-Ālam*, translated and explained by V. Minorsky, E.J.W. Gibb Memorial Series (New Series), XI, Oxford, 1937, p. 92.
36. Elliot and Dowson, I, pp. 21-22.
37. Buddha Prakash, *op. cit.*, p. 238.
38. *JASB* (New Series, Vol. 43, Part I, No. 1-4, 1874), pp. 104ff; *EI*, I, pp. 93ff.
39. Col. Tod, *Annals and Antiquities of Rajasthan*, I p. 104.
40. *EI*, V, Appendix, p. 34.
41. *Ibid.*, I, p. 93f.

*Deśosti Hariyāñākhyah Prthivyām svargasannibhaḥ /*  
*Dhīllikākhyā purī tatra Tomarairāsti nīrmīṭā ||*  
*Tomarānantaram tasyām rājyam nīhatakaṇṭakaḥ /*  
*Chāhamāna nripaschakruḥ prajāpālanatatparaḥ ||*

## 2. The Ghaznavid incursions

1. *Tarikh-i-Firishta*, Eng. Tr. J. Briggs, Calcutta, 1908, p. 30; Wolsely Heig, *Cambridge History of India*, Cambridge, 1928, III, pp. 18ff; *The Struggle for Empire*, ed. R.C. Majumdar, pp. 10-11. This seems to be the correct position. Utbi places the Thanesar campaign in A.D. 1014 after the Nardin (Ninduna) expedition which seems to be wrong. The campaign was undertaken during the life time of Ānandapāla, consequently the Ninduna campaign which was directed against his son Trilochanapāla, could not have preceded it. For a different view see Muhammad Nazim, *The Life and Times of Sultan Mahmud of Ghazna*, Cambridge, 1936, pp. 103-04.
2. *Al-Berūnī's India* ed. Edward C. Sachau, 1964.
3. *Kitāb-i-Yamīnī*, Eng. Trans. James Reynolds, *Memoirs of Mahmud of Ghazna*, London, Chap. XXXVIII, pp. 393-95.
4. Ismai, *Futuh-us-Salatin*, ed. Mahdi Husain, I, p. 123.

5. *Tarikh-i-Firishta*, Eng. Trans. (The Rise of the Mohammadan Power in India) John Briggs, Calcutta, 1966, I, pp. 29-31.
6. *Al-Beruni's India*, op. cit., I, pp. 117, 119.
7. Buddha Prakash, *Glimpses of Ancient Haryana*, HRJ, Vol. I, p. 15.
8. *Al-Beruni's India*, op. cit., I, pp. 308, 316-17.
9. *Ibid.*, pp. 316-17.
10. *Siddhāntaśiromani*, Golādhyāya, 24.
11. *The Sunday Standard*, Chandigarh, February 17, 1980.
12. *Al-Beruni's India*, II, p. 145 (London edition, 1910); Cunningham, *The Ancient Geography of India*, pp. 334-5 (London edn. 1871).
13. Utbi, op. cit.; C.V. Vaidya, *History of Medieval Hindu India*, 1926, III, p. 68.
14. *Ibid.*
15. Briggs, *Firishta*, pp. 29ff.
16. *Ibid.*
17. Utbi, op. cit.; Vaidya, op. cit., p. 68.
18. Cunningham, *ASIR*, XIV, p. 88.
19. Utbi, op. cit.,
20. Briggs, *Firishta*, op. cit., p. 30.
21. *Ibid.*
22. Isami, op. cit.
23. *Firishta*, op. cit.
24. *Ibid.*
25. Vaidya, p. 69.
26. *Firishta*, op. cit.
27. Vaidya, op. cit., pp. 71-86; *The Struggle for Empire*, pp. 13-18.
28. *Ibid.*, pp. 92ff.
29. *Ibid.*
30. *Firishta*, op. cit., p. 69.
31. Whitehead, 'The river course of the Punjab and Sindh', *IA*, Vol. 61, 1932, pp. 163f.
32. *Firishta*, op. cit., 69.
33. *Ibid.*
34. *Ibid.*, p. 70.
35. *Ibid.*, pp. 70-71.
36. *The Struggle for Empire*, p. 94.
37. *Ibid.*
38. *Firishta*, op. cit., pp. 70-71.
39. *The Struggle for Empire*, pp. 94-5.
40. *Ibid.*
41. *Rājatarāṅgiṇī*, VII, 235-37, 325, pp. 114, 118; Buddha Prakash, 'Kashmir and Haryana in Eleventh Century', *JHS*, II, Nos. 1-2, 1970, pp. 13-17.
42. *Vikramāṅkadevacharita*, XVIII, 67; Buddha Prakash, op. cit.
43. Dasaratha Sharma, *Rajasthan Through the Ages*, I, p. 260; 'The Tomara Kingdom of Delhi' (in Hindi), *Rajasthan Bhārati*, Pts 3-4, pp. 17-26.

### 3. The Tomara-Chahamana interlude

1. Ajmer Museum Inscription, line 15; Dasaratha Sharma, *Early Chauhan Dynasties*, p. 180.
2. XVI, 15.
3. Dasaratha Sharma, op. cit., p. 45.



4. Ajmer Museum Inscription, line 15; Dasaratha Sharma, *op. cit.*, p. 181.
5. Dasaratha Sharma, *op. cit.*, p. 46.
6. *JASB*, LV, pp. 41f, *El*, XXVI, p. 104.
7. *Kāvya-mīmāṃsā* (GOS), p. 51.
8. Dasaratha Sharma, *op. cit.*, p. 92.
9. *Ibid.*
10. *SK*, I. ii. 39.159(i); A.B.L. Awasthi, *Studies in Skanda Purāṇa*, Part I, Lucknow, 1965, pp. 51-2.
11. Dasaratha Sharma, *op. cit.*, p. 60.
12. *Ibid.*
13. *Ibid.*
14. Delhi Siwalik Inscription, verse 1.
15. *Ibid.*
16. *IA*, XLI, p. 19.
17. *Ibid.*
18. *Ibid.*, verses 4-6.
19. *Prthvirājaviṣṭaya*, X, verses 6-7; Dasaratha Sharma, *op. cit.*, p. 73.
20. *Ibid.*, XII, verses 8-38; Dasaratha Sharma, p. 74.
21. Punia, *op. cit.*, pp. 72-73.
22. English rendering by Dasaratha Sharma, *op. cit.*, p. 74.
23. *The Kharataragachchhapattāvali* as quoted by Dasaratha Sharma, *op. cit.*, p. 90.

#### 4. The coming of the Turks, resistance and fall

1. *Tabaqāt-i-Nāsiri*, Raverty's trans., p. 449; Briggs, *Firishta*, I, p. 169.
2. Raverty, *op. cit.*, p. 451.
3. Dasaratha Sharma, *op. cit.*, p. 81.
4. *Prthvirājaviṣṭaya*, X, 42.
5. Dasaratha Sharma, *op. cit.*, p. 81.
6. *Ibid.*, see also *Tabaqāt-i-Nāsiri*, *Tārīkh-i-Firishta* and *Tabaqāt-i-Akbari*.
7. Dasaratha Sharma, *op. cit.*
8. Raverty, *op. cit.*, p. 455.
9. According to *Firishta* Hindu Army numbered 200,000 horses and 3,000 elephants.
10. Raverty, *op. cit.*, pp. 460-64.
11. Dasaratha Sharma, *op. cit.*, pp. 83, fn 59.
12. *Ibid.*, p. 84.
13. *Prthvirājaviṣṭaya*, 64th and 65th Samayas (Nāgari Prachārīṇi Sabhā edn.)
14. *The Struggle For Empire*, p. 113.
15. Raverty, *op. cit.*, 464, fn 7.
16. *Ibid.*; Dasaratha Sharma, *op. cit.*, p. 84.
17. Briggs, *Firishta*, I, p. 175.
18. Dasaratha Sharma, *op. cit.*, p. 85.
19. *Ibid.*, p. 176.
20. *Ibid.*
21. Elliot and Dowson, *History of India as told by its own Historians*, II, p. 200; Dasaratha Sharma, p. 85.
22. *Ibid.*
23. Raverty, *op. cit.*, I, p. 468.
24. *Prthvirājaprabandha*, *Prabandhachīntāmaṇi*, *Viruddha-vidhīvidhvamsa*; Raverty, *op. cit.*, I,

- p. 468, fn 1; Briggs, *Firishtha*, I, p. 176; *Hamnīramahākāvya*, III, 58; Dasaratha Sharma, *op. cit.*, p. 86.
25. J.N. Sarkar, *Military History of India*, Calcutta, 1960, p. 36.
  26. Elliot and Dowson, II, p. 215.
  27. *Catalogue of MSS in the Library of the India Office*, No. 1577; Dasaratha Sharma, p. 86 fn. 69.
  28. *Prthvirājaprabandha*, *Purāṇanaprabandhasangraha*, p. 68. (Singhi Jaina-granthamālā, 1936).
  29. As quoted in *The Struggle For Empire*, p. 112. and Dasaratha Sharma, p. 86, fn. 69.
  30. S.H. Hodivala, *Studies in Indo-Muslim History*, Bombay, 1957, II, p. 174.
  31. For instance, the mousoleum of Shah Nismat Ullah at Hansi and two Persian inscriptions from the same place dated A.D. 1192-93 and 1197 respectively; *Epigraphia India Moslemica*, 1911-12, pp. 15, 19.
  32. J.N. Sarkar, *op. cit.*, pp. 35, 36, 37.
  33. Jasbir Kaur, *History of Haryana* (A.D. 647-1206), Ph.D. Thesis, 1983, K.U. (unpublished), pp. 121-22.

### 5. The fadīn? glory

1. Jasbir Kaur, *op. cit.*
2. R.S. Sharma, *Indian Feudalism*, Macmillan, 1980, p. 224; Jasbir Kaur, *op. cit.*, pp. 125-29.
3. Jasbir Kaur, *op. cit.*
4. *Yastilakachampū*, Ch. 1. Nirṇayasāgar Press, 1916.
5. Rodgers, *Report*, pp. 40-1; *Marg*, XXVII, No. 4, p. 11.
6. *Marg*, *op. cit.*, p. 13. The Paju Kalan (5 kms. north-west of Safidon) brick temple of Mahādeva with its pyramidal roof, *āmālaka*, *kalāśa* and the finale is somewhat similar in style to the temple at Kalayat (Dattarwal, *op. cit.*, p. 92).
7. *Ibid.*, p. 14.
8. *Ibid.*, p. 11. Mahiṣāsūramardini (Durgā) images are also noticed at Paju Kalan (Dhattarwal, *op. cit.*, pp. 88-89), Sondh and Gurwara (distt. Gurgaon; Punia, *op. cit.*, pp. 226-29) and Tusham (district Hissar; Silak Ram, *op. cit.*, p. 213).
9. *EI*, pp. 242f.
10. Buddha Prakash, 'Glimpses of Ancient Hariyana', *HRJ*, I, p. 15.
11. Rodgers, *op. cit.*, pp. 15-16; *Marg*, *op. cit.*, p. 14.
12. Rodgers, *op. cit.*, p. 17.
13. *EI*, XXI, pp. 295f.
14. Silak Ram, *op. cit.*, pp. 244-45.
15. *Ibid.*, pp. 246-47.
16. *Ibid.*, pp. 247-49.
17. *Op. cit.*, pp. 242-43.
18. *Op. cit.*, p. 245.
19. U.V. Singh, 'Recent Archaeological Discoveries in the Vicinity of Thanesar', *KURJ*, X, 1976, p. 28.
20. Silak Ram, *op. cit.*, pp. 193-227; Punia, *op. cit.*, 195-234; Sharma, *op. cit.*, pp. 133-163; U.V. Singh, *Pinjor Sculptures*, K.U.K., 1977; Dattarwal, *Archaeology of Safidon Tehsil, District Jind (Haryana)*, MS, K.U.K.
21. SK, Kumarikā-Khaṇḍa, List No. 63; v ii. 71.69, iii. 182.45, 198.68; VII, i. 35.3-5; A.W.L. Awasthi, *Studies in Skanda Purāṇa*, Lucknow, 1965, pp. 68-70.
22. Buddha Prakash, *op. cit.*, p. 16; K.K. Saxena, 'A Śiva-Pārvatī Sculpture from Kurukshetra', *VII*, IV, Pt. I, p. 84.



23. U.V. Singh, *op. cit.*; Sharma, *op. cit.*; Dhattarwal, *op. cit.*, p. 81; Shukla, *op. cit.*; Punia, *op. cit.*, pp. 198-99; *Mārg*, p. 16.
24. *Mārg*, *op. cit.*
25. Punia, *op. cit.*, pp. 201ff. 218-19; Dhattarwal, *op. cit.*, p. 87; U.V. Singh, *op. cit.*
26. Devendra Handa, 'A Viṣṇu Sculpture from Kurukshetra' *JHS*, 1969, I, No. 2, pp. 1-2. The other Śeṣaśāyī images are from Gurawara, Bhanchari and Śeṣaśāyī (all villages in district Gurgaon; Punia, *op. cit.*, p. 213-14).
27. *Durgāsaptaśatī*, Gita Press, Gorakhpur, Ch. I.
28. Devendra Handa, *op. cit.*
29. K.K. Saxena, *op. cit.*
30. Devendra Handa, *op. cit.*
31. S.P. Shukla, 'Thanesar : Past Revealed', *Haryana Review*, August, 1977, p. 9.
32. *Ibid.*
33. *Mārg*, *op. cit.*, p. 16. The Asthal Bohar site has also yielded a life-size image of Balarāma (10th-11th century). It is massive, resilient and stately (*Mārg*, *op. cit.*). Viṣṇu images belonging to this period have also been located at various other sites such as Safidon (8th-9th and 10th-11th century), Jaintidevi and Pinjor (9th-10th century), Siwan (7th-8th century), Ujjana (10th-12th century) and Sondh (9th-10th century). For details see U.V. Singh, Sharma, Punia and Dattarwal, *op. cit.*
34. S.P. Shukla, *op. cit.*, p. 9.
35. *Ibid.*
36. *Harṣacharita*, Ch. IV.
37. Silak Ram, *op. cit.*; Sharma, *op. cit.*; U.V. Singh, *op. cit.*
38. Silak Ram, *op. cit.*; 306; Cunningham, *ASIR*, XIV, p. 97; *Mārg*, p. 16.
39. *Mārg*, *op. cit.*
40. *Ibid.*
41. *Ibid.*
42. *ASIAR*, 1922-23, p. 93; Silak Ram, *op. cit.*, p. 306.
43. Silak Ram, *op. cit.* Two sculptures of the sun-god have also been found at Khokrakot and belong to c. 6th-7th century A.D. (*Ibid.*, p. 305).
44. U.V. Singh, *op. cit.*, p. 13.
45. *Ibid.*
46. *Ibid.*
47. *Agni Purāṇa*, 51.1.
48. As quoted by T.A.G. Rao, *Elements of Hindu Iconography*, I, p. 89.
49. U.V. Singh, *op. cit.*, p. 14.
50. Silak Ram, *op. cit.*, p. 223.
51. Sharma, *op. cit.*, pp. 133f.
52. Watters, *op. cit.*, pp. 314-19.
53. Suraj Bhan, *Sugh Report*.
54. Paramatthadipani, Theragāthā, Bombay Un. Pub., pp. 56-57; Silak Ram, *op. cit.*, p. 309.
55. J.C. Jain, *Life in Ancient India as Depicted in Jain Canons*, Bombay, 1947, pp. 121, 328 and fn. 695; *Vivagasūya* ed. A.T. Upadhye, Belgaum, 1935, I, p. 49; *Samavayanga*, Ahmedabad, 1938, 68, p. 57; *Niryavaliyao* ed. Gopani and Choksi, Ahmedabad, 1935, 5.
56. U.V. Singh, *op. cit.*, pp. 16-20.
57. Kurukshetra University Museum Collection.
58. *Ibid.*
59. *Mārg*, p. 12.
60. *Ibid.*; Silak Ram, *op. cit.*, p. 199.

61. Silak Ram, *op. cit.*, p. 310.
62. *Ibid.*
63. *Ibid.*
64. *Ibid.*
65. *Ibid.*
66. *Ibid.*
67. U.V. Singh, *op. cit.*, pp. 16-20.
68. *Ibid.*, p. 17.
69. *Ibid.*, pp. 18-19.
70. *Op. cit.*, p. 19.
71. Silak Ram, *op. cit.*, pp. 224-25.
72. Punia, *op. cit.*, pp. 232-34.
73. Haribhadra Suri, *Sambodhoprakaraṇa*, verses 27, 34, 46-49, 61, 63, 68 etc. as quoted by Dasaratha Sharma, *Early Chauhan Dynasties*, p. 222.
74. Silak Ram, *op. cit.*, p. 310.
75. Dasaratha Sharma, *op. cit.*, p. 223.
76. *Ibid.*
77. *Ibid.*; Jinadatta Suri, *Upadeśaraśāyana*, verse 52.
78. *Ibid.*
79. *Ibid.*
80. Sharma, *op. cit.*, p. 224.
81. *Ibid.*, fn 15.
82. *Ibid.*
83. *Ibid.*
84. *Ibid.*
85. Shukla, 'The Glory that was Sthānviśvara' *The Voice of the Holy Land*, XII, Dec. 1975, p. 5.
86. *Āin-i-Akbarī*, Eng. Tr. H.S. Jarrett, Delhi, 1965, II, p. 301; Cunningham, *ASIR*, XIV, p. 96; William Foster, *Early Travels in India* (1583-1619), Indian Edition, 1968, p. 157-58.
87. Dasaratha Sharma, *op. cit.*, p. 214.
88. H.L. Srivastava, *Excavation at Agroha*, *MAI*, No. 61; Handa, 'Agroha—An ancient city of Haryana', *Vishvajyoti*, XV, No. 8, Oct. 1966, p. 32 (Hoshiarpur).
89. *XXI*, pp. 295ff.
90. *Ibid.*
91. Silak Ram, *op. cit.*, p. 197.
92. *Imperial Gazetteer of India*, XIII, New Delhi, pp. 24-5 (Reprint).
93. *Flishta*, *op. cit.*, p. 63.
94. *The Struggle For Empire*, p. 94.
95. *JASB*, LV, Part, I, pp. 41ff; *Et*, XXVI, p. 134.
96. *Ibid.*
97. *IA*, XLI, pp. 17-19.
98. *Mārg*, p. 29.
99. *Ibid.*, p. 31.
100. U.V. Singh, *op. cit.*, p. 3; Rodgers, *Report*, pp. 28-32.
101. *Ibid.*
102. *Ibid.*
103. *Al-Berūnī's India*, I, p. 205.
104. *IA*, XLI, p. 17.



105. U.V. Singh, *op. cit.*
106. *Ibid.*, p. 20.
107. For details see Y.D. Sharma, *Delhi and its Neighbourhood*, Archaeological Survey of India, Delhi, 1974.
108. Jasbir Kaur, *History of Haryana (A.D. 647-1206)—A Historical Reconstruction*, Ph.D. Thesis K.U. 1984 (unpublished), Ch. IX. 'Art and Architecture' for a detailed treatment of this aspect.

## CHAPTER VI

# *The Sultanate (1206-1526)*

### 1. Laying the foundations

With the defeat of the Chāhamānas in the second battle of Tarain (1192) began a gloomy period in the history of Haryana marked by the destruction of its cities and the temples, the murder, slavery and the subjection of its people. The Muslim invaders treated this region with extravagant violence and it was too heavy a blow to have dealt.

Although it is difficult to say who took charge of the Indian possessions after Muizz-ud-din's death in 1206, there is no doubt that Aibek who had already distinguished himself at the battle of Tarain was undoubtedly the ablest of Muizz-ud-din's officers. According to *Tarikh-i-Fakhruddin Mubarak Shah* (28) 'Aibek was formally invested with the viceregal powers, promoted to the rank of *malik* and appointed *waliahd* for the Indian possessions in 1206'.<sup>1</sup> Further, according to *Tāj-ul-Maāsir* 'an occupation army was stationed at Inderpat near Delhi under the command of Qutb-ud-din Aibek, who was to act as Muizz-ud-din's representative'.<sup>2</sup> This was challenged by other contenders—Yaloz and Qubaicha, the governors of Ghazni and Punjab respectively.

After Muizz-ud-din's death Yaloz set out to conquer the Punjab. The citizens of Lahore, threatened by this danger, invited Aibek who having a quick understanding of the situation, wasted no time in taking appropriate measures to check Yaloz's advance. He defeated Yaloz and forced him to retreat to Kuhistan.<sup>3</sup> For the proper defence and administration of his possessions Aibek now shifted his capital to Lahore and set military posts at several places in Haryana of which the most important were—Hansi, Sirsa, Mewat, Rewari, Rohtak, Sonapat and Thanesar.<sup>4</sup> Haryana mostly remained under the direct rule of the Sultanate. The crown lands of the region were a source of personal income to the Sultans and secondly, Haryana being so close to the imperial capital any development there was bound to effect the political fortunes of the Sultanate.

Northern India thus passed under the Turks of central Asia who followed



Islam with fanatical tenacity. Their new rule was theocracy in theory, but in practice a military despotism backed by a foreign aristocracy. The greed for wealth led the new ruling class to theorise that 'prosperity bred sedition and revolt and poverty was the guarantee of stability and peace'.<sup>5</sup> This made them follow a policy which was tyranny combined with exploitation of the masses. But as would be shown, the latter did not always meekly surrender to this policy, but they very often revolted and at times even overthrew their oppressors.

Even when Muizz-ud-din was alive, reports of revolts in his Indian kingdom reached him.<sup>6</sup> Again after Aibek's death in 1210 the lead in this regard was taken by the turbulent Jats, Ahirs and the Meos in challenging the central authority.<sup>7</sup> This was followed by the deposition of Aram Shah—Aibek's successor, who was disliked by the Amir's of Delhi who invited Iltutmish, the Governor of Badaon, to assume charge of the government. Aram Shah, although enjoyed the support of Lahore Amirs, put a feeble resistance, was vanquished and slain.

Soon after his accession in 1210, Iltutmish had to meet the opposition of his formidable rivals—Yaloz and Qubaicha, the masters of Punjab and Haryana respectively. When Yaloz was driven out from Ghazni by the Khwarazmians, he moved to Lahore, expelled Qubaicha and according to *Firishta* 'even succeeded in occupying the Punjab upto Thanesar',<sup>8</sup> including also the region round about Sirsa. This was a serious challenge to the position of Iltutmish in Delhi so he marched to the battlefield of Tarain where the contending parties met.<sup>9</sup> The battle began with Yaloz's severe attack on the left wing of Iltutmish's army which the latter faced boldly. As ill luck would have it Yaloz was struck by a chance arrow and seeing him wounded his armies gave way.<sup>10</sup> Minhaj mentions *Hudūd-i-Tarain* as the place of the battle,<sup>10</sup> while according to Hasan Nizami it was fought at Samana.<sup>11</sup> Isami mentions Hansi where Yaloz was defeated, taken prisoner and later on put to death.<sup>12</sup> It is likely that during this struggle for power the Sultan might possibly have received some help from Qubaicha also. This receives some support from the fact that after Yaloz's defeat Qubaicha's agents are known to have ruled for sometime over Sirsa and other areas<sup>13</sup> but his hold over these parts of Haryana seems to have short lived. When he declared independence in 1227, he was challenged by Iltutmish and in the resulting encounter Qubaicha was finally defeated at Sirsa and chased until Iltutmish occupied Lahore which he put under his son, Nasiruddin Mahmud.<sup>14</sup>

Haryana thus came under the direct control of Iltutmish. Because of meagre information and also the changing nature of the administrative units very little can be said on the administrative set up under Iltutmish. The region was then divided into various *iqtas* (equivalent of modern division or a commissioner) with officers designated as *muqta* or *wali* having civil, judicial and military functions. The important *iqtas* during Iltutmish's rule were : Delhi, Hansi, Sirsa (Sarsuti), Pipli, Sarhind, Rewari, Narnaul and Palwal.<sup>15</sup> The most important of these was the Delhi *iqta*—an extensive area from Jamunā in the east to Hansi in the west, and from Siwaliks in the north



to Mewat in the South<sup>16</sup>, and being the seat of power it was directly administered by the Sultans. The *iqta* of Hansi due to its strategic and economic importance (for its location on trade routes) was put under Nasiruddin Mahmud (1226-28) and then later under Nusratuddin Taisi Muizzi (.228-32) a close confidant of Sultan.<sup>17</sup> Similarly the *iqtas* of Rewari, Pipli, Sarhind and Sirsa had their own importance. The last Palwal, being too small, was probably merged later into the Delhi *iqta*.

Iltutmish was succeeded by Firuz in 1236. As the latter was a weakling, the real power was seized by his mother Shah Turkan under whose oppressive rule, nobles lost all faith in the administration and rebellions broke out at various places. Malik Izzuddin Kabir Khan Ayaz, Malik Alaaddin Jani and Malik Saifuddin Kuchi—the *iqtadars* of Multan, Lahore and Hansi respectively, jointly rebelled against Firuz.<sup>18</sup> The situation was worsened when the Turkish officers of the Sultan's army murdered non-Turkish (Tazik) Muslim officers in the neighbourhood of Mansurpur and Tarain.<sup>19</sup> The victims of this organised massacre are particularly mentioned by Minhaz. They were such important persons as Tajulmulk Mahmud, the *dabir* and *mushrif-i-mamalik*, Bahauddin Hasan Ashari, Karimuddin Zahidi, Ziyaulmulk, son of Nizamulmulk Junaidi, Nizamuddin Shafarqani, Khawaja Rashiduddin Malikani and Amir Fakhruddin.<sup>20</sup>

Rebellions and disorders encouraged Raziya to seize the opportunity to gain power. With the support of the army, nobles as well as the people, Raziya succeeded in capturing the throne. The Jats and the Rajputs of Haryana although in the beginning were with her, later on opposed her and were even instrumental in bringing a tragic end to her short career. Her commander Qutb-ud-din Hausan Ghorī on his way to Ranathambhor was attacked by the Mewatis of Haryana whose guerilla tactics of warfare caused much harassment to the Sultanate army.<sup>21</sup> This apart, the provincial governors, a much influential section of the Turkish ruling class, felt humiliated at the political developments at Delhi. Consequently Aitigin, the *amir-i-hājib*, Altunia and Kabir Khan, the governors of Bhatinda and Lahore respectively, decided to devise plans to overthrow Raziya.<sup>22</sup> Raziya although gained some success in the beginning in her attempt to foil the sinister designs of her opponents was ultimately defeated and was imprisoned and Muizz-ud-din Behram was then put on the Delhi throne. Raziya, a very intelligent lady as she was, married Altunia with the hope of winning back her throne with this matrimonial alliance. The ambitious Altunia who also saw in this relationship an opportunity for further raising his position, collected an army of Khokars, Jats and Rajputs, also winning over some disgruntled section of the nobility, marched on to Delhi. The march ended in a complete disaster. Minhaj describes their miserable flight as follows :<sup>23</sup>

In the month of Rabi 1 638 (September-October, 1240) Sultan Muizz-ud-din Behram marched against them with an army from Delhi and Raziya and Altunia were defeated and driven back; when they reached Kaithal, all their soldiers



deserted them and they fell into the hands of Hindus, and were martyred. They were defeated on 24 Rabi I 638 (14 October, 1240) and Raziya was martyred on the following day.

After the reigns of Muizz-ud-din Beram Shah and Alauddin Masud Shah—the feeble successors of Raziya, Nasiruddin Mahmud ascended the throne with the help of Balban, the most influential of the ‘forty’. Balban who had received the *iqta* of Hansi was appointed *amir-i-hajib* during the reign of Alauddin and was also in possession of the *iqta* of Rewari.<sup>24</sup> But Balban had to face the powerful opposition headed by Imad-ud-din Rihan who, when the Sultan was at Rohtak, managed to order Balban to depart for his *iqta* at Hansi.<sup>25</sup> Since Shahzada Ruknuddin was actually to be given the charge of Hansi Balban had no other alternative but to proceed to Nagaur.<sup>26</sup> Ultimately Balban triumphed and put an end to the domination of Rihan. Soon after his accession Nasiruddin had to face serious rebellions of the Mewatis who, under their leader Malka had become so strong that they even dared to attack imperial caravans near Hansi. As put by Minhaj ‘they had carried off herds of camels and camel-men, and had dispersed them among the Hindus throughout the Kohpayah (hill tracts), as far as the vicinity of Rantambhur (Ranthambor).’<sup>27</sup> Since the Sultan was busy meeting the Mongol invasion, he entrusted Balban (in 1260) with the task of dealing with the Mewatis. Minhaj details Balban’s Mewat expedition. He relates :<sup>28</sup>

All those that were on the mountain sides, in the deep defiles, and great ravines, were taken and were brought under the swords of the Musalmans. For a period of twenty days he (Balban) continued to move about Kohpayah in every direction. The dwelling places and villages of those mountaineers were on the submits of the high hills, and the whole of their edifices on the acclivities of rocks . . . in altitude, equal to the stars, and even with the sky. By command of Ulugh Khan-i-Azam (Balban), the whole of those places which, in strength, might compare with the tale told of the wall of Sikandar in solidity, were captured, and plundered, and the people of those places, who were knaves, Hindus, thieves and highway robbers, were all put to the sword.

Specially mentioning the repressive measures which Balban took in crushing the rebellion Minhaj adds :<sup>29</sup>

The Ulugh Khani orders were that whoever should bring in a head should receive one *tangah* of silver, and whoever brought in a man alive two *tangahs* of silver from the private treasure.

Malka along with his 250 followers was put into chains. The Sultan, very much

pleased at this achievement called a special *darbar* on March 9, 1260 near Hauz-i-Rani to celebrate the occasion. Balban and his lieutenants were honoured befitting to their grand success against the Mewatis and the latter were severely punished, most of them trampled under the elephants' feet, while Malka and his associates were skinned alive. Never before such a horrible sight was witnessed at Hauz-i-Rani and the gate of Delhi.<sup>30</sup> Despite these severest measures the Mewatis again revolted in July, 1260 and the Sultan again sent Balban to crush them. Balban made an unexpected move towards Kohpayah putting about 12000 persons consisting of men and women and their children to the sword. Much booty also fell into the hands of Balban.<sup>31</sup>

After the death of Nasiruddin, Ulugh Khan ascended the throne with the title of Ghiyasuddin Balban (1266). His first act was to give a final blow to the Mewatis whose frequent revolts were a much disturbing factor for the smooth running of the administration. This general disorder and discontent is voiced in the works of Minhaj and Barani.

At Kohpayah (hill tracts of Mewat) round about the capital there was a community whom Minhaj calls 'obdurate rebels' who, 'unceasingly committed highway robbery and plundered the property of Musalmans, and the ejection of the subject peasantry, and destruction of the villages in the districts of Haryana, the Siwaliks and Bayana'.<sup>32</sup> Barani's description is graphic. He details the disorder and anarchy that prevailed in the environs of Delhi and the measures which Balban took to restore order there. He wrote :<sup>33</sup>

... Sultan Balban devoted the first year of his reign to cutting the forest round Delhi and suppressing the Meos. He came out of the city, pitched his army-camp and considered the suppression of the Meos the most important of state enterprises. Owing to worthlessness of the successors of Iluttmish and the weakness of Sultan Nasiruddin ... the Meos in the neighbourhood of Delhi had grown in power and multiplied in numbers. They came into the city at night, broke through the walls into the houses and molested the people in other ways. The people of Delhi were unable to sleep owing to the fear of the Meos, who had also plundered all the inns in the neighbourhood of Delhi ... The roads (to Delhi) were closed on all sides, and it was impossible for caravans and traders to come and depart. Finally, owing to the fear of the Meos, the western gates of the city were closed at the time of the afternoon prayer, and no one had the courage to go out of the city after that time either to visit the sacred tombs or to enjoy by the side of the Sultani (Shamsi) tank. But ever before the afternoon prayers (the Meos) molested the water-carriers and slave girls who went to fetch water from the tank; they took off their clothes and left them nude.

Balban removed all the jungles in the area around Delhi a preparation for his final assault on the Mewatis. Thousands of Mewatis were put to death. Sultan's



losses were also considerable including that of Yak Lakhi, one of his favoured slaves.<sup>34</sup> To put curb to any future rebellion Balban built a fort at Gopalgir. Adequate troops were stationed there and tax-free lands for their maintenance was also granted.<sup>35</sup> This besides, the Sultan also used to go every winter to Rewari with 1000 horsemen and 1000 foot soldiers, though apparently for hunting, the real purpose seems to be his personal supervision of the region which had been of so much trouble to the Sultanate, and also to keep the army vigilant and active.<sup>36</sup> Despite all these steps it must be admitted, Balban could not crush permanently the Mewatis, who, in course of time again raised the standard of revolt.

To meet the Mongol invasions and also the frequent rebellions of the people Balban set up several military posts at Gopalgiri, Sohna, Rewari, Narnaul, Kanod, Sonapat, Hansi, Barwala, Phatarat, Thanesar (Pipli) etc. assigning them to the Afghans. To facilitate civil administration Balban increased the number of *iqtas*—the new *igtas* being Sonapat, Kanod, Kaithal, Siwalik etc. and further divided them into *shiqs* (equal to modern tehsil).<sup>37</sup>

## 2. The Khaljis and the Tughlaqs : administrative reforms

During the reign of Balban's successor Muizz-ud-din Kaiqubad, a physical and moral wreck, Jalaluddin Firuz Khalji, who had already distinguished himself in the wars against the Mongols, usurped the power and ascended the throne in June, 1290. Under Balban, Jalaluddin had served as *iqtadar* of Kaithal and received also the *niyabat* (deputyship) of Samana and was raised to the position of the governor of Baran under Kaiqubad.<sup>38</sup> While at Kaithal, he rewarded a Mandahar Rajpur although the latter had wounded him on the face in an encounter following the destruction of a Mandahar village. The Mandahar was appointed *vakildar* under Malik Khurram on a salary of 100,000 *jitals*.<sup>39</sup> During the early years of his reign Jalaluddin led an expedition (via Rewari, Narnaul and Alwar) against the Chauhanas of Ranthambhor who under their famed leader Hamira Deva aimed at territorial expansion in the neighbouring regions specially those parts of Haryana whose inhabitants, the Mewatis, even Balban's exertions had failed to reduce.<sup>40</sup> The expedition, although failed in its main objective to capture Ranthambhor, succeeded for sometime in bringing the Mewatis into submission.

The Sultan was assassinated by his nephew Ali Gurshasp, who ascended the throne as Ala-ud-din Khalji (1296). Ala-ud-din's reign witnessed the re-occurrence of the Mongol invasions. Towards the end of 1299 Qutlugh Khwaja with 200,000 soldiers passed through this region on his way to Kili (about 8 kms from Delhi) where an encounter between the Mongols and the imperial forces took place.<sup>41</sup> Although the exact route which the Mongols followed is not recorded but it could be only through Haryana where it was easier to get cattle, grains and fodder for the army. The Mongols again attacked Indian territories under Targhi (1301-03) Ali Beg and



Tartaq (1305-06)<sup>42</sup> They plundered the Siwaliks whose distressed inhabitants fled across the fords of the Ganges but were pursued and many of their towns were put on fire but in their further advance the Mongols met with stiff resistance led by Malik Nayak, Alauddin's Hindu general and the governor of Samana and Sunam.<sup>43</sup> Isami<sup>44</sup> locates the battle at Hansi-Sirsawa whereas according to Barani<sup>45</sup> it was fought in the Amroha district. The Mongols, although in large numbers, were defeated by the more compact and disciplined army of Nayak who arrested two Mongol commanders—Ali Beg and Tartaq and presented 20,000 of their horses to the Sultan. Alauddin organised a grand durbar to receive Malik Nayak alongwith his officers and his staff.<sup>46</sup>

Alauddin was a military dictator believing in curbing the rebellions firmly. As according to him 'prosperity breed sedition and revolt, and poverty was the guarantee of stability and peace', he ordered his officials to frame such laws by which people could be suppressed and their wealth and property drained. Further, he increased the revenue, reduced the prices of products and imposed several other duties and restrictions on the business community. These measures naturally irritated people whose sharp reaction came to the surface under Alauddin's weak successors. Although one, of them Qutb-ud-din Mubarak Shah (1315-20) dropped many of these harsh measures reduced the revenue, remitted the arrears and lifted the controls yet owing to addiction to drinking and other vices, the Sultan did not last long to see the final implementation of his policy. A palace revolution put Nasiruddin Khusrau Khan on the throne on April 15, 1320.

The political developments at the capital were not approved by Ghazi Malik Tughlaq, the governor of Lahore and Dipalpur who decided to oppose it. His task was made easy by his son, Fakhruddin Jauna (later wellknown Muhammad Tughlaq), then a high official at the Delhi court. Jauna joined his father's forces at Dipalpur while Muhammad Sartiah, an officer of Malik Tughlaq, took possession of Sirsa to protect him.<sup>47</sup> With these precautionary measures began Malik Tughlaq's campaign for the capture of the throne of Delhi. He was shrewd enough to accept the assistance of the brave local chiefs of Haryana—the Khokar Gulchandra, Niju and Sahij Rai and the Meos even though he was fighting for the glory of Islam.<sup>48</sup>

A detailed account of the battle of Sarasvati is provided by Barani<sup>49</sup>, Isami<sup>50</sup> and Amir Khusrau.<sup>51</sup> The imperial army bypassed the fort of Sirsa which was held by Muhammad Sartiah a faithful officer of Ghazi Malik.<sup>52</sup> The Tughlaq army marched via Alapur and the bank of Bhat.<sup>53</sup> Khusrau refers to the 'stupid miscalculation' of Delhi army which wandered aimlessly through wilderness in the night. The soldiers, thirsty and exhausted, found themselves close to the enemy forces next morning, and had no alternative but to face the enemy and fight.<sup>54</sup>

The severe Khokar attack completely shattered the front ranks of Delhi army. Khan-i-Khanan, who had hardly led an army on the battle-field before, decided on flight. Gulchand, the Khokar chief, drove his charger straight at Khan-i-Khanan's



*chatra* (umbrella) bearer, slew him and brought the *chatra* and placed it on Tughlaq's head. Ghazi Malik thus received his first symbol of royalty from the hands of a Khokar chief.<sup>55</sup> According to Khusrau, 'the Delhi army was routed in one attack' but as rightly pointed out by K.A. Nizami "he (Khusrau) was unfortunately not in a position to acknowledge frankly (as was done by Isami) that it was the Khokars who won the battle of Sarasvati for Malik Tughlaq and the 'glory of Islam'."<sup>57</sup>

The valient commander Qutlugh Khan was killed in the action while Khan-i-Khanan alongwith Yusuf Khan, Shaista Khan and Qadr Khan fled from the battle-field.<sup>58</sup> As stated by Amir Khusrau, the victorious army captured Hansi and following the route via Madina (a village north of Rohtak), Mandoti and Palam finally encamped at Lahrawat where it again scored a decisive victory over the imperial army.<sup>59</sup> Malik Tughlaq sternly maintained order in the newly conquered territory which included larger area of Haryana. We are told that he refused the sum of six lakhs of *tanks* which his officers had extracted from a caravan of innocent corn-merchants.<sup>60</sup>

Ghazi Malik ascended the throne of Delhi as Ghiyasuddin Tughlaq (1320). He revived Alauddin's policy of repression specially against those who rose to prominence under Khusrau Khan, a Hindu convert-Muslim. While enunciating his policy he ordered that the peasants should be treated in such a way 'that wealth did not tempt them to raise the standard of rebellion, nor were they to be made paupers, because in that case they would give up cultivation'.<sup>61</sup> He made serious attempt to regulate revenue affairs with firmness and sympathy. He laid down rules of conduct for the *muqtas* and governors regarding the realization of land revenue, and took all possible precautions to save the peasant from their high-handedness and oppression. Ghiyasuddin was followed by his son Muhammad bin-Tughlaq who, by his wild schemes added to the miseries of the people. Further, largely increased revenue, crushing burden of the taxes on houses and even branding of cattles must have substantially contributed in generating popular unrest against these oppressive measures. This has been aptly described by Barani. He relates :<sup>62</sup>

The Hindus (by this he meant the peasants) burnt their barns and drove their cattle; they formed themselves into groups of ten or twenty and took shelter in jungles near tanks; the majority of people fled away and became untraceable; collectors and accountants returned empty-handed.

The revolt was wide spread. At Kuhram, Sunam, Kaithal, Samana and other places the peasants refused to pay taxes, and the villagers had taken to highway robbery. Combining themselves into small groups they even clashed with the administration. The Sultan himself marched against the insurgents and crushed them. Further, to curb the seditious tendencies he appointed only men of his confidence to administer various *iqtas* of which the most important were those of Delhi, Hansi and Sirsa fre-



quently mentioned by contemporary Muslim writers. Ibn-Batuta gives the name of the *iqtdar* of Hansi as Malik Muajjam Hoshang, a position which was later on held by Ibrahim Kharetadar, who was given additional charge of Sirsa.<sup>63</sup> As the latter became much powerful and even revolved against the imperial authority, he was put to death by the orders of the Sultan.<sup>64</sup> Besides the internal difficulties the Sultan had also to face the Mongol invasion under Tarmashirin. Not only did he repulse the invaders but followed their armies up to Thanesar and from there despatched troops to chase them further up to the Indus.<sup>65</sup> But soon after Muhammad's death at Thatta in Sindh, people once again took to rioting and plunder.

Ibn-Batuta, the well known Arab traveller, visited this part of India during the times of Muhammad Tughlaq. He mentions Sarasuti (Sirsa) and Hansi as chief towns of northern India. The town of Sirsa was famous for its excellent quality of rice which grew in abundance and was in great demand in the Delhi market. Its taxes were high.<sup>66</sup> The town of Hansi was thickly populated, well planned and beautiful with a high boundary wall surrounding it. It was built by an infidel king Tura (Tomara) about whom various popular stories were current. Among the prominent personages of the town the traveller mentions Qazi Kamaluddin, Kazi ul-Quzat, Qutluq Khan, the tutor of the Sultan and his brothers Nizamuddin and Samsuddin who went on a pilgrimage to Mecca.<sup>67</sup> Amir Khurd informs us of the Sultan's close association with Qutbuddin Munawwar of Hansi who along with others made the prediction that the glory of the Tughlaq dynasty would come to a close with the reign of Firuz who would rule like a saint.<sup>68</sup>

During this period Kaithal grew into a centre of activity of noted Saiyyid families. Saiyyid Mugisuddin and his elder brother Mujibuddin Kali Pagadiwale were well known for their spiritual knowledge. Barani's family was related to the Saiyyids of Kaithal, his father Saiyyid Jalaluddin was considered among the most influential and respected Saiyyids of Kaithal, while his grand-mother, a saintly lady, used to perform miracles.<sup>69</sup> But it must be noted that the Saiyyids of Kaithal did not find favour with the Sultan probably because of the popularity of Sufism, their creed, and also possibly due to the protest of some of them against the repressive measures of the Sultan. According to *Tarikh-i-Mubarak Shāhi* and *Muntakhab-ut-Tawārikh* many of them were executed by him and their land was conferred upon the Hindu chiefs as *jagirs*.<sup>70</sup>

Firuz Tughlaq, Ghiyasuddin's nephew, born of a Bhatti Rajput mother (the daughter of Ran Mal of Abohar) was proclaimed the successor to the throne on March 24, 1351 at Thatta. Supported by nobles, Shaiks and Ulema of the court, Firuz started on his return march to Delhi where Khwaja-i-Jahan, the *wazir* had rebelled. On 23 August, 1351 the *naib-wazir*, Qawamul Mulk, along with Amir-i-Azam Qatbugha who fled from Delhi, joined the Sultan at Agroha,<sup>71</sup> a place near which the city of Fatehabad was constructed later. The new city was so named after Sultan's son Fateh Khan who was born on that very day.<sup>72</sup> At Sirsa, the grocers and bankers presented him several lakhs of *tankas*, money which was badly needed to meet the



expenses of the army but which the Sultan accepted only as a loan to be repaid after his arrival at Delhi.<sup>72</sup> At Hansi he called on the noted mystic, Shaikh Qutb-ud-din Munawwar but at a very wrong hour when the Shaikh was on his way to Friday prayer. The Shaikh reprimanded the Sultan for drinking wine and hunting animals unnecessarily. The dialogue between the two has been thus recorded by Afif in his *Tārīkh-i-Firūz Shāhi*:<sup>73</sup>

I have heard it said that you are addicted to wine; but if Sultans and the heads of religion give themselves up to wine-bibbing, the want of the poor and needy will get little attention. The Sultan thereupon said that he would drink no more. After this the Shaikh said that he had been informed that the Sultan was passionately fond of hunting; but hunting was a source of great trouble and distress to the world, and could not be approved. To kill any animal without necessity was wrong and hunting ought not to be prosecuted farther than was necessary to supply the wants of man—all beyond this was reprehensible.

The Sultan, it must be noted, although showing due reverence to the Shaikh, evaded the question and did not promise to abstain from hunting. Consequently, the Shaikh too did not accept the presentations offered by the Sultan. But the Shaikh gave hearty welcome to his fellow brother Nasiruddin Mahmud (who accompanied Sultan), both disciples of Shaikh Nizamuddin Aulia being ordained the same day. In the memory of their great master, the Shaikh summoned religious gatherings and recital of holy scriptures was arranged.<sup>74</sup> Firuz next marched to Dhansa where Khwaja-i-Jahan offered his submission, gave his life and cleared Firuz's entry to the imperial capital.<sup>75</sup>

Sultan Firuz's reign was marked by various administrative reforms specially his plan of canal constructions which greatly benefitted agricultural cultivation in Haryana. He conferred the title of Khan-i-Jahan on Malik Maqbul who later became *Naib-wazir*. His new administrative measures included the appointment of Malik Khatab, the Kotwal of Hansi as the governor of Sirhind and Multan, of Kamaluddin as the Chief of Samana,<sup>76</sup> Yal Khan, Tajjuddin and Bahadur Nahir as the new *iqtadars* of Safidon, Rewari and Mewat respectively.<sup>76a</sup>

The new *iqta* of Hisar-Firuzah was created specially because of the help which its people rendered to the Sultan in getting the crown. Afif describes the city as 'large, populous and flourishing'. Its rampart was surrounded by ditch; and within the rampart were a royal palace (*kushak*) and a tank (*hauz*) (constructed by Firuz) and also the officials' residences. Firuz constructed two canals—called Rajiwaha and Ulugh Khani which flowed from Yamunā and Satluj respectively to Hisar-Firuzah, both passing through Karnal.<sup>78</sup> Hansi, Agroha, Fatehabad and Sirsa up to Salura and Khizrabad and the adjoining area was then included in the jurisdiction of Hisar-Firuzah which became the *shiq* (the provincial capital) under Malik Delan as its *Shiqdar*



(provincial governor).<sup>79</sup> Besides these places Jind, Dhatrat, Tughlaqpur (Safidon) were also considerably benefitted by the above canal constructions.<sup>79a</sup>

The canal construction was undertaken with a view to meeting the scarcity of water during summer so much so that even foreigners from Iraq and Khorasan were required to pay four *jitals* for a pot of drinking water.<sup>80</sup> Due to the paucity of rains only the coarse grains of the Kharif season could be grown as the wheat of rabi crop required more water than was available.<sup>81</sup> To meet this he therefore ordered for the construction of five other canals : one from Sutlej to Jhajjar; the second, from Sirmur hills to Hansi, Arsan and Hisar-Firuzah (he constructed a large tank near the royal palace and filled it with water from this canal); the third, from Ghaggar via Sarsuti fort to Harni Khera (constructing a fort there which he called Firuzabad); the fourth from Yamunā at Budhai to Hisar-Firuzah and the fifth, joining the waters of Sarasvati to those of Salima.<sup>82</sup>

The whole canal system was probably based on the principal that construction of main canals was to be the function of the state while minor feeders that carried the waters to the fields, were to be maintained by the state officers. The cultivators had to bear the cost of construction and maintenance of canals.<sup>83</sup> When the canal system was completed and put into working order it yielded to Firuz a personal income amounting to about two lakhs of *tankas* a year. It also shows the extent to which the system had helped the growth of *kharif* and *rabi* crops. 'No king of Delhi', says Afif, 'had so much personal property as Firoz Shah; ultimately a separate department with its own officers had to be established to take charge of his personal properties'.<sup>84</sup>

Firuz traced two pillars of Aśoka—the larger one from a village Nawira in the district of Salura, and the other from Khizrabad (at Topra in district Ambala) at the foot of the hills about 90 *karohs* from Delhi. He did not know what they were, but decided to bring them to Delhi. Afif gives a detailed description how the larger stone pillar which Firuz called the 'golden pillar' was brought and installed in Delhi.<sup>85</sup>

For hunting, his favourite past time, the Sultan chose the jungles of Hisar and other such places in Haryana. This had brought him to Thanesar and the adjacent area where an interesting event of his life took place. The incident has been described in details in *Mirāt-i-Sikandari*.<sup>86</sup>

We are informed that one of Firuz's wives, a Hindu lady belonged to 'a village which was one of the dependencies of the town of Thanir (Thanesar).' Her brothers Sadhu and Sadharan, men of local influence, became converts to Islam and served the Sultan. The younger Sadharan received the title of Wajh-ul-Malik from the Sultan, and one of his successors became the founder of the Muslim dynasty of rulers in Gujarat. At Sultan's suggestion the two brothers became the disciples of Kutb-ul-Aktab Hazrat Makdum-i-Jahaniyan, a Sufi saint<sup>87</sup>, whose place of residence although not mentioned belonged to Uchcha originally.<sup>88</sup> Sultan Firuz was known for his patronage to men of learning. During his auspicious reign, Maulana Ahmad Thanesari (who belonged to Thanesar as his name would suggest) composed hymns in Arabic.<sup>89</sup> Abdul Hakk



Dehlavi, a noted poet of the times of Jahangir refers to his, 'eminent talents and genius'.<sup>90</sup>

Firuz's reign, although witnessed various public welfare activities was marred by religious persecutions as is gathered from the *Fatuhāt-i-Firūzshāhi*. While referring to the Hindus who assembled for worship in the new temple at Kohana (Gohana) the Sultan records :<sup>91</sup>

The people were seized and brought before me. I ordered that the perverse conduct of the leaders of this wickedness should be publicly proclaimed, and that they should be put to death before the gate of the palace. I also ordered that the infidel books, the idols, and the vessels used in their worship, which had been taken with them, should all be publicly burnt. The orders were restricted by threats and punishments, as a warning to all men.

These oppressive measures led to popular revolts in Hisar and Safidon which, as gathered from Bihamad Khani were mercilessly put down by the Sultan.<sup>91a</sup> The people of Mewat along with their leader Sambar Pal, a chieftain ruling over Kotla area (who came to be known later on as Bahadur Nadir) were particularly subjected to forcible conversion to Islam.<sup>92</sup> Despite this, the Mewatis continued to oppose various administrative and military measures of the Delhi Sultans.

Firuz died on September 21, 1388 and was succeeded by his grandson under the title of Ghiyasuddin Tughlaq. This arrangement was not acceptable to his uncle Sultan Muhammad. Consequently a strong force under Malik Firoz Ali and Bahadur Nadir was sent to chase Muhammad in the Sirmur Hills (Sept-Oct, 1388) but without any result for Muhammad ultimately took refuge in the fort of Nagarkot.<sup>93</sup> Ghiyasuddin was followed (in 1389) by Abu Bakr Shah who ruled for a very short period. Bahadur Nadir, the ruler of Kotla, on behalf of Abu Bakr also took up arms against Sultan Muhammad many a time but was defeated.<sup>94</sup> After the death of Muhammad, the chaos which followed, greatly suited Bahadur Nadir's ambitious designs. Against Nasiruddin Mahmud, the next ruler, Nadir supported the cause of Muqarrab Khan, another claimant to the throne of Delhi and accordingly was placed in-charge-of the old fort of Delhi.<sup>95</sup> But Taimur's invasion which followed shortly compelled him to fall back upon his original territory at Kotla and keep a watch on the political happenings at Delhi. Taimur who valued Nadir's friendship, sent his envoys Saiyyid Samsuddin and Alauddin Nayab Shaikh Kokari for negotiations and did not attack his territory.<sup>96</sup>

In the reign of Nasiruddin Mahmud, Sarang Khan - the Governor of Dipalpur, marched on to Delhi but was checked by the Panipat governor, Tatar Khan. In this encounter the former was defeated and compelled to return to Multan.<sup>97</sup> Indri and Karnal then formed single *iqta* and were put under Khawas Khan,<sup>98</sup> while the

administration of *shiqs* like Sonapat, Panipat, Jhajjar, Rohtak were under the control of Nasiruddin Nusrat Shah.<sup>98a</sup>

Thus on the eve of Taimur's invasion towards the close of the fourteenth century, Haryana presented a picture of complete chaos. The court intrigues of the Sultans and the selfish interests of their supporters substantially contributed towards this end. Consequently the extensive empire of the Tughlaqs was narrowed down to a few miles near about Delhi. A contemporary poet has very aptly remarked :<sup>99</sup>

*Hukm Khudāband Ālam*  
*Aj Dehali tā Pālam*

### 3. Taimur's invasion and the aftermath

Taimur's Indian expedition was 'a pure plundering raid with an excellent timetable'.<sup>100</sup> As precisely put in the *Zafarnāma* 'the order was issued that the soldiers were to seize grains wherever they could find it'.<sup>101</sup> Accordingly the soldiers invaded the cities, put houses on fire, captured inhabitants and plundered whatever they could find. No one escaped except religious scholars and Saiyyids.

Taimur crossed the Indus on September 21, 1398 with a formidable force of 92,000 horsemen and within no time subdued most of the Punjab. He thereafter entered Rajasthan and devastating the Bikaner region moved into Haryana along the valley of Ghaggar sometime in the month of November.<sup>102</sup> His historian Sharfuddin makes the following observation of the then conditions of Haryana. He wrote<sup>103</sup> :

...in the precincts of Delhi, the Hindus (this term he uses for the common peasantry) were dominant, and in Haryana robbery was rampant so that the passage of the caravans was difficult. The Jats were assertive everywhere and the people of Samana, Kaithal and Asand burnt their homes and advanced towards Delhi.

Taimur's intention was to plunder Delhi. He therefore took great care in selecting his route, avoiding big cities, and concentrating on small towns and villages where provisions for his soldiers could be easily had.

Taimur entered Haryana via Bhatnir (modern Hanumangarh) which after desperate fighting with the Rajputs ultimately fell into their hands. Timur's first halt in Haryana was at Kinar-i-Hauz-i-ab (bank of a lake)<sup>104</sup> which, according to *District Sirsa Settlement Reports* is presently known as Anna Kai Chhamb, a lake near the town of Rania.<sup>105</sup> The tired general along with his soldiers took a day's rest at this place. Their next march (November 15) was to Sarsuti (Sirsa) via Firozabad. The inhabitants of Sirsuti specialized in the rearing of pigs put a strong resistance and one



of the ablest generals of Timur, Adil Farrash fell fighting with them. The people, finding it very difficult to withstand the charge of Taimur's powerful cavalry for long, were defeated, thousands of them being put to the sword.<sup>106</sup> This was followed by an attack on Fatehabad at a distance of 18 *kos* from Sirsa. The town was captured without any resistance. Most of the people fled to the nearby jungles to save their lives, their cattle, wealth and corn fell into victor's hands, and a large number of the inhabitants who were left behind, were massacred.<sup>107</sup> The forts of Rajab and Ahruni were next invested. At Ahruni the Ahirs offered some resistance, but were soon outnumbered by Taimur's forces, thousands of them were killed many taken prisoners and the town was reduced to ashes.<sup>108</sup>

From Ahruni Taimur marched to Tohana, whose inhabitants the Jats are described by Yazdi as 'having deviated from the path of truth and adopted robbery as their profession'. The people put some opposition and then decided on flight as a result of which nearly 200 were killed and many others were taken prisoners. The attack on Tohana was led by Tokal Bahadur and Maulana Nasiruddin.<sup>109</sup> Many of the Jats and Ahirs took shelter in the sugar cane jungles of Tohana showing thereby that Ghaggar valley was fertile even up to Taimur's times. Thereafter following the Ghaggar Taimur reached Samana. Somewhere in this region he was joined by his other commanders Mahmud and Rustam with their forces whom Taimur had left behind on his way from Kabul to India.<sup>110</sup> The Jats 'a robust race, numerous as ants and locusts, a veritable plague to the merchants and way-fares' offered here a stiff resistance. Small in numbers and inferior in warfare to the Central Asian forces of the invader, they could only make supreme sacrifices in their attempt to defend their territory.<sup>111</sup>

Passing through Pul-Kopla and Pul-Bakran Taimur's forces reached Kaithal.<sup>112</sup> Having plundered the town and massacred the people they next proceeded to Asandh also destroying all the villages lying on the route. The dwellers of Asandh were fire worshippers. Already got scared of the invader the people took to flight to Delhi after destroying their houses.<sup>113</sup> The invading army then reached the Tughlaqpur fort and Salwan<sup>114</sup> and subduing its people next arrived at Panipat (December 3) whose people, as per imperial instructions, had already deserted the place. Timur freely plundered the town and took 1,60,000 mounds of wheat from that place.<sup>115</sup> These plundering expeditions were successful because the inhabitants of Fatehabad, Kaithal, Samana, Asandh and Panipat fled to Delhi in panic and not further east in various parts of the *doab*. Passing through Kanhi Ghazin the invader next halted at the village Palla on the Yamuna (or possibly a branch of it) where his army was ordered to collect provisions for men and fodder for horses and cattle.<sup>116</sup> Delhi, the imperial capital was next attacked whose ruler Nasiruddin Mahmud Shah was defeated on December 16, 1398.<sup>117</sup>

Taimur's invasion, although lasted for a very short duration (about a month or so) produced disastrous consequences. The people lost all faith in the efficacy of the



administration to protect their lives and property against foreign invasion. There is no doubt that the people of Haryana offered resistance and at every step obstructed Taimur's march to Delhi, but in the absence of imperial help they could not hold their own against the well-equipped Central Asian army. The only thing they could do was to lay their lives in hundreds and thousands in course of action. The weakness of the central authority thus became apparent and discontent widespread.

Many a adventurer sprang up during this period and occupied whatever territory they could. When Taimur departed, Haryana was held by Daulat Khan who was defeated later on by Khizr Khan (the *mugta* of Dipalpur whom Taimur had nominated to look after his conquered territory) near Fatehabad.<sup>118</sup> Khizr Khan now distributed his newly conquered territory among his supporters, Hisar-Firuzah for instance, was assigned to Qiwan Khan.<sup>119</sup> Sultan Mahmud who still retained Rohtak besieged Hisar-Firuzah and succeeded in wresting it from Qiwan Khan.<sup>120</sup> Khizr Khan's retaliatory action followed in 1410, when he laid siege to Rohtak for six months and forced Malik Idri, Sultan Mahmud's officer, to surrender.<sup>121</sup> Khizr Khan, whose military prestige was now considerably increased, occupied most of Haryana including Narnaul and Jhajjar which he had recovered from Bahadur Nadir.<sup>122</sup> After the death of Sultan Mahmud in 1412 began Khizr Khan's struggle with Daulat Khan for the capture of Delhi in which he ultimately succeeded, defeating his formidable rival and putting him in imprisonment in the fort at Hisar-Firuzah.<sup>123</sup> He occupied the throne of Delhi in 1414, and became the founder of a new dynasty—the Saiyyids.

#### 4. The Lodi Innovations

The disruptive tendencies which were already at work went out of control under Khizr Khan's successors. The Mewatis for instance, foiled the expeditions of Mubarak Shah (1421-33)<sup>124</sup> and under Muhammad Shah (1434-43) carried the disorder up to the gates of Delhi while the Ulama and the Amirs actually invited Mahmud Khalji of Malwa in 1440 to invade the capital.<sup>125</sup> Although the Sultan with the help of Bahlol Lodi, the capable Governor of Punjab, managed to keep off Khalji, he could not save the Sultanate from disintegration. Ala-ud-din Alam Shah, the last of the Saiyyids who succeeded to the throne in 1443, was a highly incompetent ruler having little hold over the *amirs* and other chiefs. These rapid changes in the Delhi Sultanate were being watched very carefully by Bahlol who struck at a right moment and ascended the throne of Delhi on April 19, 1451. He established some kind of tribal oligarchy by inviting a large number of Afghans to settle in the country making them liberal Zamindari grants. During his reign prince Nizam Khan (later Sikandar Lodi) suppressed the revolt of Tatar Khan Yusuf Khail, the master of all the *sarkars* to the west of Delhi—Sirhind, Hisar-Firuzah, Samana, Lahore and Dipalpur.<sup>126</sup> In a battle fought near Ambala, Tatar Khan despite his stubborn resistance was defeated and slain.<sup>127</sup>



Nizam Khan who succeeded Bahlol on 16th July, 1489 was fanatical in religious matters. His regime though otherwise successful in certain respects, was marred by his intolerance towards non-Muslims. The *Tabaqāt-i-Abkārī* of Nizamuddin Ahmad refers to Sikandar's plan to visit Kurukshetra for the massacre of the Hindu population there. It relates :<sup>128</sup>

In his younger days, i.e., when he (Nizam Shah) was still the Shahzadah, heard that there was a reservoir in Thanesar where Hindus assembled and bathed. He asked the learned men 'What is the order of the law of the Prophet in this matter?' They said, 'It is not lawful to lay waste ancient idol temples and it does not rest with you to prohibit ablution in a reservoir which has been customary from ancient times?' The Shahzadah put his hand on his dagger and attempted to slay that learned man (Maulana Abdullah Ajudhani) and said, 'You take the side of the heather'. That wise man said, 'I only say what has come down in the Law of the Prophet, and I am not afraid to tell the truth'.

This produced the desired effect. The Sultan was pacified and his plan was abandoned. Although born of a Hindu mother Sikandar's attitude towards Hindu religion appears rather baffling. His fanatical zeal is further revealed in the destruction of images of Nagarkot which he gave to butchers for weighing meat.

The contemporary sources<sup>129</sup> provide us with details of the measures which the first two Lodis took for the efficiency of the administration. It provides us the names of the officers of various administrative units under Bahlol and Sikandar. These were Tatar Khan and Sikandar Khan (Hissar), Ibrahim Sur (Narnaul), Umar Khan (Shahbad and Payal), Mathi Sur (in-charge of a small Jagir near Hansi—Hissar) and Daria Khan (Panipat). These appointments were made by Bahlol.<sup>130</sup> The *Shiqdars* Sikandar were Mian Emad (in-charge of Samasabad, Thanesar, Shahbad), Sulaiman under (Jalesar and Indri), Ali Khan (Mahavan), Usman (Jhajjar), Shaikh Saiyyid (Hansi), Hasan Khan (Mewat), the widow of Khan-i-Jahan and his minor son (a jagir near Kaithal) while Panipat continued to be under Darya Khan.<sup>131</sup>

The most prominent local states of Haryana during this period were those of Kaithal and Mewat. The former was ruled by Mohan Singh Mandhar—leader of Mandahar, Jats and Rajputs, who had his headquarters at Kalayat. The Mandhars offered stiff resistance to Sikandar in the region adjoining Jind and Kalayat; wherein Sikandar's Commander Jalaluddin was badly wounded.<sup>132</sup> The valient Mandhars had to submit before the numbers of the Sultan's army. But they were not vanquished and again put up stiff opposition to the advance of Babur.

The people of Mewat, as stated earlier, were probably converted to Islam during the reign of Firuz Tughlaq. Under the later Tughlaqs Bahadur Nadir, The leader of Mewat, played prominent role in the politics of Delhi. He was treated a rebel chief by

Muhammad Tughlaq II and Nasiruddin Mahmud Tughlaq and consequently although his territories were plundered several times by the imperial forces, Nadir continued resistance by occupying a strategical position in Jhirka and making inroads into environs of Delhi.<sup>133</sup> After Taimur's invasion, Nahir opposed Khizr Khan's claims to suzerainty even though his main fortress of Katila was razed to the ground in 1421.<sup>134</sup>

Saiyyid Mubarak Shah who succeeded Khizr Khan despatched in 1424 an expedition to ravage rebellious Mewatis who preferred to lay waste their land and took refuge in the hilly area of Jahara and forced the imperial forces to retreat.<sup>135</sup> Mubarak repeated his attacks on Mewat in 1425, 1427 and 1428. Jallu and Kaddu, the grandsons of Nadir put up stiff resistance. Following the same tactics this time they retreated to Indor, a place of their refuge in Tijara Hills. Indor was captured and Kaddu was put to death in 1427.<sup>136</sup> Although Jallu continued resistance Mubarak carried fire and sword throughout their land and forced the Mewatis to come to terms.<sup>137</sup>

In 1451, Bahlol led his army against Ahmad Khan Mewati who offered resistance for sometime but had to surrender ultimately and was forced to send his uncle Mubarak Khan to the Delhi Court.<sup>138</sup> He was also deprived of his seven parganas but was allowed to retain the rest of the land as tributary but when it was noticed that he had supported the cause of Husain Shah of Jaunpur against Bahlol, he was forced to submit after immense losses.<sup>139</sup> During Sikandar Lodi's reign Alam Khan Mewati was a respectable noble at Delhi Court. In the period of confusion following the rebellion of Ibrahim's officers, Hasan Khan Mewati declared his independence. He carved out an extensive kingdom of his own which included the entire Mewat, portions of Gurgaon, Narnaul, parts of Kanod and the area round about Alwar.<sup>140</sup> He had a standing army of 10,000 Mewatis and his friendship was desired by the Sultans as well as by the Rajput chiefs. Although not every happy with Ibrahim, Hasan Khan remained faithful to the Sultanate and supported the imperial forces in the first battle of Panipat.

The last of the Lodi's Ibrahim was a worthless tyrant who estranged many nobles of the court and helped the forces of disintegration which were already at work. After Tarain, the fate of the country was once again decided in 1526 on the battle field of Panipat where Ibrahim Lodi met his end. And Haryana passed on to its new masters—the Mughals.

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## CHAPTER-VII

# *The Mughals (1526-1707)*

### 1. The First Battle of Panipat

Situated between Lahore and Delhi, Haryana had been the scene of battles throughout the medieval period. Almost every invader penetrating Indian territory from the west and aiming at the capture of Delhi had to fight his way through this region. This was perhaps the primary consideration which Babur had in his mind on the eve of the first battle of Panipat which consequently led to the foundation of the Mughal empire.

Ibrahim, the Lodi Sultan of Delhi, due to his overbearing nature alienated a number of Afghan nobles—the mainstay of his power in India, further creating suspicion in their minds concerning his intentions. Consequently Daulat Khan, the Governor of Punjab and Alam Khan (Sikandar Lodi's brother) were led to invite Babur to invade India<sup>1</sup> which, for an adventurer like Babur was indeed a golden opportunity.

Daulat Khan planned to capture Delhi and Agra; and in it quite a number of Afghan Amirs such as Ghazi Khan, Ismail Jilwani, Sulaiman Shaikhzada and Alam Khan joined him.<sup>2</sup> Alam Khan personally met Babur at Kabul who, sent some of his nobles with the former to assess the situation. They captured Sialkot, Lahore and adjacent areas and reported back to Babur who accordingly started on his Indian expedition on December 16, 1525.<sup>3</sup> Alam Khan's view was that since the Mughals were invited by him, Delhi should be assigned to him after its capture.<sup>4</sup> This was not acceptable to the Mughals. Consequently Alam Khan separated from the Mughals and with an army of 40,000 horsemen moved towards Delhi and laid siege to it.<sup>5</sup> Sultan Ibrahim who was also not unaware of these moves, decided to march towards Delhi at the head of a huge army consisting of eighty thousand soldiers. Although receiving reverses in the initial encounter Ibrahim finally succeeded in defeating Alam Khan forcing him to flee towards Panipat and Indri, the latter also being deserted by a number of his Afghan nobles.<sup>6</sup> Alam Khan, while he was passing through Sirhind with Dilawar Khan, heard the news of Babur's advance and capture of Milwat. Mir Khalifa persuaded Alam Khan to join Babur, the latter received him well. Later on Daulat Khan and Dilawar Khan also joined.<sup>7</sup>

Babur, who had already started his Indian expedition, followed the route via Sialkot, Lahore, Kalanaur, Milwat, Dun, Danur, Banur, Samana and Sunam.<sup>8</sup> At the last mentioned place, he learnt about Ibrahim's march towards Panipat, and the military movements of Hammid Khan, the *shiqdar* of Hisar-i-Firuzah.<sup>9</sup> Ibrahim was also assisted by Husan Khan, the *shiqdar* of Mewat.<sup>10</sup> For the assessment of enemies' position Babur immediately despatched his envoys Kitta Beg and Munim Ataka to Panipat and Hisar-i-Firuzah respectively.<sup>11</sup> Reaching Ambala (February, 1526), the invading army engaged the enemy at Hodal where Humayun defeated Hammid Khan. It was Humayun's 'first affair, first experience of battle and an excellent omen'.<sup>12</sup> The Mughals occupied Hisar which Babur presented to Humayun to remain as his personal *jagir*.<sup>13</sup> From Ambala the army marched to Shahbad and then advancing along the bank of the river Yamuna reached Karnal. After a short stay at Gharaunda Babur led his armies to Panipat (April 12, 1526) the battle field where he was to meet Ibrahim Lodi.<sup>14</sup>

Babur arranged his armies in such a way that 'on his right was the town of Panipat with its suburbs, in front the carts (700) and mantelets (shields), on the left and elsewhere ditch and branch'. Ustad Aliquli was ordered that the carts should be joined together in Ottoman fashion with slight modification of using ropes of raw hide instead of chains, and that between every two carts 5 or 6 mantelets should be fixed, behind which the match lockmen were to stand and fire.<sup>15</sup>

During the interval before the actual start of the battle small parties of the Mughals attacked the enemy's camp very closely. At the advice of his Hindustani well-wishers Babur followed it up by a night attack. As it was very dark the Mughals mistakably reached very close to the enemy's camp but fortunately escaped unhurt. Humayun too made an advance along with his troops but received no response from the otherside.<sup>16</sup>

On Friday, April 20, came the news that the enemy was advancing in fighting array. Babur divided his army of 12,000 horsemen and numerous Afghan and Turk adventurers into vanguard, left wing, right wing and the centre. The *Baburnāma* provides the names of the commanders of various wings of the army. In the right were placed Humayun, Khwaja Kalan, Sultan Muhammad Duldai, Hindu Beg etc., while the left was led by Si. Mirza Mahdi Khwaja, Adil Sultan, Shah Mir Husain, Si. Junaid and others. The right of the centre was protected specially by Chin-timur Sultan and Sulaiman Mirza, while the left's responsibility was shouldered by Khalifa Khwaja Mir-i-miran. The advance and the reserve were respectively in the charge of Khusrau and Abdul Aziz—the masters of the horses. The turning party (*tulghuma*) at the point of right and left wings were accordingly arranged.<sup>17</sup>

The Afghan army, estimated about 100,000 men with about 1000 elephants, consisted mostly of mercenaries much inferior to the Mughals in discipline, training and valour and their supreme commander Ibrahim, no match to Jahiruddin Babur in respect of organization, planning and military strategy. Ibrahim's short comings have



been very aptly commented upon by Babur. He observed, 'how should he (Ibrahim) content his braves when he was ruled by avarice and had a craving insatiable to pile coin on coin? He was an unproved brave; he provided nothing for his military operation, he perfected nothing, nor stand, nor move, nor fight'.<sup>18</sup> At another occasion when being asked by Darwish-i-muhammad Sarban 'With such precautions taken, how is it possible for him to come?' Babur replied, 'Are you likening him to the Auzbeg Khans and Sultans? In what of movement under arms or of planned operations is he to be compared with them?'<sup>19</sup>

The battle began with the advance of Ibrahim's army towards Babur's right wing but was taken aback and slackened by the front line defences (of the enemy) reinforced by the right-reserve Abdul-aziz. Babur made second attack. His turning parties wheeled round and discharged arrows on the rear, right and left of the enemy forces. His right and left engaged the advancing enemy forces. The Afghans plan was to concentrate on Babur's right wing in order to sever his connection with the city, and pierce through the centre. But Babur's repeated pushing of fresh troops into that wing foiled enemy's attack. The match-lock of Ustad Ali Quli Khan and the canons of Mustafa brought havoc among the Afghan forces.<sup>20</sup>

The final scene of the battle is thus described in *Baburnāma*<sup>21</sup> :

Our right, left, centre and turning parties having surrounded the enemy, rained arrows down on him and fought ungrudgingly. He made one or two small charges on our right and left but under our men's arrows, fell back on his own centre. His right and left were massed in such a crowd that they could neither move forward against us nor force a way nor flight.

*The Tārīkh-i-Salātīn-i-Afghānā*, a valuable source of information for the desperate fight of the Afghans, relates<sup>22</sup> :

Many of Sultan's soldiers were killed. He himself was standing with some of his men near him, when Mahmud Khan came forward, and said, 'our affairs are in a very desperate condition; you had better leave the field of battle. If the king is saved, it will be easy to find another army, and again make war against the Mughals. We shall soon be able to find an opportunity of accomplishing our wishes. This is my opinion; but whatever His Majesty thinks is best'. The Sultan replied, 'O Mahmud Khan, it is a disgrace for kings to fly from the field of battle. Look here, my nobles, my companions, my well-wishers and friends have partaken of the cup of martyrdom, one has fallen here, another there, where then can I now go? My horses' legs are dyed with blood up to his chest. Whilst I was king, I governed the empire as I pleased; now, perfidious Fortune has sided with the Mughals, what pleasure is there in life? It is better that I should be like my friends, in the dust and in blood'. [Thus making his final say, the Sultan, along with his five thousand brave horsemen (the remnant of his



imperial army) rushed into the thickest of the battle, slew many of the Mughal and finally towards the close of the day obtained martyrdom.]

The *Tārīkh-i-Salāṭīn-i-Afghāna* also gives us an idea of Afghan attitude to the battle and the excellent treatment which the victor offered to his fallen enemy.<sup>23</sup> We are told that astrologers foretold Ibrahim's defeat; and that his men though greatly outnumbering Babur's, were dispirited and disheartened because of his ill treatment of them, and his *amirs* displeased with him, but that nevertheless, the conflict of Panipat was more desperate than had ever been seen.<sup>24</sup> It further adds that 'Ibrahim fell where his tomb now is; that Babur went to the spot and, prompted by his tender heart lifted up the head of his dead adversary, and said 'Honour to your courage', ordered brocade and sweetmeats made ready, enjoined Dilawar Khan and Khalifa to bathe the corpse and to bury it where it lay.'<sup>25</sup> It shows that although having a very poor opinion of his adversary as a military leader, Babur was greatly moved by the courage shown by him in the last moments. Ibrahim died a heroic death.

It was also one of the dying regrets of Sher Shah to have erected a monument in the memory of Ibrahim Lodi and another one in the opposite direction for the Chagtai Sultans despatched to martyrdom by him, both constructed with such architectural embellishments, that friend and foe might render their tribute of applause, and his name might remain honoured upon earth until the day of resurrection.<sup>26</sup>

Like the second battle of Tarain (1192), the first battle of Panipat (1526) was also a decisive battle. Not only did it seal the fate of the first Afghan empire but also that of Haryana which passed on to the Mughals for centuries to come.

According to the *Tārīkh-i-Salāṭīn-i-Afghāna* Babur stayed for about seven days at Panipat. He took possession of Ibrahim's treasury, elephants (1500), horses (27,000) and other warlike implements, and gained the goodwill of eminent persons of the town by showing liberality towards them.<sup>27</sup> Sultan Muhammad Aughuli for his excellent services in the battle was appointed Governor of Panipat with 10,000 horsemen under him and the revenue of one crop was granted for their maintenance.<sup>28</sup> Babur's constructive measures for the town consist of a tomb (in the memory of Ibrahim Lodi), a mosque, a tank and a garden, the last popularly known as *Kabuli Bag*.<sup>29</sup> Babur's next halt was at Sonapat whose people—businessmen, soldiers as well as village elders offered submission to him. All of them were amply rewarded.<sup>30</sup> Babur next encamped near the fort of Indrapat for a little more than a month, as it was a pleasant and agreeable spot.<sup>31</sup>

The establishment of Mughal rule in Haryana did not go unchallenged. Under the leadership of Hamid Khan Sarangkhani, the Afghans in the neighbourhood of Hisar-Firuzah revolted. They were about 3000 to 4000 in numbers. On November 21, 1526 Babur sent a number of his lieutenants Chin-timur Sultan, Ahmadi Parwanchi, Abul Fath Turkman, Malik Dad Kararani and Mujahid Khan of Multan to curb Afghan disturbances. Both the armies met near Hisar. The Mughal attack was so



sudden that the Afghan had to give way, many fled and the rest put to death. Hisar was thus brought into complete submission.<sup>32</sup>

Mewat was next to revolt. Its ruler Hasan Khan Mewati had sent his son Nahar Khan to assist Ibrahim in the first battle of Panipat. After the battle was over Nahar Khan fell into Babur's hands who was kept as an hostage. Some of his councillors suggested Babur that if Nahar Khan is released unconditionally Hasan Khan would be more favourably disposed to him. But this move proved to be of no avail. Hasan Khan not only disregarded Babur's favours, but created further disturbance and joined Rana Sanga. Babur in his *Memoirs* also expresses repentance for this tactical mistake. He further complains of the former Sultans, for not being able to establish order in Mewat and to bring it under their complete subjection.<sup>33</sup>

That it was not simply a war of the Hindus against the Muhammadans but a united national effort against a common enemy of the country becomes clear from the following extract recorded by Ahmad Yadgir in his *Tārīkh-i-Salāṭin-i-Afghāna*. He writes :<sup>34</sup>

Rana Sanga who was at that time a powerful chief sent a message to Hasan Khan saying "The Mughals have entered Hindustan, have slain Sultan Ibrahim, and taken possession of the country; it is evident that they will likewise send an army against both of us; if you will side with me we will be alive, and not suffer them to take possession. [And Hasan Khan agreed to this proposal].

True to his word the valiant Hasan Khan Mewati, along with his 12,000 troops, laid his life in fighting the invader at the battle of Khanwa (March 17, 1527). But when after the battle Hasan Khan's son, Nahar Khan asked for peace Babur showed magnanimity in restoring him to favour and bestowing on him a *jagir* of a few parganas worth several lakhs for his support.<sup>35</sup> Tijara town, the seat of power of the Mewatis was given to Chin-Timur together with an allowance of 50 laks for maintenance.<sup>36</sup>

The people of Kaithal were also not to lag behind. Under the leadership of a Rajput Mohan Mundahir they revolted. The *Tārīkh-i-Salāṭin-i-Afghāna* provides for the first time, details of Babur's punitive expedition to Kaithal sent from Sirhind against Mohan at the complaint of the Qazi of Samana.<sup>37</sup> Although missing in the text of *Baburnāmā* the passage, as rightly pointed out by Beveridge, 'in its precision of details bespeaks a closely contemporary written source'.<sup>38</sup> The learned scholar adds : 'In view of the vicissitudes to which under Humayun the royal library was subjected, it would be difficult to assert that this source was not the missing continuation of Babur's diary'.<sup>39</sup>

Babur while returning from Lahore received a complaint at Sirhind of Mohan Mundahir's attacking, burning and plundering of the estates of the Qazi of Samana and killing his son. Babur ordered Aliquli of Hamadan to advance towards Mohan's

village (in the Kaithal tehsil of Kurukshetra district) with 3000 horses. Extreme cold season made fighting very difficult. The archers could not pull their bows. They fought their best but could not stand the brave villagers led by Mohan. After hearing of this discomfiture Babur sent a reinforcement of 6000 horses and many elephants with Tarsam Bahadur and Naurang Beg. Reaching Mohan's village at night they planned their strategy. They divided themselves into three divisions of which one was to attack the enemy from the west side of the village. Accordingly, when this division made an attack, the villagers made counter attack and came forward. The Mughal forces having decided to play deceit turned back and fled, allowing the Mundahirs to follow them about two miles away from their village. This offered Tarsam Bahadur the desired opportunity to attack the remaining inhabitants of the village and to put it on fire. The terrible sight of their village compelled the Mundahirs to return only to get entrapped. The Mughals, known for their barbarity, punished the revolting Mundahirs severely. About 1000 of their men, women and a children were made prisoners. Some of them were slain, and a pillar of their heads was raised. Their leader, Mohan was captured and later on buried to the waist and shot to death with arrows.<sup>40</sup>

After Sirhind, Babur is said to have spent two months hunting near Delhi. It may be, as pointed out by Beveridge, that 'he followed up the punitive expedition to Kaithal by hunting in Nardak (in Kurukshetra), a favourite ground of the Timurids.'<sup>41</sup>

For the smooth running of administration Babur divided Haryana into four *sarkars* namely, Sirhind, Hisar-i-Firuzah, Delhi and Miwat. This besides, he appointed his faithful officer Ahsan Taimur and Bughra Sultan to look after the *jagir* of Narnaul and Samsabad respectively.<sup>42</sup> That these *sarkars* were a prosperous and cultivated tract of land becomes clear for the following revenue figures as gathered from the *Baburnāmā* :<sup>43</sup>

Sarkar	Krurs	Laks	Tankas
Sirhind	1	29	31,985
Hisar-i-Firuzah	1	30	75,174
Delhi and Mian Doab	3	69	50,254
Miwat	1	69	81,000

## 2. The short lived empire

Humayun who succeeded Babur on December 26, 1530 appointed his brothers Mirza Hindal and Mirza Kamran as governors of Miwat and Sirhind-Hisar respectively. But this proved to be suicidal for the very existence of the newly founded empire. While Humayun was busy fighting the Afghans at Gaur, Hindal revolted.



Sher Khan defeated Humayun at Chausa (1539) and assumed the title of Sher Shah; at Bilgram (1540) he finally routed Humayun and expelled him out of the empire.<sup>44</sup>

A tradition recalls Humayun's visit to Fatehabad on his way to Amarkot. On hearing the *Muazzim's* call to prayer Humayun made a stop over in order to offer his prayers in the nearby mosque which since then is known after him. The walls of *idgah* contain two of his epigraphs.<sup>45</sup> Sher Khan too while pursuing Humayun, passed through this region. At his camp at Thanesar, the theft of an army horse was reported to him. He then ordered the presence of all neighbouring zamindars to find out the culprit failing which to face the consequences. It had the desired effect. Soon the culprit was brought before him and was immediately put to death. The anecdote not only shows the efficiency of Sher Shah's military administration but also the importance of Thanesar, a leading town in Haryana, as a halting station for the troops on their way to Lahore.<sup>46</sup> The Mughal empire, so laboriously founded by Babur, disappeared within a short time under his unworthy successor. And with it Haryana once again passed on to the Afghan rule.

### 3. The Sur administrative reforms

Haryana was the ancestral home of Sher Shah. His grandfather Ibrahim Khan Sur who came from Afghanistan, served under Jamal Khan Sarang Khani of Hisar-Firuzah who bestowed on him 'several villages in *pargana* Narnaul for the maintenance of forty horsemen'.<sup>47</sup> His son, Hasan Khan, entered the service of Umar Khan, Khan-i-azam, the counsellor and courtier of Sultan Bahlol'.<sup>48</sup> Bahlol gave several villages in the *pargana* Shahbad as a *jagir* to Hasan Khan. After Ibrahim's death Hasan Khan succeeded to his father's *jagir* with several additions to it.<sup>49</sup> It was at Narnaul in 1486 that he was blessed with a child named Farid (later famous Sher Shah Sur).<sup>50</sup> Sher Khan, who also served in Haryana under Mathhi Khan and Jamal Khan, later on, built a tomb at Narnaul in the memory of his grandfather Ibrahim Khan.<sup>51</sup> A perfect example of square tomb of the Pathan style it was constructed under the supervision of Shaikh Ahmad Niyazi.<sup>52</sup>

It was but natural for Sher Shah to extend his administrative measures also to Haryana, his home province. As before Haryana remained divided into four *sarkars*: Delhi, Mewat, Hisar and Sirhind. The important administrative officers were *Shiqdar-e-Shiqdaran* (Chief military-officer), *Munsif-e-Munshifan* (chief judicial-officer), *Shiqdar* (in-charge of *pargana*), *Munsif* (judicial and revenue administrator of *pargana*), *Quamungo* (record-officer), *Knajanchi* (treasurer). Village, the smallest administrative unit, was looked after by the *panchayat*, *mukaddam* and *patwari*. The imperial land revenue system of Sher Shah was similarly introduced in Haryana also.<sup>53</sup> Sher Shah was careful in making new appointments. Haji Khan was placed in-charge of the region of Mewat, while Khawas Khan was appointed *subedar* of Sirhind who appointed Malik Bhagawant as his representative there.<sup>54</sup>

Sher Shah's public welfare activities specially construction of roads and *sarais* also benefitted this region. The largest of his roads (about 1580 *krohs*) which ran from Sonargaon to the Indus passed through Haryana. Trees were planted on both sides of the roads and *sarais* were built at intervals of every two *krohs* providing separate accommodation for Hindus as well as Muslims. For the up-keep of the *sarais*, villages were granted by the state. Every *sarai* had a well, a mosque, and a staff consisting of an *imam*, a *muazzim* and a number of watermen, all paid out of the income of the lands attached to the *sarais*.<sup>55</sup> Ruins of Sher Shah's *sarais* are still to be seen in the town of Thanesar while towards the north on the Sarasvati there are remains of an old bridge which is said to have been constructed by that ruler. These *sarais*, in fact, worked as *dak chowkis* through which news came to the emperor from the western most parts of his empire. Besides administrative importance, the *sarais* must have developed into trade centres as well.

The accidental death of Sher Shah at Kalanjar on May 17, 1545 resulted in a war of succession between his sons, Adil Khan and Jalal Khan. The former, who was elder and the heir-apparent, was supported by influential *amirs* like Khawas Khan and Qutab Khan. The younger, who had already crowned himself with the title of Islam Shah decided to settle the issue in the battlefield, and came out successful ultimately. But he became suspicious of Haibat Khan Niyazi, the Governor of Punjab and the supporter of his rival. Haibat Khan was also joined in by Khawas Khan and other Niyazi nobles. An agreement was reached between them to dethrone Islam Shah. Haibat Khan Niyazi thus raised the standard of revolt and many disgruntled noble of the court also joined him.<sup>56</sup>

The two forces met near Ambala. The cause of the new confederacy was doomed because of sharp differences among the confederates. Haibat Khan himself wanted to become the King while Khawas Khan who pleaded the cause of Adil Khan decided to withdraw from the contest leaving the Niyazis to their fate. The result of the battle was now a foregone conclusion. Although the Niyazis fought bravely, they were ultimately overpowered and defeated and were pursued up to Rohtas.<sup>57</sup>

The disintegration of the Afghan empire soon after the death of Islam Shah offered Humayun a golden opportunity to regain his Indian possessions. Leaving Kabul in November, 1554 and following the route via Peshawar and Kalanur, Humayun occupied Lahore in February, 1555. He had already despatched a strong force under Bairam Khan towards Haryana which was then under Nasib Khan.<sup>58</sup>

Whatever resistance the Afghans offered was put down by the Mughals. The initial success of the Mughals forced Sultan Sikandar (a nephew of Sher Shah who was in possession both of Delhi and Agra at the time of Humayun's return march) for a decisive action. In the two battles at Bajra and Sirhind the Mughals defeated their rivals, the Afghans.<sup>59</sup> Sultan Sikandar fled towards the Siwaliks and thus Punjab and Haryana up to Delhi came into Humayun's possession. He ascended the throne of Delhi on July 23, 1555.



#### 4. Empire re-founded (The Second Battle of Panipat)

Akbar received the news of Humayun's death at Kalanaur (in Punjab). Immediately after his accession on February 14, 1556, Akbar had to deal with the Afghans, who although subdued, were not completely vanquished. One of their leaders Sikandar Shah along with his men wandered in the hills near Ambala with the hope that fortune might turn in his favour and enable him to regain the throne which his uncle Sher Shah had occupied with so much distinction. The rival claims could be settled only by the sword. After the capture of Delhi, Akbar returned to Sirhind and then pursued Sikandar until May 1557 when the latter finally submitted.<sup>60</sup>

The unstable conditions under Sher Shah's incompetent successors brought Hemu, a Hindu chief of Rewari (in Mewat) to prominence. Born at Qutbpur in the Dhusar caste of the *baniya* or mercantile class Hemu's early life was full of hardships and difficulties. As his father Puran Das had renounced worldly life, Hemu had to earn livelihood by selling salt and acting as weighman.<sup>61</sup> He soon became a government contractor and rose to the position of *Shahana-i-Bazar* (superintendent of markets) and then later on held the position of Chief of Intelligence and *Daroga-Dak-hoki*.<sup>62</sup> He was appointed prime-minister under Adil Shah, and was known to have won twenty-two victories for his master.<sup>63</sup> In spite of the disadvantages of his belonging to a merchant community and 'puny form', Hemu justified his sovereign's confidence by proving himself 'an able general and ruler of men'. At the time of Humayun's return march to recapture his lost throne, Adil Shah sent Hemu to oppose him, while he himself retired to Chunar.<sup>64</sup> At the time of Humayun's death Hemu thus remained in the field on behalf of Adil Shah 'to prevent Akbar from taking effective possession of his father's kingdom'.

After his accession Akbar promoted Tardi Beg (one of the most influential and experienced officers under Humayun), to the rank of commander of 5,000 and appointed him as Governor of Delhi<sup>65</sup> and also kept under his control the affairs of Mewat and other *parganas* which had but lately been brought under royal authority. Capturing Gwalior and Agra, Hemu proceeded to Delhi.<sup>66</sup> Tardi Beg, the governor, seized with consternation, sent express messages to all the Mughal chiefs in the neighbourhood to come to his aid. Hemu charged Tardi with such impetuosity that he compelled him to quit the field. The right wing of the Mughals was routed, flight became general, and the city of Delhi surrendered. Tardi Beg fled to Sirhind, leaving the whole country open to the enemy.<sup>67</sup> Hemu captured 160 elephants, 1000 Arab horses and an immense quantity of valuable booty of the Mughals.<sup>68</sup>

The decisive victory over Tardi Beg and the capture of Delhi and Agra considerably enhanced Hemu's political power and stimulated his imperial ambition. Commenting on this aspect of Hemu's career V.A. Smith wrote :<sup>69</sup>

Hemu . . . now began to reflect that his sovereign was a long way off, that he

himself was in possession of the army and elephants, and that it might be better to gain a kingdom for his own benefit rather than that of his absent employer. Accordingly, he distributed the spoil, excepting the elephants, among the Afghans who accompanied him and thus won them over to his side. With their concurrence he entered Delhi, raised the imperial canopy over his own head, and exercised the most cherished privilege of sovereignty by striking coin in his name. He assumed the style of Raja Bikramajit or Vikramāditya, which had been borne by several of the most renowned Hindu monarchs in ancient times, and so entered the field as a competitor for the throne of Hindustan against both Akbar and Sikandar Sur. While writing to his nominal sovereign Adil Shah, he concealed his usurpation and pretended to be acting in his master's name.

The Muslim chronicles,<sup>70</sup> the basis of Smith's observation have greatly distorted Hemu's character, ridiculing his humble origin and uncommon physique and highlighting his selfishness although admitting his courage, dairing and capacity to rule. The chronicles present a unfair portrayal of this remarkable figure of medieval India which rose to prominence by 'sheer force of genius'. As very aptly remarked by K. Qanungo :<sup>70a</sup>

No religious animosity marred the project of a common resistance to the Mughals under the leadership of Hemu. Haji Khan Pathān contributed to Hemu's victory over Tardi Beg in the battle of Tughlaqabad by timely resistance, and Hemu's defeat in the second battle of Panipat was a mere accident of war, namely, the capture of his artillery a few days before by Ali Quli Khan-Zaman, and the loss of his own eyes in the battle. No Hindu had ever been covered with so many glorious wounds on the field of battle except Maharana Sanga; no Rajput wielded the sword so bravely against foreign invaders as this humble Hemu of Rewari did on the field of Panipat.

Akbar who received the news of the disaster at Tughlaqabad on October 13, 1556 at Jullundhur decided to proceed to Delhi. He already sent a *firman* to Tardi Beg and other officers 'directing them to keep up their hearts and to stand firm' and that, as a matter of extreme caution 'assemble at the town of Thanesar and there await the arrival of the imperial army'.<sup>71</sup> Next day Akbar moved from Jullundhur and encamped at Sirhind where Ali Quli Khan Shaibani and other defeated officers who had not received the imperial order, were dealt with.<sup>72</sup> Tardi Beg, on the charge of abandoning his position without adequate reason and his disgracefully feeble resistance, was executed soon after his arrival at Sirhind.<sup>73</sup> The imperial army next reached Thanesar. The census of the army at Thanesar showed that Mughals had about 26,000 horsemen. Badagh Khan with 4000 horsemen was sent as an advance party and was directed 'to keep always one march ahead of the emperor'.<sup>74</sup> Akbar halted at



Thanesar for a few days. It was at this juncture that he received the blessings of the famous Saint Shaikh Jalal. Ahmad Yadgar in his *Tārīkh-i-Salātin-i-Afghāna* makes particular mention of the interesting dialogue which took place between the saint, Akbar and his regent. He wrote :<sup>75</sup>

Bairam Khan took the prince into the presence of Kutbul Aktab Saiyad Jalal Thanesari and procured him the honour of kissing the feet of that most holy individual. When they were about to depart, they begged him to give them the assistance of his prayers. They said, 'This accused infidel is coming with an army numerous as ants and locusts, it is proper that your holiness should protect the cause of Islam.' The Saiyad reflected for a short time, and then said to them, 'Have you not heard what little boys at play say?' He then dismissed them.

A little different version of the event is given in the *Bibliotheca Indica* text of the *Tārīkh-i-Mubārکشāhi*. It states :<sup>76</sup>

They entreated His Holiness to recite a *Fatiha* soliciting divine assistance on their enterprise. Further, the text makes the saying of the saint more explicit by adding ' *un sun bāniyān, kān pakad āniyān*' which means 'they have displayed hundreds of clever tricks, but have at last come back pinching (or gripping) their ears (with their own fingers in token of abasement and discomfiture).

The incident not only shows the extent of Shaikh Jalal's reputation but also how Akbar and his regent were anxious to seek the blessings of a saint like the Shaikh for victory in the battle against Hemu.

The location of the battle-field where Mughals fought the Afghans for the second time has been a matter of considerable difference of scholarly opinion. On the basis of contemporary and other sources G. Khurana has re-examined the issue recently.<sup>77</sup> Al-Badaoni mentions a place named Kharmanda which Hemu reached after starting from Panipat (which shows that the battle could not have been fought at Panipat proper).<sup>78</sup> Abul Fazl mentions plain of Sarai Kaharunda/Karunda.<sup>79</sup> H. Beveridge who sees a close identity in the places mentioned by the above Muslim historians, and further equates it with Kharkhuda (which was then included in the Delhi *Sarkar*, and is presently in the Rohtak district).<sup>80</sup> But the learned scholar himself had doubts about the validity of his second suggestion on the ground that Akbar marched to Panipat from Jullundhur following the route via Thanesar and Karnal, the place in Rohtak district seems too far south.<sup>81</sup> Ahmad Yadgar although does not name the place but mentions Hemu's setting his camp two *kos* west of Panipat.<sup>82</sup> This has been accepted by V.A. Smith<sup>83</sup> and the *Karnal District Gazetteer* (1910).<sup>84</sup>

G. Khurana suggests the identification of Kharamanda with Mehrana (present Madana)<sup>85</sup> mentioned in the revenue records, as situated about five kms southwest of the old town of Panipat.<sup>86</sup> In support of his suggestion the scholar points out the existence of a *Khara* at that place which was popularly known as Karamadana. Further, it is stated that the famous caravan *sarai* (popularly known as Sarai Pilkhan) mentioned by Badaoni is situated near this place (about 3 kms south of Panipat on the highway leading to Delhi and about 2½ kms east of the then Kharamadana).<sup>87</sup> Thus, the battle-field according to Khurana extended from Sarai Pilkhan to Kharamanda and was spread over an area of about two to five kms. southwest of Panipat.<sup>88</sup> To this the scholar tries to find support in the *Tārīkh-i-Salātīn-Afghāna* mentioning the respective positions of the two armies, and concludes that Hemu might have camped his army in the vicinity of the Firozshahi canal (in the west of Panipat) which assured supply of water for his men as well as animals. Kharamanda was situated on the eastern side of the canal and the battle must have fought round it (November 5, 1556).<sup>90</sup>

The suggestion although interesting fails to explain the derivation of the place name Mehrana (Madana) after the original Kaharunda or Karunda on linguistic grounds. The scholar although takes into consideration Kharamanda mentioned by Badaoni completely ignores the variants Kaharunda or Karunda as mentioned by Abul Fazl, or Kharunda of the *Khulasat-Tawārikh*.<sup>91</sup> Is it then identical with Gharaunda where there still exists a *sarai* of that period?

To boost the morale of his soldiers, Bairam Khan gave them an inspiring address followed by presentation of gifts to the notables and promises of future to others. The soldiers were further encouraged when Ahmad Beg, the madman, also made the prediction 'the victory is on our side, but one chief of rank will obtain martyrdom during the fight'.<sup>92</sup>

The battle started with the attack of Hemu's advance guard commanding the artillery and the forces of the Mughal general Ali Quli Khan Shaibani. The Mughals followed all tactics—audacity, deceit and cunning. Consequently, Hemu's advance party was worsted and fled away leaving their guns on the battle-field. Undaunted by this initial reverse, i.e., the loss of artillery, Hemu again advanced with an army comprising of 30,000 Rajput and Afghan horsemen, with 500 armoured elephants mounted by musketeers and cross bowmen. With a lightening speed Hemu attacked the enemy. This was met with stubborn resistance by Ali Quli Khan and his 10,000 horsemen. Hemu's elephant made a furious charge on the right, left and centre of the Mughal army. This did not prove effective as Mughal horsemen wheeled along the sides and fell on Hemu's flanks and rear slashing the elephant's legs and shooting the *mahouts*.<sup>94</sup> Abul Fazl in his *Akbarnāmā* mentions a great ravine which 'even elephants could not cross'.<sup>95</sup> It appears as pointed out by A.L. Srivastava after initial reverses, the Mughals had taken positions across the ravine which not only saved the Mughal centre from the onslaught of Hemu's elephants but also gave it an opportunity to



make an effective use of its arrows and bullets.<sup>96</sup> *Dalpat Vilās*, a Rajasthani work, also mentions the crossing of a *nullah* by the Mughal army on the eve of the battle.<sup>97</sup>

As the onslaught of the enemy forces slackened, Ali Quli Khan made a determined attack on Hemu's rear. Hemu, mounted on a lofty elephant, surveyed the situation, and then rushed to the side of his army which was threatened by the enemy and made counter charges with his elephants. In the action, two of his brave generals—Bhagwan Das and Shadi Khan were killed but the struggle continued with unabated fury. The battle, as if it were a roaring flood, proceeded when an arrow came whizzing and pierced one of Hemu's eyes and came out at the back of his head. He pulled out the barb, bandaged his eye with a scarf and gave orders to continue the battle but soon he fainted and fell down in his howdah which further spread panic and confusion in his army. Hemu's soldiers made no further attempt at resistance and at once scattered in various directions. Hemu's elephant which fled into the jungle was brought back by Shah Kuli Khan and its unconscious ride was placed before the Protector and Akbar.<sup>98</sup> On the combined testimony of Ahmad Yadgar and the Dutch writer Broecke it appears, as rightly pointed out by Smith, that he was beheaded 'his head sent to Kabul to be exposed, and his trunk was gibbeted at one of the gates of Delhi', and that 'the official story of magnanimous sentiment of unwillingness (on Akbar's part) to strike a helpless prisoner' seem to be a late invention of court flatterers.<sup>99</sup>

Hemu's father Purandas and his wife with their property were under the protection of Haji Khan, a slave of Sher Shah. Haji Khan who had no courage to face the imperial forces under Pir Muhammad, fled before their arrival. Consequently, Alwar along with the entire territory of Mewat passed on to the Mughal rule. The fugitives, hotly pursued by the Mughals, proceeded to Dewati-Majari, Hemu's ancestral place and a stronghold, and offered final resistance to the invader before submission.<sup>100</sup> Abul Fazl thus narrates the tragic end of Hemu's father:<sup>101</sup>

He was taken alive and brought before Pir Muhammad who tried to convert him to the faith, but the old man said, 'For eighty years I have worshipped God in the way of my own religion, how can I now forsake my faith'. Shall I, through fear of death embrace your religion without understanding it? Maulana Pir Muhammad treated his question as unheard and gave him an answer with the tongue of the sword.

Hemu's widow escaped to the jungle of Bejawada. The prisons of Delhi and Agra were filled up with hundreds of Hemu's supporters and followers to be released only when Akbar decided to follow a liberal policy in religious matters. Mewat which had been Tardi Beg's *jagir* was conferred on Pir Muhammad, a confidential servant of Bairam Khan.<sup>102</sup>

In 1560 Akbar marched from Delhi to put down the rebellion of Bairam Khan

and the imperial standard was planted at the town of Jhajjar (April 22, 1560).<sup>103</sup> Bairam Khan received the news in the Sarkar Mewat and seeing resistance futile sent all insignia of his office (elephants, standard, kettle-drum etc.) with Husain Quli Beg to be presented to the Emperor at Jhajjar.<sup>104</sup> In 1567, while on his way from Lahore to Agra, Akbar again passed through Haryana and encamped at Thanesar. It was the occasion of a solar eclipse when a great assemblage of people had gathered there. Keshav Puri who was the head of the sect of Puri monks came to the emperor with the complaint that their usual place of camping at Kurukshetra tank where they used to receive alms from the pilgrims, was taken over by the rival sects of the Kura and that a fight between the two was inevitable. Nizamuddin Ahmad<sup>105</sup> and Abul Fazl<sup>106</sup> both have narrated this incident. According to these authorities the quarrel between the rival sects started over the possession of the gold, silver, jewels and valuable stuff, which were thrown into the water by the people or bestowed as gifts upon the Brahmins. Akbar went to the place for investigation. As persuasion failed, he allowed the two sects to fight out the issue. Bows and arrows, swords and stones were fully used in the fight. As the Puris were few in number the fight was unequal. Akbar thereupon lent some of his soldiers 'smeared with ashes' to assist them. The Puris, thus strengthened, killed the rival Mahant, Anand Kur. Although there were many casualties on both the sides, the event appeared to the emperor a mere 'gladiators' sport' for his penegyrist relates that 'the holy heart was highly delighted with it'.<sup>107</sup> The incident which occurred during early years of Akbar's reign, when he had not developed a catholic outlook in religious matters, displays his scant regard for human life and contempt towards other religious faiths.

Apart from this incident the *Akbaranāmā*, however, mentions Kurukshetra as a place of greatest religious importance for the Hindus. It relates :<sup>108</sup>

Near Thanesar is a tank which might be called miniature sea. Formerly there was a wide plain there known as Kurukhet which the ascetics of India have revered from Ancient times. Hindus from various parts of India visit it at stated times and distribute alms, and there is a great concourse.

Mulla Ahmad, although an author of the times of Jahangir, probably refers to the reign of Akbar while contending that 'Islam had become so weak that the Hindus destroyed mosque without fear'.<sup>109</sup> But in support of his statement the solitary instance which he cites is that of Thanesar where the Hindus had destroyed a mosque in the midst of the tank, sacred to the Hindus, and built a temple.<sup>110</sup> The sacred tank mentioned here no doubt stands for the famous Brahmasara but there is absolutely no evidence—literary or archaeological, to show the existence of any mosque in the midst of it before the times of Akbar or that the alleged temple built by the Hindus afterwards. Secondly, it would be difficult to explain why the Hindus should destroy a mosque. It may simply be a charge based on the allegations made by the



orthodox Badaoni and others on Akbar's liberal religious policy. The dominance of this orthodox party may be seen, in the desecration of the celebrated temple of Mahanandi at Nagarkot by the men of Husain Quli Khan in 1572, which even the presence of Birbal could not stop.<sup>111</sup> Bayazid, a Mughal officer, likewise, converted an ancient temple at Benaras into a mosque.<sup>112</sup>

The rebel Ibrahim Husain Mirza defeated by Akbar in Gujarat in 1573 escaped to Punjab passing through Narnaul, Sonapat, Panipat and Karnal and thence to Multan where he died, a wounded prisoner.<sup>113</sup> In 1577 Akbar again moved his camp in the direction of Punjab. In the neighbourhood of Narnaul (December, 1577) he held a special council at which he settled many matters of business in consultation with Raja Todar Mall and Khwaja Shah Mansur. One of the important department then dealt with was that of mint.<sup>114</sup> The following year he paid his respects to Shaikh Nizam Narnauli, the Sufi saint. The emperor, however, was disappointed when he failed to find marks of enlightenment in the Shaikh. Abul Fazl call him 'a vaunter of simplicity' probably hinting at his boastful nature and 'passing of things of small value as being of great prize'.<sup>115</sup> In fact, the meeting only increased Akbar's search for the eternal truth, an urge which so much lacked among the 'wearers of rags' or the 'learned of the age'.<sup>116</sup> The same year the emperor also visited the shrine of Shaikh Jamal (one of the lieutenants of Shaikh Farid Shakarganj) at Hansi. He paid his devotions to god and distributed gifts among those who attended the shrine.<sup>117</sup>

In 1581 after having learnt about the plan of Mirza Muhammad Hakim (Akbar's half-brother), the ruler of Kabul to invade India, Akbar, accompanied by the Princes Salim and Murad, started on February 8, to meet the challenge. Shah Mansur, Akbar's Finance Minister, several of whose letters were intercepted, seems to have some understanding with the ruler of Kabul. The submission of Malik Sani, a confidential servant of Muhammad Hakim, and his stay with Mansur lends some support to it.<sup>118</sup> The Army then moved on to Panipat and Thanesar, at the last mentioned place Akbar paid his second visit to the hermitage of Shaikh Jalal. An interesting account of this visit is given by Abul Fazl. Akbar who always desired the company of the servants of God visited the hermitage of Shaikh Jalal who for his life long devotion to God, was held in very high esteem by the people. Abul Fazl relates :<sup>119</sup>

The Shaikh made his supplications according to the measure of his knowledge and represented, 'At this day our wishes are bound up in the assistance of the truthful throne-occupant. For his pleasure, the heavens revolve'. He implored his blessings and begged for a statement of truths. The world's Lord made some acute remarks and solved some difficulties. He (Akbar) discoursed eloquently. Many heart impressing words illuminated the holy temple of the dervish. At a hint from His Majesty, the author of this noble

volume (Abul Fazl) asked the Shaikh saying, 'You have spent a long life, and have enjoyed the society of the good. Can you tell of a cure for melancholy? And have you obtained a remedy for a heart distracted by opposing desires? At first he answered by tears, and then he recited this verse :

Oh, for sweet content, oh, oh !  
It has closed to pride the path of both world.

The *Iqbāl-nāmā* gives a slightly different but more explicit version of the story, It says :<sup>120</sup>

At the end of the interview, Abul Fazl asked the Shaikh, what was the remedy for the pain of search (*dardtalab*) and the nearway to the attainment of desires? The Shaikh wept and then repeated the lines.

The army next marched on to Shahbad where Shah Mansur was hanged on a tree adjoining the *Sarai* of Kot Kachhwaha.<sup>121</sup> This memorable execution has been best told by Father Monserrate, who was with the camp and wrote up his notes each evening. Commenting on the effects of this execution he wrote :<sup>122</sup>

Throughout the whole camp, the punishment of the wicked man was approved with rejoicing. No internal sedition being now to be feared, Akbar anticipated the successful issue of the war, which he accomplished by the favour of God. Muhammad Hakim, when he heard of what happened, repented his action and thought of peace.

After the death of Mirza Muhammad Hakim towards the end of July 1585 Akbar was now in a position to device plans from the incorporation of Kabul as a province of the empire. He again started on his march in the autumn and passed through the region. In September he encamped at Thanesar from which place Sadr-i-Jahan was sent in advance to proceed to Kabul 'to instil confidence and hope in the people in regard to Akbar'.<sup>123</sup> Abul Fazl<sup>124</sup> informs us that during this expedition Shaikh Ismail, grandson of Shaikh Salim Fathpuri (one of the officers) fell ill and died at Thanesar, and that Haji Sultan, who was previously punished by Akbar for killing a cow at Thanesar was later pardoned due to the mediation of Khan-i-Khanan and was appointed *Karori* of Thanesar (Sultan's home-town) and Karnal. Even after this new assignment Sultan did not improve his ways and started behaving like a madman. He renewed his old grudges and ruled tyrannically so much so that when Akbar visited Thanesar (December 1598) a petition was made to him by the *ryots*, Akbar made a thorough inquiry into the charges and when 'some of his tyranny was proved', he gave Sultan 'the extreme penalty of death'.<sup>125</sup>



### 5. Akbar's land settlement

Haryana also felt the impact of the administrative reforms which were envisaged for the welfare of Akbar's entire kingdom. It did not form then a separate *Subah*, but was mostly included in the Delhi *Subah* and partly in the Agra *Subah*. The Delhi *Subah* under Akbar consisted of three distinct cultural divisions: Rohilkhand, the Upper *doab* and most of the Haryana tract. The division of Haryana comprised of four *Sarkars* (modern districts)—Delhi, Rewari, Hissar and Sirhind.<sup>126</sup> Parts of Haryana such as Kanod, Narnaul, Hodal and Nuh were included in *Subah Agra*.<sup>127</sup> Every *Sarkar* was put in-charge of a *Faujdar* who was to act as a military as well as civil functionary. As put by Jadunath Sarkar 'He was the commander of military forces stationed in the *Sarkar* to put down smaller rebellions, disperse or arrest gangs of robbers, take cognizance of all violent crimes, and make demonstrations of force to overawe opposition to the revenue authorities or the criminal judge or the censor'.<sup>128</sup> Next in importance was *Karori* or the revenue collector assisted by a *Bitikchi* (or a writer) incharge of the maintenance of monthly records of receipts and expenditure. The *Khazandar* (treasurer) who was below him in rank received the land revenue and maintained its accounts.<sup>129</sup>

The Delhi *Sarkar* included the following *parganas* of the present day Haryana. They were: Islamabad, Pakal, Adah, Panipat, Palwal, Jhadasa, Jhajjar, Dadari, Rohtak, Safidon, Kutana, Chaproli, Sonapat, Toda, Bhawan, Zinana, Kedla, Gangirkheda, Karnal and Ganaur. Its land under cultivation was 1,26,107 *bighas* and 17 *biswas* with a annual revenue 123, 012, 590 *dams*. The land granted as *Suyurghal* (religious endowment) amounted to 10, 990, 260 *dams* a year. Cavalry and infantry forces stationed at various places were 4000 and 23980 respectively. The land holders were of various castes—Afghans, Gujjars, Rajputs, Rangars, Jats, Ahirs and Taga.<sup>130</sup>

The importance of the Rewari *iqta* during the Sultanate has already been noted. Under Akbar it constituted a *Sarkar* of the Delhi *Subah*, and was divided into 12 *parganas* or *mahals* for administrative purposes. Its land under cultivation was 11, 55, 011 *bighas* and 10 *biswas* yielding an annual revenue of 3, 52, 22, 658 *dams* and the valuation of the land granted for charitable purposes was equal to 7, 39, 268 *dams* per annum. The cavalry and infantry stationed at various *parganas* were 2, 175 and 14600 respectively. The *parganas* were: Bawal, Pataudi, Bhojarah, Taoru, Rewari Khas, Ratai—Jatai, Kot Qasim Ali, Ghelot, Kohana, Suhna and Nimrana. The land holders were comprised mainly of Ahir, Rajput and Jats. The lower castes were Muslims, Khaildar and Thethar etc.<sup>131</sup>

Hissar which came to prominence since the times of Firuz Tughlaq remained the headquarter of a *shiq* throughout the Sultanate, became a *Sarkar* under Sher Shah and continued to be so under the Mughals. It constituted 27 *parganas*: Agroha, Ahroni, Atkhera, Banaiwal, Puniyan, Bharangi, Barwala, Bhatu, Bhatner, Tohana, Tosham, Jind, Jamalpur, Hissar (2), Dhatarat, Sirsa, Seoran, Sidhmukh,



Bhewani, Shahzadpur, Fatehabad, Gohana, Khanda, Mahim and Hansi etc. The agricultural land was 31, 4, 497 *bighas* having an annual revenue of 5, 25, 54, 905 *dams* and *Suyurghal* land amounted to 14, 06, 519 *dams* per year. The cavalry and infantry stationed at various places were 6, 875 and 60, 800 respectively. The holders of land belonged to various castes—Rajput, Jat, Gujjar, Bakkal, Afghan and Saiyyid.<sup>132</sup>

The *Sarhind Sarkar* comprised 33 *parganas* of which the following were included in Haryana: Ambala, Binnor, Pal, Bhandar, Pundri, Thanesar, Chahar, Charakh, Khizrabad, Doral, Dola, Devrana, Sadhora, Sultanpur, Badha, Shahbad, Fatehpur and Kaithal. Its agricultural land was 77, 29, 466 *bighas* and 7 *biswas* having an annual revenue of 160, 790, 549 and *Suyurghal* land amounting to 11, 698, 330 *dams* per year. The cavalry and infantry were respectively 9225 and 55700. The land holders were Rajputs, Jats and Ranghads.<sup>133</sup>

The *Narnaul Sarkar* comprised of four *parganas*: Kanod, Kanti, Khudana and Narnaul. Its agricultural land was 383731 *bighas* with an annual revenue of 13798647 *dams* and *Suyurghal* land amounting to 340738. The cavalry and infantry forces were 2520 and 11700 respectively. The landholding castes were Rajputs, Jats, and Ahirs.<sup>134</sup> The *pargana* of Hodal, included in the *Suhar* (hilly) *sarkar* of the *Subah* Agra had 78500 *bighas* of cultivated land with an annual revenue of 462710 *dams* and *Suyurghal* land amounting to 33140 *dams* per year. The cavalry and infantry were 10 and 2000 respectively. The land holders were Jats and others.<sup>135</sup>

Akbar's administrative system continued under his successors. However, Shahjahan introduced a new administrative unit *Chakla* comprised of an amalgamation of few *parganas* (equal to a modern sub-division) which was introduced for the first time in the *Hisar Sarkar*, where one Kripa Ram Gaur was appointed *Hakim* of the *Chakla* (Hisar). The *Sarkars* of *Tijara* and *Narnaul* which were included in *Agra Subah* were now given to *Delhi Subah*, indeed a very wise step because the inhabitants of these places had affinities with those settled in the *Subah* of *Delhi*.<sup>136</sup> The *Shiqdar* was the executive officer responsible for the general administration of the *pargana*, sometimes also acting as magistrate but with limited powers.<sup>137</sup> Under him were several *Amirs* entrusted with the same duties as were performed by a *Karori* in respect of *Sarkar*. *Fotahdar* (just like the *Khazandar* in a *Sarkar*) was the treasurer of the *pargana*. The *Qanungo* was the information officer keeping complete records of the *pargana*, revenue receipts and rates, area and necessary details of the social customs and beliefs. These details were supplied to the *Amir* on which were depended the fixation of revenue rates.<sup>137a</sup> The administration of the *Qasbahs*, whose number cannot be given, was managed by *Kotwals*, the police-officers 'in-charge of the watch and ward of the town, control of markets, care and legitimate disposal of heirless property, care of the people's conduct and prevention of crime and social abuses such as Sati, regulation of the cemeteries, burials and slaughter houses.<sup>137</sup> He could even try criminal cases and inflict punishment but not capital.<sup>138</sup> Villages, the last administrative units were managed by the village *panchayat*. The *Muqaddams* were the officers



in charge of the revenue collection of the villages allotted to them and were paid remuneration out of the total revenue they deposited. The keeping of the village record was the duty of *Patwaris*. The villages were practically autonomous administrative units having very little governmental interference.<sup>139</sup>

To facilitate the revenue collection Haryana was divided into eighteen circles: Panipat, Jhajjar, Rohtak, Palwal, Hisar-i-Firuzah, Gohana, Sirsa, Mahim, Rewari, Taoru, Sohna, Gharaunda, Thanesar, Sonipat, Ambala-Kaithal (in Sirhind Circle) Barodah, Chal-Kalana and Kanodah.<sup>140</sup> The *zabti* system (assessment by measurement) of revenue collection which Akbar inherited continued till 12th year of his reign.<sup>141</sup> In his 13th year the *nasaq* system was introduced in *khalsa* lands.<sup>142</sup> It was replaced by the Qanungo assessments in the 15th year and the latter by the *Dastur* or *Jama-i-Dahsala*, a sort of uniform revenue system introduced throughout the empire both for the *Khalsa* as well as *Jagirdari* areas.<sup>143</sup> According to this *dastur* one year revenue of a particular area was fixed on the basis of the average of the last ten years actual *hasil* (collection) i.e. the total *mahsul* of 10 previous years divided by 10 was taken as *mahsul* of one year.<sup>144</sup> The medium of payment was generally in cash for there seems to be no provision for the commutation of cash into kind. Even if the revenue was realised in kind through crop-sharing or grain appraisement, it could be sold immediately in the market.<sup>145</sup> From the land granted as *madad-i-maash* (charitable endowments) no revenue was charged, the grantees were entitled to its full enjoyment.<sup>146</sup>

The account of *Āin-i-Akbari* thus shows the amount of prosperity enjoyed by the people of Haryana under the revenue administration of Akbar. The climate was temperate, rains plentiful and at some places harvests thrice a year (*Bahudhānyaka*). It was known for fruits and flowers. The revenue figures suggest the soundness of the system. It was well supervised and mostly free from corruption and oppression of the people.

## 6. The Royal *ḡ*irmans (Public Welfare)

Soon after his accession Jahangir visited Haryana in 1605. Prince Khusrau who had revolted and was on his way to Lahore, halted at Sarai Narela, set its rest house on fire and thereafter reached Panipat. The *Faujdar* of Panipat fled to Lahore, pursued by the prince.<sup>147</sup> Jahangir who was informed of these developments decided to deal with it personally and accordingly left Agra on April 6, 1606.<sup>148</sup>

*Tuzuk-i-Jahāngiri* (or the Memoirs of the Emperor) gives a vivid account of Jahangir's journey in Haryana following the route via Palwal, Faridabad, Delhi, Narela etc.<sup>149</sup> It makes elegant reference, to the two battles of Panipat, where Jahangir's 'gracious father' and 'honoured ancestor' had won great victories.<sup>150</sup> Between Panipat and Karnal he killed two tigers with a gun 'that had closed the road to the servants of God'. At the latter place he raised Abi din Khwaja, son of Khwaja Kalan Juyberi, and *pirzada* (spiritual adviser) son of Khwaja Khan Uzbek, to the rank



of 1000.<sup>151</sup> It also mentions the punishment inflicted on Shaikh Nizam Thanesari 'one of the notorious impostors (*Shayyadan*) of the age' for misleading Khusrau. He was given road expenses and ordered to proceed for the pilgrimage to Mecca.<sup>152</sup> After the rebellion was crushed Jahangir possibly followed the route via Haryana also in his return march to the capital. From his *Memoirs* it is further gathered that he assigned the *sarkar* of Hisar Firuza to Prince Khurram who was now heir—apparent to the throne.<sup>153</sup> Again in the year 1620 while returning from the Kashmir expedition, Jahangir's camp was pitched on the bank of the river Sarasati (Sarasvati) in the neighbourhood of the *qasaba* of Mustafabad.<sup>154</sup> In the year 1622, after his second expedition to Kashmir, he halted at Thanesar and Karnal where Ber Singh Deo Bundela and Asaf Khan respectively presented themselves before the emperor.<sup>155</sup>

William Finch, the English traveller who visited this area in A.D. 1611 during Jahangir's reign informs us about the insecurity of roads.<sup>156</sup> While on his way to Lahore, the traveller saw a *Faujdar* of Delhi with some of two thousand horses and foot chasing the thieves and putting their houses to fire. At Ganaur and Panipat pillars (*manora*) were erected with the heads of some hundred thieves 'their bodies set on stakes a mile in length.'<sup>157</sup> At Karnal the traveller's party which had luggage was assulted by the thieves.<sup>158</sup> He makes a special mention of the sacred tank at Thanesar, its castle and pagodas 'much revered by all Gentiles (idolators) throughout India' and also to its salammoniatic (*ammonium chloride*) industry.<sup>159</sup>

Jahangir took drastic measures against the thieves and robbers who infested this region. The royal *firman* issued in 1605 explicitly states the *dastur-ul-amal* (rules of conduct) to be observed in all dominions in this matter. It proclaims:<sup>160</sup>

On roads where theft and robberies took place, which roads might be at little distance from habitations, the *jagirdars* of the neighbourhood should build *sarais* (public rest-houses), mosques, and dig wells, which might stimulate population and people might settle down in those *sarais*. If these should be near a *khalsa* estate (under direct state management), the administrator (*mutasaddi*) of that place would execute the work.

Jahangir's public welfare activities also benefitted the people of Haryana. In his *firman* issued in 1606 he ordered in the whole of the hereditary dominions, both of crown lands and the *jagirs* 'the preparation of *bulghur-khanas* (free-eating-houses) where cooked food might be provided for the poor according to their condition so that residents and travellers both might reap the benefit'.<sup>161</sup> The *firman* issued in 1619 while referring to the previous measures of planting trees on straight wide roads from Agra to the river Attock (Indus) further orders setting up 'a pillar (*mil*) at every *koss*, to be the sign of a *koss*, and at every three *koss* a well, so that way farers might travel in ease and contentment, and not endure hardships from thirst or the heat of the sun'.<sup>162</sup> The number of *sarais*, roads and wells which were thus constructed must have substantially benefitted the region.



Jahangir in his *Memoirs* tells us about a dreadful epidemic which occurred in the 10th year of his accession (1615).<sup>163</sup> It engulfed the *parganas* of the Punjab, Lahore and then spread to Sirhind and the *Doab* and finally to Delhi and its surrounding *parganas* and villages and desolated them.<sup>164</sup> The Emperor enquired from the physicians and learned men about its cause. Some said that 'it came because there had been drought for two years in succession and little rain fall'; while others explained it due to the 'corruption of the air which occurred through the drought and scarcity'.<sup>165</sup> The scarcity of rains and the occurrence of famines were also mentioned by Abul Fazl and Badaoni but we do not know whether their accounts relate to Haryana. Thus it would appear that in spite of various works of public welfare undertaken by Mughal administration, the frequent and devastating natural calamities continued to play havoc with the life of the people.

The *Safarnāmā* of Abdul-Latif al' Abdullah al' Abbasi, one of the renowned scholars of Gujarat, is an important source for the history of Haryana during the first half of the seventeenth century A.D.<sup>166</sup> Abdul Latif who accompanied his patron Abdul Hassan on their way from Gujarat to Bengal passed through various towns and cities. Their itinerary from Sambhar to Ludhiana, and from there back to Delhi via Sirhind covered a number of places in Haryana such as Narnaul, Hisar-i-Firuz, Meham, Kaithal, Jind, Sirhind, Samana, Phullor, Thanesar, Panipat and Delhi.<sup>167</sup> In his brief account of Kurukshetra, Latif makes special mention of Sheikh Jalal Thanesari and the Hindu faith in the holy Sannihit tank where Hindu from far and wide, came to have a dip and narrates several anecdotes current among them about its 'miraculous powers such as a place of salvation, giver of progeny, remover of sins and diseases etc.'<sup>168</sup> As an orthodox Muslim he disapproves these queer notions of Hindus which according to him were nothing but sheer nonsense (*Jāhilanā se khyālāi*).<sup>169</sup> Latif refers to the construction of buildings on the bank of the tank ordered by Jahangir.<sup>170</sup> He, however, held a poor opinion of Thanesar which he calls a 'useless and unblessed place' for it no longer produced several good people like Sheikh Jalal Thanesari.<sup>171</sup> He found Panipat a small town.<sup>172</sup>

Latif is more elaborate in his description of Narnaul which then formed a part of Agra *Subah* and was thickly populated.<sup>173</sup> He is full of praise for the people particularly the governor, Shah Quli Khan (*Hakim-e-Narnaul*) and his brother Islam Quli Khan, their construction of magnificent mansions, *bazaars*, *hammams* (baths), bridges, beautiful lakes, and gardens in the grand city (*Shehreast azeem*), the wonderful health resort.<sup>174</sup> Among the memorable works of Shah Quli Khan, Latif mentions *Hauz-i-Kesar* and in its midst the *Roza-e-Ruzwan* (the Garden of Paradise).<sup>175</sup>

To Latif Narnaul had no parallel on the earth. It was the cleanest place from which the whole country benefitted, it was as if the heaven descended upon earth. His three days stay at Narnaul, Latif considers the best part of his life.<sup>176</sup> Shah Quli built another beautiful garden near the tank called *Bagh-e-Aram* where later on he himself was buried.<sup>177</sup> Islam Quli Khan built a mausoleum for himself in this garden.<sup>178</sup> Latif



also visited Sher Shah Sur's grandfather's tomb at Narnaul (a fine specimen of Indo-saracenic art), and the tomb of a celebrated *Pir* nearby.<sup>179</sup>

Emperor Shahjahan took particular care for protecting crops on the roads from Agra to Lahore where the movement of army was frequent. Special officers like *daroga*, *mushrif* and *amin* were appointed for this purpose, and in case damage to crops was reported, compensation was given to the aggrieved party.<sup>180</sup> It is probable that Shahjahan, like his predecessors, visited Thanesar which was on the way from Agra to Lahore and had already developed into a halting station for military purposes. The local tradition associates Shahjahan with the construction of a marble tomb originally built in honour of Sheikh Jalaluddin but where, at the instance of the Sheikh, his disciple Sheikh Chehali, who had died earlier, was cremated. As shown earlier Sheikh Jalaluddin was Akbar's contemporary (who died in 1581). He cannot be the direct spiritual teacher of Sheikh Chehali, a contemporary of Shahjahan and Dara Shikoh. The construction of this splendid and massive tomb was either the work of Shahjahan or more likely that of his son Dara Shikoh whose great passion was Sufi religion and philosophy. The use of marble and red stone, the massive structure and imposing elegance and style suggest those features which are conspicuous in Shahjahan's buildings.

The *Shāhjahānāmā* informs us that during Shahjahan's reign, an old canal (running from Khizrabad to Safidon) constructed originally by Firuz Tughlaq but which was disused later on due to shortage of water, was renovated. It had been previously repaired by Shahabuddin Ahmad Khan, the Fauzdar of Delhi during the time of Akbar, and was called then *Nahar-i-Shahab*. Shahjahan ordered for its repairs from Khizrabad to Safidon and its further extension up to the imperial palace. It was renamed *Nahar-i-Bihisht*.<sup>181</sup> The *Badshāhnāmā* on the other hand, mentions that in the year 1646 during Shahjahan's reign the scarcity of rains caused famine in the Panjab. The emperor ordered the establishment of ten kitchens for distributing cooked food in the province, and Sayyid Jalal was appointed to distribute 10,000 rupees among the poor and destitute. The children already sold were ransomed by the government and restored to their parents. Shahjahan sanctioned another 30,000 rupees in February 1647 for relief measures in the Punjab.<sup>182</sup>

The foreign traveller Francois Bernier who visited India during this period (1656-68) gives interesting details about the solar eclipse in 1666, and makes a special mention of Thanesar. The traveller witnessed the eclipse festival on the banks of Jamuna and wrote that it was:

kept with the same external observances in the Indus, in the Ganges and in the other rivers and *talabs* (tanks), but above all in that one at Tanaiser (Thanesar), which contained on that occasion more than one hundred and fifty thousand persons assembled from all parts of the empire; its waters being considered on the day of an eclipse more holy and meritorious than those of others.<sup>183</sup>



## 7. Revolts and repression

After the defeat of imperial forces in the war of succession, Dara Sikoh fled towards Lahore through this region. It had long been his viceroyalty and was held by his faithful deputy Sayyid Ghairat Khan.<sup>184</sup> Since March 6, 1658, Hisar-Firuz had been in the possession of Dara. He also used to stay at Palwal where his trusted lieutenant Feroze Khan Mewati lived and where in the village Sultanpur his son Sipahar Shikoh was born.<sup>185</sup>

Niccolao Manucci, the Venetian traveller who was in the service of Dara decided to join his master at Lahore. The traveller who had to pass through this region gives a vivid account of the anarchical conditions—the highway robberies, plunders and murders which prevailed there. Within twenty-four hours Aurangzeb despatched Bahadur Khan with several troops of cavalry to occupy the road to and from Agra on the west.<sup>186</sup> This time the villagers also joined the robbers in plundering travellers on the highways, and slaying them. In these circumstances the travellers had to keep their arms ready. No one dared to travel on the road after sunset. There was some security in the *Sarais* where the travellers took shelter at night. Every day the travellers halted at noon to feed and rest the animals, and about 2' in the afternoon they resumed their march so as to reach another *Sarai* before sunset positively.<sup>187</sup> In course of his journey, Manucci encountered an incident which happened somewhere near Panipat, at a distance of four days journey from Delhi. His cart driver suddenly disappeared, and the convoy left him and set out for the next station. The villagers finding him alone surrounded him and wanted to rob him but could not for he had nothing. The cart driver ultimately turned up and after receiving scolding and beating from Manucci agreed to resume the journey. When they entered a forest in the midway they had the horrible sight of the advance party which was plundered and butchered while passing through that way. Although Manucci wanted to help the wounded the driver did not permit. While on his onward march Manucci met several villagers who, in great surprise inquired how he saved his life. Manucci replied that 'God knows how to deliver poor men from the hands of scoundrels'.<sup>188</sup> The account further tells us that the party was stricken with fear of thieves until they reached the river Biyas where Daud Khan, an officer of Dara met them.<sup>189</sup>

This description shows the chaotic conditions which prevailed in this part of the country during the closing years of Shahjahan's reign as also the complete failure of the administrative machinery in protecting the lives and property of the people.

It was again through this region that Dara, after his capture by Jiwan Khan, was brought back to Delhi. Manucci also followed the same route on his return march to Delhi. It was at Sirhind that he saw the dead bodies of Jiwan Khan and his men. Aurangzeb had given orders to the governor of the fortress of Sirhind to get them stoned by the people and 'thus be both rewarded and slain (for his ingratitude to Dara)'.<sup>190</sup>

Aurangzeb, unlike his predecessors did nothing for this region. His hostility was

due to the Mewati and Satnami uprisings and also because the region was strongly attached to Dara. Aurangzeb, therefore, could not but follow only a policy of repression towards the region.

Sāvaliyā Mev, the resident of village Sanhole (on the Sohana-Tawadu road) was the first to rise against Aurangzeb. He had recruited a small force of Mevs but sufficient enough to harass the imperial forces on march. Similarly Hathi Singh Badgujar, a resident of village Dahana (modern Badshahpur), employed a band of Rajputs to carry on raid in the neighbouring area.<sup>191</sup> Aurangzeb decided to deal with this problem diplomatically. He befriended Rao Nand Ram, an influential *Ahir* leader of village Bolani near Rewari, who helped him in capturing Hāthi Singh forcing him to surrender to the emperor. In token of his services the emperor granted Rao Nand Ram the *jagir* of Rewari along with its surrounding area. This was the beginning of the Rao estate of Rewari.<sup>192</sup>

The emperor later on released Hathi Singh so that he could deal with Sāvaliyā Mev. The policy was successful. Hathi Singh murdered Sāvaliyā for which he received the *jagir* Ghaseda—comprising of eleven villages.<sup>193</sup> The murder of Sāvaliyā became a signal for widespread uprisings of the Mevs who followed guerilla warfare for some-time but had to bow down ultimately to the all mighty imperial forces. Mewat was freely looted and thousands of its men were brutally murdered, a tragedy which became the subject of a popular folk song:<sup>194</sup>

*Dillī śahar suhāvano kañchan barase nīr  
Sabakā kañṭhā toḍake le gayo Alamgir*

### The Satnami revolt

An offshoot of the medieval Bhakti movement, the Satnami movement had its origin in the Sādhs, a unitarian sect founded in 1543 by Birbhan, of the village Bijesar of Narnaul *pargana*.<sup>195</sup> It was probably a branch of the Raidāsi *jamayat* (organization) founded after the famous saint Raidāsa.<sup>196</sup> Birbhan although claimed to be inspired by Uddhava Dāsa, a pupil of Raidāsa, like Kabir seems to 'have wandered rather far from Vaiṣṇava teachings of Rāmānanda, Raidasa's master'.<sup>197</sup> The Sādhs call upon God under the name Satnāma (the True Name) and among themselves employ Satnami as the name of the sect. They were nick named 'Mundiya's' or 'Shavelings' from their habit of shaving the body clean of all hairs.<sup>198</sup>

The Sādhs, under the name of Satnamis appear to have been heroes of the revolt of Hindu devotees against the oppression exercised by Aurangzeb's revenue officials. 'The revolt of the Satnami *faqirs* (May 1672)' writes J.N. Sarkar, 'has gained a place in the history of Aurangzeb out of all proportions to its size or political importance. Unlike the popular disturbances of the reign it appealed to the vulgar craze for the supernatural and sent a short thrill of fear through the capital itself. Hence, men



greatly marvelled at it and it became the talk of the age'.<sup>199</sup> Their mendicant militancy and puritan professionalism even drew the attention of Khafi Khan who observed:<sup>200</sup>

One of the remarkable occurrence of this year (May, 1672) was the outburst of the Hindu devotees called *Satnamis*, who are also known by the name of *Mundihs* (i.e., clean shaven fellows). There were four or five thousand of these, who were house-holders in the *parganas* of Narnaul and Mewat. These men dress like devotees, but they nevertheless carry on agriculture and trade, though their trade is on a small scale. In the way of their religion they have dignified themselves with the title of 'Good Name', this being the meaning of *Sat-nam*. They are not allowed to acquire wealth in any but a lawful calling. If any one attempts to wrong or oppress them by force, or by exercise of authority, they will not endure it. Many of them have weapons and arms.

Iswara Das Nagar, a contemporary historian, on the other hand, presents quite a contradictory account. He wrote:<sup>201</sup>

The *Satnamis* are extremely filthy and wicked. In their rules they make no distinction between Hindus and Musalmans, and eat pigs, and other unclean animals. If a dog is served up before them, they do not show any disgust at it! In sin and immorality they see no blame.

The observation, evidently of an orthodox Hindu need not be given any credence in view of the more reasonable and realistic account of Khafi Khan. It may be as pointed out by Grierson 'a false and libellous attack on a Hindu heresy which acknowledged no caste and refused worship the customary Hindu deities'.<sup>202</sup>

The *Satnamis*, as is evident from one of their texts (*Pothi Glyān Bānī Sadh Satnāmi*) denounce caste, begging, hoarding and servitude of the rich. As put by Irfan Habib their injunction 'do not harass the poor, shun the company of an unjust king and wealthy and dishonest man, do not accept a gift from them or from kings has a revolutionary ring'.<sup>203</sup> It was essentially a social revolt of the lower classes in a common fraternity irrespective of caste, creed or region. It started with a small incident<sup>204</sup> which was symbolic of widespread discontent among the people, and inspired their actions that followed. A *Satnami* peasant of Narnaul having a quarrel with a *piada* (foot-soldier) on duty was struck by the latter with a staff. This was the signal for the *Satnamis* who gathered there in large numbers, to beat the *piada*. Being informed of the incident, the *Shiqdar* of Narnaul sent additional force to arrest the offenders. The party could not cope with the large number of *Satnamis*, was beaten and its arms snatched.<sup>205</sup> Further, as narrated by Manucci:<sup>206</sup>

[An old sorceress told them that if they would follow her orders she would make

them masters of Delhi, the king not having more than ten thousand horsemen, because all his other troops had gone with Shah Alam on the expedition against Shivaji.]

The morale of the Satnamis became high and their numbers large. The swiftness of the movements can very well be gathered from the remarks in the *Maāsir-i-Ālamgiri*<sup>207</sup> describing the movement as 'A malignant set of people, inhabitants of Mewat, collected suddenly as white ants spring from the ground, or locusts descend from the sky'. They soon routed the troops of Kartalab Khan, the *Faujdar* of Narnaul, killed him and captured the towns of Narnaul and Bairat which provided them secure bases for further operation.<sup>208</sup> They demolished mosques and established their own administration in the district, holding it by means of outposts and collecting the revenue from the peasants.<sup>209</sup> Commenting on the initial success of the Satnamis and the worry of Aurangzeb Manucci wrote :<sup>210</sup>

[They (the Satnamis) marched with such vigour that when the news reached the court Aurangzeb was particularly disturbed in mind, and sent out against them his ten thousand horsemen. The Mundas fought with such vigour, upheld by the sorceress of the old woman, that they routed Aurangzeb's army. At this result he was more disturbed than ever. They had already arrived within fifteen leagues of Delhi, when he ordered out all the troops he had been able to raise. Continuous reports were to be sent to him of what went on.]

The Satnami revolt despite its religious origins cannot be turned as merely a Hindu revolt, which would be minimizing its secular character. The refusal of some Muslim as well as Rajput commanders of the Mughal army to fight with them justifies it.<sup>211</sup> It is no wonder that the movement assumed larger proportion and stories became current that it was sustained by magical and supernatural power.<sup>212</sup> The insurgents after closing in on Delhi cut off its grain supplies. A large army was then sent to repel them but as it reached Rewari it lost heart and fled.<sup>213</sup> The emperor finally decided to send a strong force under his best commanders Radandaz Khan, Hamid Khan, Yahya Khan, Najib Khan, Rumi Khan, Kamaluddin, Purdil, Isfandiyar Bakshi, under the overall command of Prince Muhammad Akbar.<sup>214</sup> To keep high morale of his armies Aurangzeb himself wrote hymns and magical figures on papers 'and sent them to be hung on the heads of the elephants and horses, and on the standards, fatiguing himself greatly with the preparation of all these papers'.<sup>215</sup> 'If he (Aurangzeb) wearied himself thus', writes Manucci, 'it was from the great importance of the matter, for it was a question of losing kingdom and life, since, without exaggeration, Aurangzeb found himself at this moment in greater danger than at any time in the rest of his life'.<sup>216</sup>

A deadly encounter between the contending parties took place at Narnaul. Although inadequately equipped and lacking in discipline and training, the Satnamis put a heroic resistance to their oppressors. 'They (the Satnamis) enacted the scene of the great war of the Mahābhārata'.<sup>217</sup> Though ultimately overpowered by numbers, they fell fighting to their last man. About 5000 Satnamis are estimated to have



sacrificed their lives for their cause. The casualties on the Mughal side were no less. 'Many of the Muslims were slain or wounded'.<sup>218</sup> Bishnu Singh Kachhwa, who had fought most gallantly, had his elephant wounded at seven places.<sup>219</sup> Thus ended one of the most spectacular popular rising of the region against oppressive rule of Aurangzeb. Although failed to produce a heirarchy of able leadership which could have revived it even after disaster, it left the field open for other people of the region to continue the struggle against oppression for long time to come.

Aurangzeb's policy of intolerance did not end with the suppression of the Mewatis and the Satnamis. It now turned to the destruction of the sacred places of the region (a notorious administrative measure of that reign). Several temples were destroyed at Kurukshetra and a castle (called Mughalpura) was built in the midst of a lake from where Mughal soldiers could fire upon pilgrims who came to bathe there.<sup>220</sup> Near the Sarvesvara Mahadeva temple, the remains of a castle with pillars on four sides are still visible testifying to Aurangzeb's oppressive rule. According to local tradition, the castle was demolished later on by the Marathas who also removed the pilgrim tax which required the Hindu pilgrims to pay one rupee for a small pot of water of the holy tank and five rupees for a dip in it (*eka rupayā loṭā aurapañcha rupayā gotā*) and that the Marathas rebuilt the Sthānesvara Mahadeva temple which had been destroyed and replaced by a mosque during this period. A careful look at the present temple reveals the existence of Muslim structure—a mosque with domes and beautifully painted arches. It appears that at a still later stage further attempt was made to remove the Muslim signs by putting Hindu religious paintings in the walls.

The *Akhhbārāt* (the official news bulletins of Aurangzeb's court) throw light on the destruction of some religious establishments at Thanesar. The *Akhhbār* dated 30 May, 1667 reports:<sup>221</sup>

The Brahmins of *pargana* Thanesar presented a complaint that the sons of Shaikh Mir on their way from Lahore dismantled the places where Hindus used to sit on the tank. The sons of the Shaikh petitioned that the Hindus were indulging greatly in irreligious acts. It was ordered that the tank should be destroyed so that water could not be stored there.

Thanesar formed a part of the *jagir* of Hoshdarkhan, governor of Akbarabad (Agra), whose agent thought that the tank was indispensable for cultivation.<sup>222</sup>

The *Akhhbār* of 1 June, 1667 reports a similar complaint.<sup>223</sup> Aurangzeb summoned the Qazi of Thanesar to his court. After hearing the Qazi, the Emperor ordered Abdul Aziz Khan, *Faujdar* of Thanesar, that 'the waters of the tank be released from all the four quarters so that after this the Hindus may not gather there'.<sup>224</sup> It seems that this order was not immediately implemented for the *Akhhbār* dated 18 June, 1667 records that 'Abdul Aziz Khan who had been ordered to destroy the tank at

Thanesar was reported (by Hoshdarkhan) to have harassed the *ryots* who were greatly benefited by the tank.<sup>225</sup> The Emperor also referred to a similar request previously made by Begam Saheb. The Emperor, however, ordered (although without having received any formal complaint) the suppression of the aforesaid irreligious acts, but allowed the tank to be restored to its former condition.<sup>226</sup>

As early as 24 October, 1754 by a special *firman* of Alamgir (the Mughal Emperor), the Hingne Brothers, Peshwa's agents at Delhi, were authorised to look after Kurukshetra and Gayâ, the two holy places of the Hindus.<sup>227</sup> The temples at Kurukshetra were either built, reconstructed or renovated during Maratha rule in Haryana which lasted from 1784-1803. The local tradition attributes this credit to Sadashiv Rao Bhau but the latter had no time to visit Kurukshetra.

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9. *Ibid.*, p. 465.
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13. *Ibid.*
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## CHAPTER-VIII

# *The Later-Mughals, the Afghans and the Marathas*

The death of Aurangzeb (March 3, 1707) was followed by a period of decline, confusion and disorder throughout northern India. And Haryana, which was included mostly in the Delhi *Subah* and partly in the Agra *Subah*, could not escape it. Politically linked with the fortunes of the imperial capital (which was also its seat of power once) Haryana was deeply affected by the changing order. After the struggle for power between the three sons of the deceased emperor—Muazzam, the governor of Kabul, Muhammad Azam of Gujarat and Kam Bakhsh of Bijapur, the first succeeded in ascending the throne (May, 1707) under the title of Bahadur Shah (also known as Shah Alam I). On his return march from the Deccan while nearing Ajmer, the new emperor received the news of the Sikh outbreak in Panjab and Haryana.<sup>1</sup> This was confirmed by the arrival in the camp in a destitute condition, of the inhabitants of Sarhind and Thanesar alongwith the Pirzadas of Sarhind and Sadhaura complaining against the oppression they suffered at the hands of the Sikhs. The emperor, therefore, decided first to march in person to crush the Sikh rebellion.<sup>2</sup>

### 1. Banda and the Sikh depredations in northern Haryana

The Sikhs who were transformed into a real military power under Guru Govind Singh supported Muazzam (later Bahadur Shah) in the war of succession. On Govind Singh's death came forward a man generally known as Banda, originally a native of a village either Pandor (in Jullundhar *Doab*) or Rajauri (in Punchh)<sup>3</sup> and intimately connected with the Guru, his family and the following. The origin and antecedents of Banda still remains a matter of difference of scholarly opinion but this much appears to be certain that he was sent from the Deccan to the north.<sup>4</sup> Be whatever it is, Banda succeeded within no time in projecting himself as the real leader of the Sikhs who alone was capable of unifying them and to secure for them prosperity in this world and salvation in the next.<sup>5</sup>

In Haryana he first appeared in the town of Kharkhoda (about 30 miles west of



Delhi). At his fervent appeal many armed men readily joined him and when their number reached five hundred, they attacked Sonapat, routed its *faujdar* and forced him to flee to Delhi.<sup>6</sup> Banda's initial successes have been noted by Khafi Khan who wrote<sup>7</sup> :

... in the course of three or four months he gathered round him four or five thousand pony (yabu) riders and seven or eight thousand motley footmen. His numbers daily increased, and much plunder fell into his hands, until he had eighteen or nineteen thousand men under arms, and carried on a predatory and cruel warfare ... In many villages which he plundered he appointed *thanadars* and *tahsildars* to collect the revenues of the neighbourhood for him ...

Elated by this success Banda next turned to attack Wazir Khan, the *faujdar* of Sarhind who had murdered Govind Singh's sons.<sup>8</sup> Banda's operation began with the capture of the town of Sadhaura (about 26 miles east of Ambala). Here the tomb of the celebrated Shah Qamis Qadiri was defiled, many inhabitants of the town were killed and their houses plundered.<sup>9</sup> A place popularly known as *Qatalgarhi* (at Sadhaura) reminds one of the indiscriminate killing of the Muslims,<sup>10</sup> Hindus even were not respected. An expedition was also sent to the vicinity of Kaithal where the royal treasure on its way to Delhi was plundered and distributed among Banda's followers.<sup>11</sup> A serious encounter between Sikh and Wazir Khan's forces took place on a plain between Alwan Sarai and the town of Banur (about 10 to 12 miles northeast of Sarhind). The Sikhs ultimately triumphed. Wazir Khan along with other Muslim leaders was slain.<sup>12</sup> Consequently the old prosperous town of Sarhind was given to pillage and Muhammadans slaughtered, even women and childrens were not spared.<sup>13</sup> All power was now usurped by the Sikhs and one Bar Singh (or Baz Singh) was appointed *Subahdar* of Sarhind.<sup>14</sup> Making the town of Sarhind as the base of his further operations Banda sent out expeditions to various directions—south, east and west and occupied nearly the whole of Sarhind *Sarkar* (of Subah Delhi). Samana, Sunam, Mustafabad, Kaithal, Kuhram, Buriya, Sadhaura, Chath, Ambala, Shahbad, Thanesar, Pael, Supar, Phalvalpur, Machiwara, Ludhiana, i.e., all *parganas* between the Sutlej and the Jamuna passed on to the new masters.<sup>15</sup> As Asad Khan, the governor of Delhi Subah and the Vice-regent (*Wakil-i-mutlaq*), did nothing to restore order in the region, the responsibility to resist the Sikh onslaught beyond Thanesar was taken up by Sardar Khan, a Muhammadan Rajput zamindar but for whose exertions the Sikhs could never have been stopped in their advance to the imperial capital.<sup>16</sup>

The social change and the administrative set up in the *parganas* occupied by the Sikhs (which included a sizeable portion of Haryana in the Sarhind *Sarkar*) is thus vividly described by Irvine<sup>17</sup> :

In all the *parganas* occupied by the Sikhs, the reversal of the previous customs



was striking and complete. A low scavenger or leather-dresser, the lowest of the low in Indian estimation, had only to leave home and join the Guru, when in a short space of time, he would return to his birth-place as its ruler, with his order of appointment in his hand. As soon as he set foot within the boundaries, the well-born and wealthy went out to greet him and escort him home. Arrived there, they stood before him with joined palms, awaiting his orders . . . the new ruler had no difficulty in exacting from every one their best and most valuable belongings, which were confiscated for the use of the Guru or for his treasury.

These oppressive measures made terrific impact on the people. 'Not a soul', adds Irvine 'dared to disobey an order, and men, who had often risked themselves in battlefields, became so cowed that they were afraid even to remonstrate. Hindus who had not joined the sect were not exempt from these oppressions.'<sup>18</sup>

After the occupation of Thanesar, Shahbad and Pundri forays were made even into Saharanpur, and along with these Karnal and its neighbourhood were also laid waste.<sup>19</sup> Banda appointed one Ram Singh as chief of Thanesar whose responsibility was to resist the Mughal troops from Delhi.<sup>19a</sup>

In the estimation of modern historians the Sikh revolt under Banda was led mainly by 'low class people', the down trodden peasantry who took up arms against the Mughals. Although his agents ruled arbitrarily yet Banda remained sympathetic to the peasantry whose grievances he tried to redress by abolishing *zamindari* system and by declaring actual cultivators as the owners of the land.<sup>20</sup>

On June 27, 1710 Bahadur Shah left Ajmer and advanced against the Sikhs following the route via Rupnagar, Sambhar, Rasulpur, Pragpura and Narnaul.<sup>21</sup> Orders were also issued to Khan Dauran (the Subahdar of Oudh), Muhammad Amin Khan Chin (*Faujdar* of Muradabad), Khan Jahan (the Subahdar of Allahabad) and Sayyid Abdullah Khan Barha to join Asad Khan (*Wakil-i-mutlaq*) against the Sikhs.<sup>22</sup> From Pragpura an advance force under the command of Firuz Khan Mewati was also sent (August 7, 1710). At Patodhi the imperial forces met a number of their lieutenants from across the Jamuna (September 10, 1710) and near Delhi Churaman Jat along-with his contingent joined them.<sup>23</sup> At Sonapat (October 22, 1710) was received the message of Shams-ud-din Khan's (the *Faujdar* of the Jullundhar *Doab*) victory over the Sikhs (October 12, 1710).<sup>24</sup> At Sarai Kunwar, the emperor was greeted with the news of Firuz Khan Mewati's victory over the enemy between Indri and Karnal and the three hundred rebels' heads which were sent to him. In token of this service Firuz Khan was rewarded with the appointment as *Faujdar* of Sarhind, and six robes of honour were also sent for him and his companions.<sup>25</sup> The next marches were to Sarai Sambhalka, Panipat, Kharonda, (and then after crossing a brick bridge) Karnal, Azimabad-Talaori (Alamgirpur) and then Thanesar (November 13).<sup>26</sup> At Karnal was received another good news of the defeat of the Sikhs at Thanesar by the forces of Firuz Khan who, after clearing Thanesar had already advanced to Shahabad.<sup>27</sup> Such



Sikhs as had been made prisoners were strung up to the road-side trees, their long hair being twisted to perform the office of a rope.<sup>28</sup> Another force led by Bayazid Khan, a Afghan of Qasur (near Lahore) and the then *Faujdar* of Jammu had driven the Sikhs at Panipat before the success of the other military leaders mentioned above.<sup>29</sup> The Sikhs were finally driven in disorder towards Sarhind.<sup>30</sup>

The emperor left Thanesar on November 25 and advancing through Shahabad and Aukala, reached Sadhaura on December 4 from which place a few days before, the Sikhs had already moved southwards with 3,000 horsemen and 10,000 infantry.<sup>31</sup> The rebels now took refuge in the strong fort of Lohgarh (Iron-gate) where earlier Guru Govind had also taken resort after the death of his father. Previously well known as the fort of Mukhlispur and situated halfway between the towns of Nahan (in Sirmur) and Sadhaura (in Sarkar Sarhind), 'on the top of a steep hill and surrounded by deep ravines' it became the seat of Banda's headquarters where he introduced his official seal and issued his coinage whose year commenced from the date of his victory at Sarhind.<sup>32</sup>

Despite hardships of the campaign the imperial forces subsequently succeeded in capturing Lohgarh but the Guru, although sustained a crushing defeat, succeeded in escaping towards Bari Doab in the parganas of Raipur and Bahrapur (Gurdaspur).<sup>33</sup> On emperor Bahadur Shah's death (February 28, 1712) Muhammad Amin Khan left Punjab, an action which helped Banda in recapturing the town of Sadhaura and the fort of Lohgarh.<sup>34</sup> After Jahandar Shah's accession, Amin Khan was again sent to resume the campaign, but the investment of Sadhaura which followed did not yield any result.<sup>35</sup>

Zain-ud-din Ahmad Khan, a reputed military leader of Alamgir's time and also the newly appointed *Faujdar* of Sarhind, continued campaign against the Sikhs. But despite the best efforts of the Mughals in investing the Sikh strong hold at Sadhaura, Banda maintained his position.<sup>36</sup> He attacked Batala and Jammu and succeeded in recapturing Sarhind in 1712. Soon after Farrukhsiyar's accession Abdus-samad Khan (the new governor of Lahore) and his son Zakariya Khan (the *Faujdar* of Jammu) were ordered to expel Banda from Sadhaura, or, if possible to destroy him altogether.<sup>37</sup> He despatched a force of 20,000 troops, joined by 5000 from Sarhind. The Sikhs offered stubborn resistance for sometime but had to give up due to shortage of supplies.<sup>38</sup> They ultimately decided on flight to Lohgarh.<sup>39</sup> The capture of Sadhaura and the flight of the rebel forces were reported at Delhi on October 9, 1713.<sup>40</sup> After plundering Rupar, Kalanaur, and Batala, Banda finally took position at the earthen fort at Gurdaspur.<sup>41</sup> The imperial forces besieged Gurdaspur, stopped its supplies of corn and fodder and thus starved Banda and his followers into surrender (December 17, 1715).<sup>42</sup> He was brought to Delhi, paraded along with his disciples and then tortured to death on June 19, 1716.<sup>43</sup> After an interval of about three years Sarhind Sarkar once again passed into the hands of the Mughals and peace was restored, but Nadir Shah's invasion undid it all.



## 2. The invasion of Nadir Shah

Nadir Shah (the king of Persia) after the occupation of Afghanistan decided to march on India whose unsettled borders and negative defence policy ideally suited his purpose. He passed through Jalalabad, Peshawar, Wazirabad and further carried destruction and disorder throughout the region between Lahore and Sarhind which according to Shaikh Ali Hazin, a contemporary writer, 'was in complete revolution. Every person put forth his hand to plunder and pillage, and some thousands of robbers beset the public roads . . . The whole of that time, whether on the road, or at the (halting) stations passed in fighting and contention.'<sup>41</sup> After passing Sarhind and Rajpura the invading army reached Ambala on February 7, 1739 where heavy baggage and harem was left under a strong escort and later, the next day Shahbad was reached.<sup>45</sup> Thanesar was captured on 10th evening, and the following day Sarai Azimabad (a big stone and brick house) where the prominent persons of Ambala had taken refuge, was occupied and detailed information about the imperial encampment at Karnal was obtained.<sup>46</sup>

The Indian defence was entrusted to Itimad-ud-daulah Qamar-ud-din Khan (the *Wazir*), Nizam-ul-mulk Asaf Jah (the Wakil or Regent) and Samsam-ud-daulah Khan Dauran (the *Amir-ud-umara* or Bakhshi or the head of the military department).<sup>47</sup> Farmans were also sent to the Rajputs and the Marathas to come to their aid in this hour of national crisis. The Rajputs made excuses and delayed coming while the Marathas did not come at all despite the fact that in a letter addressed to his general Pilaji Jadhav, Baji Rao considered rendering help to the Emperor of Delhi at such a time 'a glory to the Maratha State.'<sup>48</sup> Surprisingly Baji Rao I could think only in terms of defending Narmada line to bar the southward advance of Nadir Shah, if at all there was any.<sup>49</sup>

The imperial army reached Panipat on January 18, 1739 and the Emperor Muhammad Shah with his contingent on 27th.<sup>50</sup> After the fall of Lahore which then became known, it was decided to encamp at Karnal where abundant water supply was available and whose adjoining plains favoured manoeuvring large bodies of cavalry. This besides, Saadat Khan, the Governor of Oudh with his army was still awaited. Entrenchment was preferred to a straight battle.<sup>51</sup>

Muhammad Shah had set his camp along the western bank of the canal of Ali Mardan Khan with the walled town of Karnal immediately south of him. His front and right were protected naturally by jungle (between Azimabad and Karnal) and the canal respectively.<sup>52</sup> Under the direction of Sad-ud-din Khan (*Mir Atash*), the camp was enclosed by a mud wall many miles in circuit. Along this line guns were ranged side by side and soldiers posted in the trenches to keep watch day and night.<sup>53</sup>

The respective strength of the combatant forces is gathered from a number of contemporary sources—the accounts of Mirza Mahdi, Hanway, Rustam Ali, Ghulam Ali and Anandram.<sup>54</sup> Although there is much divergence in the figures given by these authorities yet the more realistic position seems to be that the Persians had 40,000



horsemen (excluding vanguard and rear) besides non-combatant about its three times of whom one third were servants all mounted, some of them completely armed so as to take part in plunder and in the defence of their baggage.<sup>55</sup> Similarly the total Indian fighting force at Karnal could not have exceeded 75,000 men but their non-combatants were excessive.<sup>56</sup> 'The Indian army due to its enormous size lost mobility and aggressive power and became helplessly beleaguered, and was placed thereby in a situation similar to that in which Sadashiv Rao Bhau found himself at Panipat twentytwo years later.'<sup>57</sup>

The Persian horsemen made surprise attacks on the neighbouring area and carried off corn, grass and fuel so that the price of grain rose enormously in the Indian camp. This besides an advance force of 6,000 troops led by Haji Khan even succeeded in proceeding along the banks of the canal up to the edge of the enemy's camp and in reporting back position of the imperial army.<sup>58</sup> The strategy of Nadir Shah was<sup>59</sup> :

... to avoid a frontal attack and make a wide detour along the east of Karnal, so as to keep touch with the Jamuna and its abundant water supply on his left flank and also to cut the Mughal line of communication with Delhi by seizing the town of Panipat in the rear (and). . . to force Muhammad Shah to come out of his lines and accept battle on a field chosen by Nadir or to remain helplessly shut up in Karnal while the Persians would march to Delhi unmolested.

The plan, admirably worked out as it was, yielded expected results. The Persian army marched to the plain six miles northeast of Karnal, a little north of Kunjpura and within sight of Jamuna. Nadir Shah himself led a search party to ascertain enemy's position and returned unharmed to his own camp.<sup>60</sup> When the news of Saadat Khan and his army's reaching Panipat was received, a division of Persian army was sent to intercept it and another to pressurise the eastern flank of the Mughal army.<sup>61</sup>

### *The Battle of Karnal*

On February 13, 1739 began Persian advance along the plain between the canal on the Jamuna. Prince Nasrullah taking position north of Indian camp facing Nizam's division, Nadir Shah himself at first at the head of the vanguard but after Saadat Khan's joining the emperor shifted to a position about three miles east of the Indian camp, a mile or two west of the Jamuna, and was joined here by his son.<sup>62</sup> In these movements passed the forenoon and sun began to decline when suddenly the Indians were seen coming out of their lines to offer battle, an action which was mainly due to the rash tempered Saadat Khan whose baggage train was carried off by Persian

advance party.<sup>63</sup> Although Nizam and other commanders counselled delay Saadat Khan did not listen to their advice and instead hastened to the point of attack.<sup>64</sup>

The sudden advance of the Indian army was unexpected to the Persians. Nadir Shah according to the plan already prepared, made swift movements of his army composed entirely of cavalry with artillery consisting of long muskets (*jazair*) besides long swivels (*zamburaks*).<sup>65</sup> His tactics of warfare have been thus described by Hanway<sup>66</sup> :

In order to baffle the elephants, on which the Indians mostly relied for effect, he caused a number of platforms to be made and fixed each across two camels. On these platforms he laid naphtha and a mixture of combustibles with orders to set them on fire during the battle. The elephants were sure to flee away at the sight of quickly approaching fire and put the Indian army behind them in disorder.

The Indians from the outset were in a disadvantageous position due to delay in the starting of their different divisions, 'absence of a common pre-arranged plan of battle, and above all lack of supreme director of operations'. Saadat Khan formed the right wing, Khan Dauran in the centre, while Wazir and the emperor in the left wing. In sharp contrast to this stood 'the extremely mobile Persian army led by the greatest living general of Asia, struck the Indian host or evaded it as they found advantageous to them. Nadir Shah's genius neutralised the superiority in numbers and the desperate valor of many of the Indian soldiers.'<sup>67</sup>

The battle began a little after one O'clock in the afternoon. Adopting the manner of their Parthian ancestors, the Persians succeeded in drawing Saadat and his soldiers a few miles away from the imperial camp and from the artillery. The cavalry screen which covered the swivel guns drew aside and Saadat was assailed by the discharge of the gun fire. Although the vanguard of the Indian army fled but Saadat held for longer till most of his men were dead and he himself was forced out of the field in the evening. Similar fate awaited Khan Dauran's division in another quarter of the field, where also the masterly tactics of the enemy succeeded. The Indians were inactive, imbecile and completely lacked co-ordination. At the points of contact they had numerical inferiority and were far away from the aid of their heavy artillery.<sup>68</sup>

The continued fire of Nadir's gunman did the rest. As 'arrows cannot answer bullets' the Indian could only fight bravely and give up their lives as a vain sacrifice. Although the situation had become absolutely hopeless, the bravest of Khan Dauran's soldiers about 1000, dismounted and in the Indian fashion, tying the skirts of their long coat together fought on foot till they all died. But a few of his devoted servants with a desperate fighting succeeded in bringing back Khan Dauran to the camp but only to die.<sup>69</sup>

With the disappearance of the two leaders, the Indian resistance ceased. At sunset Muhammad Shah retired to his camp, doing absolutely nothing to save his



throne and his people. The battle was over in less than three hours. The loss on the Indian side were terrible. Although the figures vary in different sources—Jahankusha (100 chiefs, 30,000 soldiers), Hanway (17,000), Harcharandas (20,000), Maratha envoy (10,000-12,000 and 7000-8000) but the reasonable figure seems to be 8000 slain which included a number of important officers.<sup>70</sup> Saadat, his nephew Sher Jang and Khwaja Ashura (a son of Khan Dauran) were captured alive.<sup>71</sup> The Persians lost 2500 slain and twice of this wounded, but their gains were immense—elephants, treasury, guns, baggage and stores, nothing escaped.<sup>72</sup>

After the battle was over the villages were no more safe. The Persian marauders plundered them, laying the fields waste and killing the inhabitants who ever resisted. Another body of Persians raided Thanesar and devastated it. During Nadir's advancement to Delhi, Panipat, Sonapat and other towns lying on the way were similarly sacked.<sup>73</sup>

The Indian defeat at Karnal has been attributed to a variety of causes. The outclassed method of warfare, inefficiency in the use of fire arms, bad employment of elephants 'a sure engine of self destruction' and above all bad generalship were the principle causes of the Indian disaster. In contrast to this stood the sturdy Persians, well-disciplined, excellent in the use of fire arms, with best cavalry and led by the ablest military leader of those time.<sup>74</sup>

### *The Aftermath*

The peace negotiations which followed need not detain us. Suffice it would be to say that these were nothing but intreaguig diplomatic manoeuvring of the Indian leaders mainly the Nizam and Saadat Khan, which ultimately proved detrimental to the honour and prestige of the Mughals and in effect were responsible for the virtual imprisonment of the emperor and his household and the subsequent devastation of the imperial capital.<sup>75</sup>

The miserable condition of the Indian camp vividly described by the contemporary writers has been remarkably summed up by J.N. Sarkar in the following words<sup>76</sup> :

Great terror and bewilderment now fell on the Indian camp. They were sheep left without a single shepherd, and surrounded by wolves. Even their last remaining chief, the Wazir, was now taken away from them. The road to Delhi was beset by roving bands of Qizilbashs who had no fear of resistance, and by the peasantry who had risen in insurrection at the fall of the government which had so long kept order. The vast camp broke up and every one fled wherever he thought best, but comparatively few effected their retreat in safety.

This finds corroboration in the despatch of the Maratha agent at Mughal court

Babu Rao Malhar, who had accompanied the Emperor to Karnal with his own escort and property and was a witness to the great disaster which had fallen on the Indian camp. When all was lost 'making a fort of his breast' he started from his camp on Sunday 25 February, 1739 at about 3 O'clock in the afternoon. His elephants, camels, infantry and baggage and tents were sent towards Delhi by the royal highway while he himself preferred the way through the jungle for greater safety. Next day after riding some 80 miles, along circuitous by-paths he regained the road near the imperial capital. He reached Jaipur on 6th March where he was joined by his colleague Dhondo Pant. His elephants and camels came more slowly, from Delhi to Rewari. His feelings can be judged from his exclamation:

God has averted a great danger from me, and enabled me to escape with honour! The Chaghtai Empire is gone, the Irani Empire has commenced. Remain there in great caution.<sup>77</sup>

The indignation and humiliation to which the emperor, his court and the people were put is the saddest chapter of the history of those times. The rise of Delhi populace and Nadir's retaliatory massacres, and the exaction of ransom are beyond description.<sup>78</sup> Nadir Shah held his final *darbar* on May 1, 1739 and left Delhi on May 5. He marched by way of Narela to Sonapat where the peasants rose and attacked his baggage train in the rear. He lost about 1000 transport animals before marching Thanesar and in retaliation massacred thousands of innocent people in various towns falling on his way.<sup>79</sup> Thanesar, Indri and a few other estates he granted to Najabat Khan as *jagir* on condition of his restraining the Jats and the Rajputs who were taking advantage of the weakness of the empire by causing trouble and committing excesses<sup>80</sup>, while Zakariya Khan was to take charge of Panipat as its Governor.<sup>81</sup>

Nadir Shah's invasion hastened the process of the disintegration of the Mughal empire. The weakness of the central authority brought in various forces—the Sikhs, the Marathas and later, the Durrani, who tried to exploit the situation to their advantage by restoring to plunder and devastation. And Haryana which remained an integral part of the Empire for a long time had also to undergo tremendous sufferings. Its peace, prosperity and industry were completely disturbed. With utmost cruelty contributions were levied and extorted which forced people to flee to safer places or resign themselves to the will of the god. One jungle covered the entire country 'from Karnal to Ludhiana'.<sup>82</sup> That terrible time the people called by *Singh-shāhi-kā-Rām-Raulā*, or *Bhaogardi*, the Sikh hurly-burly or the Maratha anarchy whose horrors according to the Karnal District Gazetteers 'still live vividly in the memory of the villagers.'<sup>83</sup>

#### *The Rise of local powers : Rewari and Ballabgarh*

Although a period of over all decline it marked the rise of local powers—specially of Rewari and Ballabgarh in Haryana.



The estate of Rewari, as stated earlier, was founded by Nand Ram, a Ahir leader of *gadhi* Bolni.<sup>84</sup> His illustrious son Bal Krishna rose to the position of a *mansabdar* (maintaining two thousand troops) under Aurangzeb. During the times of Bahadur Shah and Muhammad Shah, Bal Krishna rose to still higher position. *Sher Bachacha Samsher Bahadur* as he was styled by Muhammad Shah, Bal Krishna with his five thousand followers laid his life in fighting Nadir Shah in the battle of Karnal.<sup>85</sup> As noted by Man Singh, the author of *Ābhira Kula Dipikā*, his valour and bravery even drew the attention of Nadir Shah who paid rich tributes to him.<sup>86</sup> He was succeeded by his younger brother Rao Gujarmal, an astute diplomat. As reward for the services rendered by his elder brother, Rao Gujarmal received the *jagir* of twelve villages from the Mughals, and was also appointed *faujdar* of Rewari and its adjoining territory.<sup>87</sup> But he soon found himself in conflict with his neighbour, Dalel Khan, a favourite of Farrukhsiyar and *hakim* of the territory comprising most of the present Gurgaon district. Dalel Khan founded the city of Farrukhnagar which become the centre of his power.<sup>88</sup> Gujarmal who proved stronger of the two, succeeded in adding Hisar-Jhajjar to his expanding estate. He soon liberated Kanod and Narnaul from the clutches of the rulers of Jaipur and also brought under his subjection other adjoining area. His territories now formed an extensive area comprising Hisar, Jhajjar, Hansi, Dadri, Bhiwani, Kanod and Narnaul including of course Rewari which remained the capital.<sup>89</sup>

Gujarmal had hereditary enmity with Bahadur Singh of Ghaseda whose predecessor Hathi Singh was murdered by Mian Singh, a brother of Gujarmal. In retaliation Bahadur Singh sought the help of Badan Singh, the Jat Chief of Bharatpur but did not succeed for the latter happened to be on friendly terms with Rao Gujarmal. Bahadur Singh thereafter tried another trick. With the connivance of his father-in-law Thakur Todarmal of Nimrana, he treacherously murdered Rao Gujarmal (1750).<sup>90</sup> With the death of Rao Gujarmal ended the glorious period of the history of Rewari State. Bhawani Singh, the next ruler was an incompetent ruler under whom the state of Rewari was subjected to the encroachment of the neighbouring states - Jaipur, Farrukhnagar and Jhajjar further reducing it to a small *jagir* of about 23 villages.<sup>91</sup>

Ballabharh, now a small *kasba* in district Faridabad, came to prominence after the death of Aurangzeb. Inhabited mostly by the Jats, it was then ruled by Gopal Singh, a local chief whose only profession was to plunder and raid the environs of Delhi.<sup>92</sup> Unable to check Gopal Singh, Farrukhsiyar, the shadowy Mughal emperor, recognised him as the Chaudhari of Faridabad having right to one sixteenth (one anna in the rupee) of the revenue for his maintenance.<sup>93</sup> His successor Charandas, a man of independent disposition, refused to pay the tax and to submit to the authority. Consequently he was arrested and imprisoned.<sup>94</sup> His successor Ballabha Singh (popularly known as Balu) was a wise ruler who, with the help of Bharatpur ruler succeeded in effecting the release of his father.<sup>95</sup> By his ability



Ballabha Singh soon became the master of the entire territory between Delhi and Faridabad and then built the fort of Ballabhgadh to serve as his headquarters. He also maintained cordial relations with the Bharatpur house which further strengthened his position.<sup>96</sup> Emperor Ahmad Shah, alarmed at the rise of this local power so close to the capital, asked his *wazir* Imad-ul-mulk to deal with Ballabh Singh.<sup>97</sup> Accordingly a combined Mughal-Maratha force led by Aqibat Muhammad Khan, Imad's chief agent, attacked Ballabhgadh (1753). Imad, fully aware of his enemy's strength, also sent additional seven thousand troops with thirty pieces of light artillery.<sup>98</sup> This show of force finally forced Ballabh Singh to come to terms and to agree to pay tax to the Mughals which was due on him. But the peasants in his territory refused to accept the terms because they were afraid that they might not be required to pay again to their master.<sup>99</sup> Consequently a second attack was then decided upon, but before it could materialise, in a heated argument with Aqibat Khan, the Mughal officer, over the realisation of the dues, Ballabh Singh along with his son, his *diwan* and nine others were killed (November 29, 1753).<sup>100</sup> The Jats, defended their stronghold heroically but they were soon outnumbered and the fort fell in the hands of the Mughals.<sup>101</sup> Ballabhgadh was renamed Nizamgadh after Imad's new title Nizamulmuluk Asaf Jah and along with Faridabad was handed over to him as *jagir*.<sup>102</sup> Later on, the successors of Ballabh Singh did succeed with the help of Raja Surajmal of Bharatpur in regaining some of their lost territories.<sup>103</sup>

Towards the middle of the eighteenth century Haryana thus slipped away from the administrative control of the rulers of Delhi. It was mostly parceled out among the local chiefs and was also subjected to some extent to the encroachment of the neighbouring powers. Raja Surajmal of Bharatpur occupied Faridabad and its adjoining area;<sup>104</sup> Madho Singh of Jaipur had taken possession of Kanod and Narnaul;<sup>105</sup> at Rewari and Shahajahanpur ruled the Ahir rulers; Kamgar Khan Baluch, the governor of Farrukhnagar held a vast territory comprising the whole of the districts of Rohtak and Hissar, parts of Gurgaon, Jind and Patiala;<sup>106</sup> Qutb Shah, wrongly called Ruhela (formerly a collector in Saharanpur) usurped parts of the Panipat and Sarhind district west of the Jamuna;<sup>107</sup> Najabat Khan Ruhela held parts of Kurukshetra and Karnal (which included, Indri, Ajimabad, Pipli and Shahbad, i.e., a *jagir* comprising of about 150 villages);<sup>108</sup> Muhammad Amin and Hasan Khan (originally belonging to the Bhattis) took possession of Fatehabad, Rania and Sirsa<sup>109</sup> while Bahadur Khan (once a servant of Kamgar who later entered the services of Imad) was granted the *jagir* of Bahadurgarh.<sup>110</sup> Other minor chiefs of Haryana Asadulla Khan and Hasan Ali Khan (brother and nephew of Kamgar Khan) were the rulers of Tauru and Jhajjar respectively.<sup>111</sup>

### 3. The Afghan-Maratha conflict

#### *The Durrani Invasions (1748, 1750, 1751)*

These anarchical conditions of India specially of Panjab and Haryana greatly facilitated the ambitious scheme of Ahmad Shah, an Afghan chief of the Abdali clan



who rose to power in Afghanistan after the assassination of Nadir Shah in 1747.<sup>1</sup> He was styled by the *darvish* Shah Muhammad Sabir as Durrani Padishah or 'Pearl among kings'.<sup>2</sup> and his clan henceforth came to be known as Durrani. Earlier, while accompanying Nadir Shah to India, he was acquainted with the weakness and imbecility of the central administration of the Mughals.<sup>3</sup> After consolidating his position at home Ahmad Shah now planned a series of expeditions into India. The expeditions, not mere predatory raids, were an indication of the revival of the Afghans as formidable rivals to the Hindu forces specially to the Marathas, making a fresh bid for supremacy on the ruins of the Mughal empire.

After having conquered Qandhar, Kabul and Peshawar Ahmad Shah invaded India for the first time in 1748 with 12000 chosen horsemen.<sup>4</sup> To oppose him Muhammad Shah, the Mughal Emperor, sent an army under Qamruddin Khan (the *Wazir*) with Safdar Jang (*Subahdar* of Oudh), Iswari Singh (The Raja of Jaipur) and Nasir Khan (former Governor of Kabul) as his assistants.<sup>5</sup> The party followed the route via Narela (here the news of the fall of Lahore was received) and was overtaken by Prince Ahmad at Sonapat who then took over the supreme command of the imperial army.<sup>6</sup> At Karnal the Sarhind *faujdar* Ali Muhammad Ruhela's desertion was known.<sup>7</sup> The imperial army left Sarhind on 27th February and advanced further north.<sup>8</sup> On March 2 Ahmad Shah Abdali succeeded in capturing Sarhind.<sup>9</sup> Even after the fall of Lahore and Sarhind the imperial army continued its advance. The *wazir* Qamruddin lost his life but the struggle was continued by his worthy son Muin-ul-mulk who, in the serious encounter at Manupur, defeated the Afghans and forced Ahmad Shah Abdali to retreat.<sup>10</sup> Consequently Muin was appointed governor of the Punjab but before he could settle down, Ahmad Shah invaded the Punjab for the second time in 1750 and succeeded in occupying it. Unsupported by the Delhi court, the Punjab governor found all resistance futile and submitted to the invader.<sup>11</sup> Abdali invaded India for the third time in 1751, again defeated Muin, conquered Kashmir and forced the Mughal Emperor Ahmad Shah to cede him the *subahs* of Lahore and Multan.<sup>12</sup> Muin was now left as the Abdali's governor in Lahore with the promise to send to the victor the surplus revenue of the Panjab and not to transact important matters without final orders from him.<sup>13</sup>

The Abdali invasion gave an opportunity between December 1751 to March 1752 to the Sikhs to renew their plundering raids. Adina Beg, the artful governor of the Jullundhur *Doab*, enlisted their help, collected them in large number and succeeded in carrying an extensive raids in the adjoining regions of the Punjab and Haryana.<sup>14</sup> Perhaps never before in the history of India 'Might is Right' ground down people as mercilessly as then. The Mughal authority was tottering, Alamgir II and his *wazir* Imad-ul-mulk tried to assert the authority of the government, but in vain.<sup>14a</sup>

#### *The Time of Trouble : Durani Invasion (1756-57)*

The first rebel to be attacked was Qutb Shah, who had obtained an imperial grant for some lands in the Saharanpur and Mirat districts.<sup>15</sup> Since after some time



the *wazir* (Imad) transferred these grants to the Marathas, Qutb was forced to try his luck elsewhere. He crossed the Jamuna, entered the Sarhind district and began to seize villages. The *wazir*'s Sindagh regiment, although primarily sent to drive away Qutb Shah, started plundering innocent people of Panipat and other towns in course of their advance.<sup>16</sup> At last they attacked Qutb near Karnal (March 11, 1755) and were on the point of victory due to their numbers when the sudden outburst of a sand-storm spread confusion in the Turk army forcing it to flee in panic to Sonapat and thus abandoning their baggage and tents to plunder. The victorious Qutb Shah laden with spoil marched towards Thanesar, putting a strong garrison in Karnal and receiving tributes from the richer villages on the way. Before Qutb reached Sarhind, Sadiq Beg Khan, the *faujdar*, who was deserted by his Afghan troops, fled to Adina Beg in the Panjab. Qutb took possession of the city alongwith the surrounding districts.<sup>17</sup> He administered the newly acquired territory well. 'He did not molest the poor, but repressed the strong refractory men, so that within his jurisdiction the roads became safe and his followers were held back from practicing oppression'.<sup>18</sup> He next crossed the Satlej and attacked Adina Beg but was signally defeated. It was now Adina Beg's turn to make the move. Accordingly he advanced to the east of the Sutlej and took over the administration of the Sarhind district as far as Thanesar, Mustafabad and Ghuram.<sup>19</sup> The *wazir* recognized Adina Beg's rule in this area in return for a tribute. It is difficult to guess how much tribute was exacted from the poor and oppressed inhabiting this area.

The *wazir* received the news of the rout of his troops against Qutb at Delhi. He pressed the Emperor to start with him at once against the rebels. Basically a coward, the *wazir* discussed plans for recovery of lost territories without fighting although advised demonstration of force by both Kamgar Khan and Najib Khan against the rebels, but in vain.<sup>20</sup> At last when he reached Fakhru garden, outside Sonapat, he learnt of Qutb's defeat at the hands of Adina Beg and then moved on with the Emperor to Panipat to deal with a worst mutiny of his unpaid soldiers.<sup>21</sup> His Badakhshi captains, censured for their disgraceful performance against Qutb, were recalled from Delhi to Panipat and were ordered to bring their troops 'to the muster and receive payment according to the actual number of men under arms.' As this was meant to stop their dishonest gains they resisted. They mobbed the *wazir*, put him to all sorts of insult and abuse, paraded him through the streets and insisted that their salaries should be paid immediately. They did not even listen to the advice of the Emperor. Somehow getting himself out of the clutches of the mutineers, the *wazir* with the help of the contingents of Najib and Bahadur Khan Baluch severely punished the Badakhshis also confiscating *jagirs* of their officers.<sup>22</sup>

Towards the close of 1755, Imad marched to the Punjab following the route via Luni, Shamli, Kairana and Ramraghat. From the last place orders demanding tribute from Najabat Khan, the zamindar of Kunjpura, were sent. The *wazir* along with Ali Gauhar crossed the Jamuna and passing Panipat and Ambala reached Sarhind on February 7, 1756. In the meantime his ally Adina Beg took possession of Lahore



after driving Abdali's agents there. Completely successful in his Punjab expedition the wazir reached Delhi at the end of June, 1756.<sup>23</sup>

After the death of Muin in November 1753, and that of his infant son and successor Muhammad Amin Khan in May, 1754, the province of Panjab fell into disorder and anarchy, largely due to the wilfulness and caprice of the regent mother Mughlani Begam.<sup>24</sup> As stated above Imad-ul-mulk marched to Panjab and brought it under his authority. He appointed Mir Mumin Khan 'the leading nobleman of Lahore', *subahdar* of the province.<sup>25</sup>

Enraged at this change in the administrative set up made by him, Ahmad Shah Abdali invaded India for the fourth time in November, 1756 with greater determination and arrived before Delhi on January 23, 1757.<sup>26</sup> The Abdali had marched from Attock to Delhi without any resistance only suggests the extent of the degradation of the imperial authority.<sup>27</sup> The first opposition which he met came from Antaji Manakshwar, the commander of a Maratha contingent of 5000 troops.<sup>28</sup> Summoned by the emperor to check the progress of the invader, Antaji marched along the road to Karnal. The Afghan advance guard under Jahan Khan in numerous batches was advancing upon the capital from all directions, and one such batch came into conflict with Antaji at Narela. Antaji was pushed back losing about one hundred men and horses. As he was also attacked by Najib on his way back, Antaji finally took shelter at Faridabad, a slightly fortified place of Surajmal. A Durrani force which was sent to besiege the town was slain by the combined Maratha-Jat army. Thereupon Abdali sent Jahan Khan at the head of 20,000 troopers. After giving a tough fight the Jats and the Marathas retreated to Mathura and finally to Kumbher fort.<sup>29</sup> Consequently Abdali's wrath fell upon the Jats also who were not ready to submit so easily. Faridabad was destroyed by fire. Surajmal, the Jat leader, offered only diplomatic submission while his son Jawahar Singh routed an Afghan party foreging near Faridabad and seized nearly 150 of their horses.<sup>30</sup> Abdali now ordered Abdus Samad to meet the situation. Abdus Samad carried execrable massacre of the Jat country—Bulandshahar, Mathura, Ballabgarh, Brindaban, Gokul and Agra.<sup>31</sup> When the government of the country failed in its duty nature came to the rescue of the unfortunate inhabitants. The flow of the Jamuna was choked with dead bodies and its polluted water led to the outbreak of cholera in the Afghan army carrying a heavy toll of life every day.<sup>32</sup>

Abdali decided to return. We had already plundered the imperial city and again subjected its unhappy people to pillage. He obtained from the Mughal Emperor the formal cession of the Panjab, Kashmir, Sind and the Sarhind.<sup>33</sup> With the inclusion of Sarhind Subah the eastern boundary of Abdali's kingdom now extended to the river Jamuna up to the neighbourhood of Panipat. This was placed in charge of Abdus Samad Khan.<sup>34</sup> From Najabat Khan, the zamindar of Kunjapura, a sum of 20 lakhs was also obtained.<sup>35</sup> Abdali departed from India in April, 1757, with immense booty and many captives, leaving his son Timur Shah, as his viceroy at Lahore, with Jahan Khan, the able Afghan general as the latter's *wazir*.<sup>36</sup>



*Ali Gauhar in Southern Haryana* : Ahmad Shah Abdali before returning from India had confirmed Alamgir II in his office and had earlier appointed for sometime the latter's son Ali Gauhar (entitled Shah Alam II) Chancellor of the Empire.<sup>36</sup> The ablest son of the Emperor, Ali Gauhar would have probably restored the dignity of his house if he could have had an army and treasury of his own and got a free hand in reforming the administration. But the disloyal and selfish *wazir* did not provide him any of these and instead pursued him with deadly hostility and finally driven him out of Delhi.<sup>37</sup> We shall only relate here Gauhar's wanderings in southeast Haryana which are relevant to our subject.

In May 1757 Ali Gauhar went to the Baluch settlements in the southeast Haryana to get something out of his *jagirs* there. Hasan Ali Khan (a nephew of Kamgar) the zamindar of Jhajjar at first evaded payment of tribute to him but later following the example of Satbhumi (the widow of the late Sitaram Khazanchi) of Kalina, agreed to pay. The prince's further advance to the Hissar district did not yield any result because of the villagers' flight to the hills and also because of the utter lack of provisions for the troops. The prince next moved to Kanod, put a small garrison there, and came to Narnaul which was vacated by the Jaipur Raja's officers. But the plunder of the innocent populace excited much indignation of Jaipur troops who put an end to the prince's outpost at Kanod and forced him to flee to Rewari and Farrukhnagar. He next attacked Auliya Khan Baluch of Dadri (in the Rohtak district) and secured from him a promise of 50 lakhs as tribute and then proceeded to Jhajjar to restore his outpost there. The news of these adventures reached the court and the *wazir* forced the Emperor to issue orders for recalling the prince. Emboldened by this, the Baluchs robbed the prince of his baggage outside Jhajjar while his soldiers plundered the villages around.<sup>38</sup> The prince in the meantime bribed Vithal Shivdev, Raghunath Rao's lieutenant, to support his cause.<sup>39</sup> The *wazir* too, on the other hand, promised six lakhs to the latter as a reward for abandoning the cause of Ali Gauhar.<sup>40</sup> But Vithal Shivdev did not leave Ali Gauhar and when after facing *wazir's* attack in Delhi the latter escaped to the Maratha camp, full protection was provided.<sup>41</sup>

The *wazir*, therefore, proclaimed the prince a rebel in arms against the lawful government.<sup>42</sup> The latter accompanied by his Maratha ally Vithal Shivdev now decided to march to the Baluch settlements of the southwest Haryana. At Farrukhnagar they fought Mirza Khan and other relatives of the zamindar Musavi Khan Baluch and obtained a promise of Rs. 2,60,000 from them. At Pataudi they received several gifts and provisions sent by Suraj Mal with his son Ratan Singh. During the first half of June 1758 the prince along with Vithal Shivdev thus wandered in Haryana—Farrukhnagar, Rewari, Nahra, Dadri—plundering the villages and levying contribution wherever he could.<sup>43</sup> Vithal Shivdeo, who had received orders from his chief Raghunath Rao (already won over by the *wazir*) to bring the prince along with him did not follow accordingly. He instead left a small escort for the prince under his own son and departed on June 16 from Dadri.<sup>44</sup> Most of the prince's followers had left him by this time. He, therefore, went to Hissar where the Raja of Bikaner at first refused



to give him asylum but later agreed. The prince then gathered a small force, reached Kunjapura (July 31), and thereafter receiving the hospitality of Najib he finally went to Oudh.<sup>45</sup>

The *wazir*, when informed of the departure of Vithal Shivdev, decided to oppose the prince also dragging the Emperor along with him.<sup>46</sup> The Emperor reached Kot Kalan (near Jahjjar) and the *wazir* Bahadurgarh.<sup>47</sup> After learning that the prince was already beyond Jamuna the *wazir* set himself to exacting tributes from the villages and fighting them in case of default. He attacked Jhajjar, Dadri Kalina and other places on Rohtak-Gurgaon border, and collected over two lakhs of rupees till they reached Hissar where he met with stiff opposition of the sturdy villagers behind their mud walls which could be subdued only by turning artillery upon them. Taking advantage of the separation of the Emperor and his *wazir*, the people of Bhiwani shut their sovereign out of their villages while the local population looted the baggage of the imperial army. This was followed by the attack of the Bhattis of the Ghaggar region on the Delhi camp putting the imperialists to great sufferings and finally forcing them to abandon the project and return to the capital (November 22, 1758).<sup>48</sup>

The administration of Timur for one year (from May 1757 to April 1758) was a period of utter lawlessness and disorder. The Sikhs, infuriated by the maltreatment of their saint Sodhi Barbhag Singh of Kartarpur and the demolition of their holy shrine rose to rebellion from all sides.<sup>49</sup> These fanatical outrages (committed by Jahan Khan) further led them to retaliatory actions for which they joined Adina Beg Khan who offered them heavy tribute besides share in the loot.<sup>50</sup> Adina Beg who was already suspicious of Jahan Khan, avoided attending the latter's court although showed willingness to undertake the administration of the Jullundhar doab. He along with his Sikh allies now decided to deal with the Afghans firmly.<sup>51</sup> A clever diplomat, Adina Beg anticipated a fresh Durrani invasion for the restoration of hold over Panjab and also realised that the only power who could meet this challenge were the Marathas. A Maratha contingent under Raghunath Rao was then at Delhi contemplating conquest of the Punjab to secure their hold on the capital. In the first week of January, 1757 Adina Beg contacted Malhar Rao then touring in the Karnal district and also made repeated requests to Raghunath Rao to extend the Maratha dominions to the Khaibar Pass. He also promised to pay one lakh rupees for every day of marching and rupees fifty thousand for halting.<sup>52</sup> Raghunath Rao accepted Adina Beg's offer. A review of the circumstances leading to the Maratha entry into the politics of the Delhi and consequently their appearance in Haryana would not be out of place here.

#### *The Maratha entry into the north : the background*

Not a sudden political phenomenon, the Maratha entry into the Delhi politics dates back to the times of Shahu. Balaji Vishvanath, the first Peshwa, marched to Delhi in 1718 to obtain approval of the Emperor Farrukhsiyar for the peace treaty agreed between Shahu and Husain Ali. The treaty was finally approved in March,



1719 by Muhammad Shah.<sup>53</sup> The prestige of the Marathas further increased under Baji Rao whose mother Radha Bai undertook pilgrimage tour to various places in northern India including Kurukshetra and everywhere she was provided escort by the imperial government and local chiefs.<sup>54</sup> Then followed Baji Rao's sudden appearance before Delhi on March 28, 1737 when after having plundered the suburbs of the capital and routing a Mughal force, the Maratha army, in its return march visited Rewari (March 31).<sup>55</sup> But the first phase of Maratha ascendancy at Delhi court may be said to have actually begun from the death of *wazir* Qamr-ud-din and Emperor Muhammad Shah in 1748 and continued with short intervals till the battle of Panipat in 1761.<sup>56</sup>

The Marathas gained considerably in the struggle for power between the Turani and Irani parties at the Delhi court. They at first supported Safdar Jang, the head of Irani party against Intizam-ud-daulah, son of the late Qamr-ud-din Khan. Safdar Jang employed them against Rohillas and the Bangash Afghans (1751) who were committing aggression in his home province of Oudh and Allahabad.<sup>57</sup> The Maratha victories in these ventures brought forth Dattaji Sindhia for the first time into prominence.<sup>58</sup> In view of the Abdali invasion (1751-52) the Marathas entered into a subsidiary alliance with Safdar Jang, which is very important in so far as it explains the causes of the Maratha entry into the north. According to the terms of agreement the Peshwa was promised thirty lakhs of rupees for keeping Abdali out of India; another twenty lakhs for defending the Empire against internal danger; was granted *chauth* on the revenues of Sind, Panjab, and certain districts in upper Ganga Doab to meet the expenses; further he was to be appointed governor of Agra, Mathura, Narnaul and Ajmer without disturbing the existing administrative set up.<sup>59</sup> But the pact did not materialise. The Emperor had formally ceded the Punjab to Abdali and his agent Qalandar Khan had been given the royal rescript to this effect (April 23, 1752).<sup>60</sup> Since there was no more necessity of the Maratha help, the Emperor declined to confirm the treaty. The Maratha leaders demanded fifty lakhs for their immediate withdrawal, and further started plundering the area around the capital which greatly worried the Delhi court. The Marathas finally retired with a promise that Ghazi-ud-din (the eldest son of Nizam-ud-mulk) who was friendly to them would be appointed viceroy of the Deccan. But the promise could not be fulfilled. Ghazi-ud-din was poisoned to death by other aspirants to his new assignment.<sup>61</sup>

In 1753 the Marathas joined the Emperor and deserted their old ally Safdar Jang who was deeply involved in the struggle for power at Delhi court.<sup>62</sup> Raghunath Rao accompanied by leading Maratha nobles with a huge army was sent to the north to procure money, but before their arrival Safdar Jang was defeated, returned to Lucknow and died a broken hearted man (October, 1753).<sup>63</sup> Passing through Rajasthan the Maratha army reached Delhi (May, 1754) while its advance guard under Khande Rao Holkar marched to the capital, had interview with the Emperor (December 22, 1753) and received presents.<sup>64</sup>



The *wazir* Intizam-ud-daulah and the *mir-bakshi* Imad-ul-mulk—the deadly enemies, had their own plans—the former aiming at a united front of the Nawab of Oudh, Surajmal and Rajput princes, while the latter with his Maratha allies contemplating means to keep intact their hold over the Emperor. In this struggle for power Imad-ul-mulk came out as the prime-minister, deposed Ahmad Shah and declared Alamgir II as the Emperor.<sup>65</sup> As Raghunath Rao did not get the promised price for his assistance to the *wazir*, the Marathas took recourse to plundering the capital and its adjoining region. The Maratha soldiers first started molesting the villages in the northern suburbs of Delhi (August 31, 1754). The suffering Dahiya farmers of Jalalpur and other villages near Narela retaliated making surprise attack on the Deccanese foraging parties and carrying off their horses and property. Malhar Rao fought them and attacked their three villages—Jalalpur, Nahra and Nahri. Many other villages of the region suffered the same fate and the booty carried off from them sold in Delhi. Complaints made to the imperial authority against these outrages were of no avail.<sup>66</sup> Imad eventually agreed to pay eighty two and a half lakh of which only one third could be collected.<sup>67</sup> The new Emperor showed his gratitude to the Marathas by issuing a royal script (October 25, 1754) by which Kurukshetra and Gaya, the two holy places of the Hindus, were surrendered to the Peshwa and the Muslim officers were withdrawn at these places which were then placed under Hingne brothers, Peshwa's agents at Delhi.<sup>68</sup> Raghunath Rao after crossing the Jamuna returned via Badarpur, Gurgaon, Jhajjar, Narnaul, Singhana to Pushkar, while Malhar Rao followed the route via Naraina, Rewari and Pataudi districts levying tributes from Gujar and Baluch landlords of Haryana.<sup>69</sup>

The fourth Durrani invasion of India in 1756 again necessitated the despatch of a strong army from Poona to Delhi under Malhar Rao and Raghunath Rao. The former left Poona earlier but was joined by the latter at Indore (February 14, 1757). By this time Delhi was already under the Durrani occupation. Ahmad Shah appointed Najib-ud-daulah *mir bakshi* (February 19, 1757) and was to act as his plenipotentiary after the former's departure from India.<sup>70</sup> So long as Durrani was in India Raghunath Rao was hesitant to march straight to Delhi. He instead entered Rajasthan first and when Durrani reached the confines of Afghanistan, planned the recovery of Gangetic *doab* (June—July, 1757).<sup>71</sup> The *wazir* Imad intended on putting the Marathas against Najib whom the emperor also desired to get rid of. Malhar Rao and Raghunath Rao joined the advance Maratha party in the suburbs of Delhi. A sharp encounter between the Marathas and Najib took place on August 11.<sup>72</sup> As a fresh Durrani invasion in support of Najib, their best Indian ally, was feared, Raghunath Rao sent Manaji Paygude for intelligence up to Thanesar and also urged the Peshwa to depute Dattaji Sindhia to take his position in the Punjab and to keep himself in touch with Abdali's movements in that quarter.<sup>73</sup> Death, desertion and famine forced Najib finally to open negotiations with the Marathas. On September 3, Najib agreed to vacate Delhi, resign the office of *mir bakshi* and pay an indemnity of five lakhs to the Marathas who were thus left supreme in the capital.<sup>74</sup>



Having ousted Najib from Delhi in September 1757, the Marathas entered Haryana and collected revenues from Kamgar Khan Baluch in Rohtak district through his superintendent Satbhami.<sup>75</sup> Malhar's women who had come to Kurukshetra for a religious bath on a Somavati Amavasya day (January 9, 1758) were attacked at Shahbad by a contingent of Abdus-Samad Khan, Abdali's governor at Sarhind. The Marathas fought bravely, slew many Afghans and seized their horses.<sup>76</sup> Malhar Rao further plundered Taraori and Karnal and collected a tribute of five lakhs from Kunjapura, then crossed the Jamunā, met Raghunath Rao and discussed the scheme of the conquest of the Punjab.<sup>77</sup>

The expedition of Raghunath Rao began towards the end of February, 1758. Passing through Thanesar the army reached Mughal-ki-Sarai near Ambala (March 5) and the vicinity of Sarhind (March 8). With the assistance of Adina Beg and his Sikh allies, the fort of Sarhind was captured, Abdali's lieutenants Abdus-Samad Khan and Jangbaz Khan were imprisoned and the city was given to plunder. As the formidable Maratha army approached, Timur Shah followed by Jahan Khan decided to return to Afghanistan (April, 1758). The Marathas, now complete master of the Punjab, pursued the enemy till they captured Attock, Peshawar and Multan.<sup>78</sup> After having made proper arrangements for the administration of the newly acquired territories Raghunath Rao 'prepared to return (from Lahore) to the Deccan at the express orders of the Peshwa'.<sup>79</sup> He appointed Adina Beg, an experienced administrator, as the Governor of the Punjab, who could successfully deal with the Sikhs, and from whom the Marathas could easily realise the settled tribute.<sup>80</sup> Satisfied with his achievements Raghunath Rao returned to Delhi via Thanesar where they had a religious bath on Somavati Amavasya (June 5).<sup>81</sup>

The Maratha settlement in the Punjab did not survive long. After Adina Beg's death (September 15, 1758) advance Maratha detachment from Peshawar and Attock were recalled.<sup>82</sup> Imad-ul-mulk sent his officers to escheat the cash and property of the deceased governor but Raghunath Rao who had received the news of Adina Beg's death in Malwa, sent a strong force to the Punjab led by Sabaji Patel who overtook Imad's agents at Sonapat and drove them back to the capital and then proceeded up to Peshawar.<sup>83</sup> Another Maratha contingent led by Dattaji Sindhia was heading towards the Punjab at the instruction of Raghunath Rao.<sup>84</sup> This marked a reversal of the Maratha policy in the north. In effect it meant the passing of Maratha leadership from Malhar Rao, a follower of conciliation and compromise with regard to the Muslims of northern India, to Dattaji Sindhia 'a rough impatient hustling soldier'.<sup>85</sup> Dattaji met Imad at Delhi who told him about the possible Durrani attack and stressed the need for the fortification of the frontier outposts by the Marathas and offered seven/eight lakhs of rupees for the purpose (January 31, 1759). Dattaji accepted the terms, called Sabaji from Peshawar and met him at Machhiwara to gather fresh information about the frontiers so as to make necessary administrative changes.<sup>86</sup>

After his return from the Punjab (May, 1759) Dattaji crossed the Jamuna opposite Panipat at Ramraghat and encamped at Shamli, where he invited Najib to



settle terms.<sup>87</sup> To overawe Najib, a large Maratha force was also sent to Saharanpur district. Najib agreed to the proposal. But Dattaji's companions, in opposition to his wish, wanted to capture Najib who also grew suspicious and the plot eventually failed due to the courage shown by Najib and his chief officers.<sup>88</sup> This resulted in open breach between Dattaji and Najib and remained a source of deadly hostility of the latter towards the Sindhis in the following period.

As most of Najib's territory fell into Dattaji's hands, the former took up a defensive position at Sukkartal (June 1759) and on September 15 repulsed Maratha assault.<sup>89</sup> Early November came the news of Abdali's entry into the Punjab which forced Dattaji to raise the siege at Sukkartal (Dec. 8, 1759) and hasten to check the progress of Durrani in the Punjab. Najib too left Sukkartal (December 16) and advanced towards Jamuna to welcome his master, Ahmad Shah Durrani.<sup>90</sup> With the *resume* of the circumstances leading to the Maratha entry into the politics of the Delhi court and their subsequent movements in Haryana and the Punjab we shall now proceed to Durrani invasion of India (1759).

#### *The Durrani Invasion (1759-61)*

After suppressing rebellions at home Ahmad Shah got ready to invade India. He had this time the advantage of securing the co-operation of the Ruhelas who had been harassed by the Marathas, and that of Nawab of Oudh who also came round the view that the Marathas, who were friendly to Imad, the greatest enemy of his house, cannot be relied upon. Ahmad Shah was also in constant touch with Najib-ud-daulah, his greatest Indian ally who had urged him to punish the Marathas.<sup>91</sup> Shah Waliullah, a Muslim theologian of Delhi, strongly advocated the revival of Muslim power in India in suppression of the Marathas, the Jats as well as the Sikhs. He wrote a detailed letter to Ahmad Shah, 'one of the most important documents of the 18th century' it appraised Abdali of the political development in the country, requesting him to relieve the Muslims from the Maratha domination.<sup>92</sup> The Marathas, on the other hand, could not gain the support of the Rajputs already alienated by Balaji Rao's unsympathetic policy towards them, nor could they secure the alliance of the Sikhs who had now become a considerable power in the Punjab. The undiplomatic policy of Balaji, in fact, deprived the Marathas of the support of many indigenous powers at a very critical moment when they were required to face the formidable combination of the Durrani and their Indian allies.

Ahmad Shah left Qandhar in the beginning of September and reached Lahore in November (1759) and towards the end of that month brought Punjab under his subjection. By that time the wicked *wazir* Imad had planned and executed the murder of Alamgir II who was found in league with Durrani and Shuja-ud-daula of Oudh, and declared Shah Jahan II (a Prince of the royal family), the new Emperor.<sup>93</sup> After making administrative arrangements for the proper governance of the Punjab, the Abdali moved from Lahore by way of Govindwal, Khizrabad (near Rupar), Sarhind,



Ambala and Taraori.<sup>95</sup> At the last mentioned place the Durrani soldiers were supplied with scarlet caps prepared by the Afghans of Kunjapura under Najib's instructions.<sup>96</sup>

#### *The Battle of Taraori and after*

Dattaji who had raised the siege of Sukkatal decided to meet the Shah. He crossed the Jamuna at the Andhera Ghat (December 18, 1759) and then finalised his plans at Kunjapura. The best 25,000 troops he himself retained while the others under Janakoji and Imad formed his rear towards Delhi to give support to the main body in an emergency and in case of disaster to escape towards Delhi.<sup>97</sup> Dattaji then proceeded towards Kurukshetra and sent Janakoji and Imad to Karnal.<sup>98</sup> The Maratha advance guard of 5000 under Bhoite with 1000 Mughalia troops routed a Afghan party of scouts near Taraori and pursued them further.<sup>99</sup> Thereupon the Shah ordered Shah Pasand Khan with 4000 troops to advance. The Marathas at the sight of this advancing Afghans army fled away giving hundreds of their men to slaughter. When Dattaji came on the scene and saw numerous headless trunks scattered all over, he decided to retire to his base at Kunjapura immediately.<sup>100</sup> The Abdali, on the other hand, forded the Jamuna near Buria, and was joined at Saharanpur by Najib and then the combined forces marched along the eastern bank of Jamuna to Delhi.<sup>101</sup>

Learning this, Dattaji wound up his camp at Kunjapura (December 27) and was now mainly concerned at saving the capital from falling into the enemy's hands.<sup>102</sup> Instead of supporting Dattaji in this right cause the treacherous *wazir* deserted him and took shelter with Surajmal.<sup>103</sup> At Sonapat Dattaji halted for sometime to gather information about enemy's movements but the past Maratha excesses had already turned the peasantry hostile and could not be relied upon in regard to intelligence. Dattaji posted his men at all the fords on the Jamuna while Sabaji Patel with 700 men reached Barari ghat. Dattaji too after a short visit to Delhi sent all the families in his camp to Rewari and then himself encamped at Barari ghat on January 4, 1760 where misfortune was awaiting him.<sup>104</sup> In a serious encounter between the Afghans and the Marathas the latter suffered reverses. The Maratha lost Dattaji and his brother Jotiba, while Janakoji was badly wounded. The Marathas, after this calamity fled towards Delhi but were pursued beyond the capital and large numbers of them were put to the sword.<sup>105</sup>

Janakoji being young and wounded, the leadership of the Maratha cavalry was now taken over by Malhar Rao.<sup>106</sup> Malhar was pursued by the Durrani forces at Narnaul, Rewari and Delhi. Each time Malhar evaded meeting the enemy and came to Bahadurgarh, from there to Kalkaji and then entered the *doab* with a view to desolating Najib's territories and intercept his treasury (of ten lakhs) on its way to the Afghan camp. But the Maratha scheme could not materialise for the Abdali had already despatched a strong force under his able commanders to protect Rohilkhand from falling into the hands of the Marathas. Malhar ultimately had to take shelter



with Surajmal.<sup>107</sup> The invading Durrani army at the advice of Najib finally established headquarters at Aligarh from where it was possible to capture Maratha out-posts in the Gangetic *doab* and thus to establish direct contact with Avadh.<sup>108</sup>

### *Towards Panipat*

The loss of Punjab and the Maratha reverses at Taraori and Bararighat meant complete disappearance of the Maratha ascendancy in the politics of the north.<sup>109</sup> To recover this, the Peshwa ultimately decided to send Sadashiv Rao Bhau 'the hero of Udgir' with a large army and with him Vishwasrao, the seventeen years old son of the Peshwa, as nominal commander-in-chief.<sup>110</sup> Sadashiv Rao was given 'inadequate troops, insufficient ammunitions and meagre finances' and had little time to work out essential details of his campaign,<sup>111</sup> which was bound to be most serious action of his time. This besides, more time was lost in leaving the Deccan and crossing the rivers—Chambal and Gambhir, a delay which enabled the Durrani to contact and unite his possible Indian Muslim allies and thus making it a war between Islam and the Kafirs. Bhau's diplomatic negotiations to gain alliance in northern India—of the Rajputs and Suja-ud-daulah did not yield any result for they were finally won over by the Durrani.<sup>112</sup> In June Bhau was joined at his camp (between Chambal and Gambhir) by Malhar Rao and Janakoji and later by Suraj Mal and Imad-ul-mulk.<sup>113</sup> He learnt here that collection of money from the Gangetic *doab* is no more possible because of the presence of Jahan Khan and Najib there.<sup>113a</sup> Further, the peace negotiation already started between Malhar Rao and Hafiz Rehmat Khan were abruptly ended on the arrival of Bhau first, because the Marathas were not serious about it, and second, their demands were exorbitant.<sup>114</sup>

Suraj Mal, the could be ally of the Marathas, did not approve a pitched battle—a dangerous experiment in northern setting, therefore favoured guerilla method of fighting. He also very wisely suggested 'leaving heavy equipment, artillery, families etc. at Jhansi, Gwalior or any of the Jat forts and the Maratha cavalry to restore to constant foraging and skirmishing and threaten the home lands of Afghans and Rohillas so that they could be compelled to desert Durrani who would ultimately leave for Afghanistan'. Malhar Rao agreed to this proposal but Bhau simply rejected it as 'the chatter of goatherds and zamindars' who were ignorant of scientific war. He instead decided to march on Delhi.<sup>115</sup>

Bhau's advance guard under Malhar Rao, Janakoji and Balvant Rao Mehendale assaulted the capital on July 22 and on August 1 the fort came into Maratha possession.<sup>116</sup> The capture of Delhi though not of much importance so long as the Muslim confederacy remained in tact, only made Bhau prouder and haughtier as is gathered from the accounts of Nana Phadnis and Mir Dard.<sup>117</sup> Although it is true that it caused despair and dismay in the Afghan camp and there were reports of the Abdali's readiness to return to his own country,<sup>118</sup> but Sadashivrao who had the responsibility of protecting the interests of the Marathas in the north should have decided to fight

his formidable enemy the Abdali only when his resources were superior to that of his adversary.<sup>119</sup> Imad, the treacherous *wazir* finding that Bhau was trying to win over his enemy Suja-ud-daulah by a promise of wazirship, gone under the tutelage of Surajmal and incited him against the Marathas. Surajmal, never happy with the Maratha contact either, decided to keep himself aloof from the contest. His main object was to be in the control of the imperial capital which was naturally turned down by the Marathas.<sup>120</sup> Bhau's support of Shuja was nothing more than an excuse for Surajmal. There seems to be no basis for the charge levelled by Grant Duff, Prof. J.N. Sarkar and quite recently Natwar Singh<sup>121</sup> that Surajmal's defection was only due to Bhau's misconduct.<sup>122</sup>

The Maratha stay at the capital was full of difficulties. The health of men and animals was adversely affected by the rainy season. There was scarcity of money, food and fodder and the bankers had dispersed from the area around the capital. Besides this, maintenance of the royal family and payment of the palace staff made Bhau's position very difficult.<sup>123</sup> Bhau's despairs find mention in his despatches to the Peshwa. Reports from his camp at Delhi said :<sup>124</sup>

There is no money for paying even one week's subsistence in a month; our men and horses are fasting.

The silver from the ceiling of the Diwan-e-Khas worth about nine lakhs could last hardly for a month or so. On September 15, 1760 Bhau wrote to the Peshwa :<sup>125</sup>

There is starvation in my camp; but no loan can be had; no revenue is being paid to me by any *kamavisdar* (collector), in spite of my having frequently written to them. My troops are going through many a fast.

Similar spirit is voiced in the letters of Nana Phadnis and Bapuji Ballal and many others. Ballal wrote to Naropant :<sup>126</sup>

Even men in higher position have to go without food for a day or so. Horses do not see gram at all. Army has lost all spirit. Loans cannot be raised anywhere. Such a calamity has never fallen before. Men and animals have become weak . . . The end does not seem good.

The situation became worst by the middle of September 1760 and forced Bhau to agree to start peace negotiation with Suja. The terms offered on behalf of Durrani were—Sarhind to remain the eastern boundary of the Durrani empire, Shah Alam, Shuja-ud-daulah and Najib-ud-daulah to be declared as Emperor, *Wazir* and *Mir Bakshi* respectively, and Sadashiv Rao Bhau not to interfere with this arrangement any more.<sup>127</sup> The final shape of the proposal implied cession of the Punjab to the Afghans, retirement of the Marathas from the north and the farthest limit of



their empire not to go beyond river Chambal. Bhau who did not believe in 'expediency and political compromises' did not accept the terms which were no doubt ignoble and 'their acceptance (in fact) meant undoing the work of the past forty years',<sup>128</sup> but that would have certainly averted the catastrophe that befell upon the Marathas a few months afterwards.<sup>129</sup> And the recovery of the lost ground too would not have been difficult but the protection of the lives of his soldiers should have been a concern of highest importance to a commander than his personal honour and prestige.<sup>129</sup>

Towards the close of September Bhau decided to leave Delhi. His plan was to visit Kunjapura and Kurukshetra and then either to return to Delhi or cross the Jamuna and fight in Gangetic *doab* in Saharanpur or Meerut district.<sup>130</sup> Before leaving Delhi he made some arrangements for the safety of the capital and its line of communication but this proved to be quite inadequate.

Bhau left Delhi on October 10, 1760 for Kunjapura, a fortified town on the Jamuna under Najabat Khan and where supplies of money and material from the Punjab had been collected for Durrani. Abdus Samad Khan, the Governor of Sarhind was also posted there at that time. Before the Maratha onslaught the Afghans gave way (October 17). Abdus Samad Khan, Najabat Khan and Qutab Shah all lost their lives. The booty which fell into the hands of the Marathas was enormous—six and a half lakh rupees in cash, two lakh maunds of wheat and other provisions, 3000 horses, many camels, large number of guns and stores of munitions.<sup>131</sup>

The Marathas celebrated their victory with great enthusiasm on Dusehra, the October 19, 1760. They stayed at Kunjapura for sometime and were to visit Kurukshetra to perform religious rites and then return to Delhi. Accordingly they left Kunjapura on October 25 and were in the neighbourhood of Taraori when the disturbing news of Abdali's crossing the Jamuna at Baghpat was received. Finding his rear been cut, Bhau hurriedly marched towards Panipat, and despatched a few contingents in advance to gather information about the actual position of the enemy.<sup>132</sup>

Ahmad Shah crossed the Jamuna at Baghpat on October 25 and entered his tents in Fakhru garden at Sonapat. His entire army crossed the Jamuna in three days (25-27th October). Maratha contingent of a thousand soldiers under Baji Hari Deshpande, found fast asleep, was cut to pieces. At Samalakha (October 28) a serious action took place between the advanced Maratha patrols and the Afghans in which about one and a half thousand Marathas and one thousand Afghans lost their lives. The same day Ahmad Shah reached Ganaur and stayed there for three days (28th-30th October), arrived Samalakha on the following day and finally fixed his camp in the neighbourhood of Panipat on November 1, where the Marathas led by Sadashivrao Bhau had already arrived on Wednesday, October 29, 1760.<sup>133</sup>

### *The rival camps*

The Maratha encampment was set up to the northwest and southwest of Panipat close to the Shah Nahar which was the main source of its water supply. The west



and the east of the Maratha camp were protected by the canal and the Panipat hill while in front stretched 'a broad dry and dusty plain'. Although well defended, the site had hardly any scope for manoeuvring. The Maratha entrenchments, covering a vast area (about 10 kms. in length and 4 kms. in depth) had included the city within its defence perimeter. The entrenchments were planned, designed and executed under the able direction of Ibrahim Khan Gardi. The whole camp was made defensible from all the sides by a judicious use of artillery and appeared like a 'well-defended moat'.<sup>134</sup>

As against this, the Abdali had made adjustment many a time according to the changing conditions when the Marathas were on the offensive and continuously firing on his camp. He shifted to the riverside 10 kms. to the southeast to escape air and water pollution. The Afghan encampment spread along the villages of Behrampur, Bapauli, Mirzapur and Goyenla with Chhajpur forming the battle-ground between the opposing armies. Towards the end of December, the Abdali finally moved to the north astride the Delhi road. The battlefield was now for most part, the villages of Risalu and Nimbdi.<sup>135</sup>

The strength of the contending parties as given by Kashiraj and Muhammad Jafar Shamlu, the two eye-witnesses, contain diametrically divergent figures<sup>136</sup> but a more rational view seems to be that taken by Prof. J.N. Sarkar, according to whom the number of the Afghan army was 60,000 half of which were Abdali's own men (23,000 horse and 7,000 foot) and the other half his Indian allies (7000 horse and 23,000 foot).<sup>137</sup> The Maratha army consisted of 45,000 soldiers in cavalry, infantry and artillery.<sup>138</sup>

A detailed breakdown of the two armies approximately calculated by J.N. Sarkar is as follows :<sup>139</sup>

*Durrani*—(Left Wing) Shah Pasand (5,000, all horse), Najib (15,000, all foot and dismounted cavalry), Shuja (3,000, one-third being foot-musketeers). (Centre) Shah Wali Khan (19,000 men with 1,000 camel-swivels). (Right Wing) Ahmad Bangash (1,000 foot), a small gap, Hafiz Rahmat and Dundi Khan (14,000, only one-fourth or less being cavalry), Amir Beg (Kabuli infantry) and Barkhurdar Khan (Persian cavalry), these last two together 3,000 men.

Total 60,000.

*Maratha*—(Left Wing) Ibrahim Khan Gargi (8,000 all foot-musketeers), Damaji Gaikwad (2,500 horse), Vittal Shivdev (1,500 horse), some petty captains (2,000 horse in all), (Centre) Bhau and Vishwas Rao with the household troops (13,500). (Right Wing) Antaji Manakeshwar (1,000 horse), Satvoji Jadav (1,500 horse), minor captains (2,000 horse), Jaswant Rao Pawar (1,500), Shamsheer Bahadur (1,500), Jankoji Sindhia (7,000), Malharrao Holkar (3,000).

Total 45,000.

The feudal character, lack of common cementing bond between its different contingents, absence of co-ordination among its commanders, and large number of non-combatants attached to cavalry may be said to be the main disadvantages of the



Maratha army. The Maratha horsemen were lightly equipped scantily clad which perhaps led to Ahmad Shah's contemptuous remark 'naked backed' about them.<sup>140</sup> And their heavy and large guns were very difficult to alter at their level and consequently their shots usually passed over enemy troops and fell away in the rear.<sup>140a</sup>

The Afghan army, besides having better horses, had more efficient and mobile artillery and its officers were clad in armours which the Marathas hardly wore. The superiority of the Afghan army in its composition, movements and discipline has been very aptly commented upon by Prof. J.N. Sarkar. He wrote :<sup>141</sup>

The strict enforcement of order in camp and battlefield, the rigid punishment of the least disobedience in any subordinate, the control of every officer's movements according to the plan of the supreme chief, the proper gradation of officers forming an unbroken chain between the generalissimo and the common soldier, the regular transmission of his orders by an efficient staff organisation and above all the fine control of the troops—which distinguished Ahmad Shah's army, were unapproached by any other Asiatic force of that age. Above all there was the transcendent genius for war and diplomacy and the towering personality of the master—who had risen like Nadir from dust and attained to almost the same pre-eminence of fortune and invincibility in war as Nadir.

#### *The Pre-Battle Encounters*

Between November 1 and January 14 when the final battle was fought there were brushes and skirmishes almost every day between the contending parties and sometimes fire was also exchanged. The most important engagements were those of November 19, 22 and December 7. On November 19 a close contest between Marathas and Wazir Shah Wali Khan's patrol parties took place. The Marathas, although having an upper hand in the beginning, had to retire to their camp in view of the reinforcement received by the enemy.<sup>142</sup> That the Marathas were in high spirit and morale throughout November can be gathered from a number of despatches of this period<sup>143a</sup> which may perhaps be an exaggeration due to the Maratha misunderstanding of Abdali's initial restraint and his pre-occupation with the shifting of his camp from the original position.<sup>143</sup> On December 7 a major encounter between Sultan Khan (Najib's brother) and Balwant Rao Mehendale took place. Despite their success in turning back the Rohilla attack, the Marathas suffered a great loss in the death of Balwant Rao, 'a brave soldier, a fearless general, besides a near relation and a personal friend of Sadashivrao Bhau.'<sup>144</sup>

This was followed by the death of Govindpant on December 17 who was entrusted with the important task of attacking the upper *doab* to stop the grain convoys which Najib's men were sending to Abdali's camp and 'to sack the homes of the Rohillas and Shuja's northern districts' and thus to corner Abdali at Panipat and make things difficult for his allies. But unfortunately Govindpant was killed in an

action against Atai Khan, and this seriously threatened Maratha line of communication.<sup>145</sup> Whatever collection he had sent to Bhau most of it fell into the hands of Abdali's men.<sup>146</sup> This was followed by the massacre of 20,000 non-combatant Marathas, issued out from their camp to gather firewood and fodder, by Shah Pasand Khan and his men on night patrol.<sup>147</sup>

With these long series of mishap, the Maratha camp turned into a beleaguered township after the third week of December. The road to Delhi had been cut off, and Kunjapura the rear, had been taken over by Daler Khan.<sup>148</sup> The only direction from which provisions sometimes reached the Marathas was the northwest, from Alha Singh Jat of Patiala but this source too was soon cut off.<sup>149</sup> This sad plight of the Maratha camp explains the last effort made by Bhau 'to arrange a peace at any price between him and the Shah'. The Durrani was also inclined to accept the offer but Najib-ud-daulah and the influential Qazi Idris prevailed upon the Shah not to accept the terms and not to lose such a golden opportunity to sweep clean Hindustan of the Marathas.<sup>150</sup> The condition of the Maratha camp on the eve of the final battle has been vividly portrayed by contemporary writers. J.N. Sarkar also gives a graphic description :<sup>151</sup>

There was no food and no firewood for men and no grass for the horses. The stench of carcases of men and beasts lying uncremated and unburied and the effluvia of the evacuations of four lakhs of living creatures, made the confines of the entrenchment a living hell for human beings.

Sadashiv Rao Bhau's decision to offer battle does not seem to be spontaneous nor was it unanimous. Holkar and Janakoji were in favour of postponement for a few days till a final reply was received from the other side.<sup>152</sup> But Bhau was in quite a desperate mood for his officers and men were starving and food was not available. They cried in agony, 'Do not let us perish in this misery. Let us make a valiant struggle against the enemy; and then what Fate has ordained will happen.'<sup>153</sup>

Bhau made a last bid for saving peace. His envoy, Balak Ram, the betel-bearer, carried the following message to Kashiraja in his master's own hand :<sup>154</sup>

The water has now risen above the level of head. If anything is possible, do it now, or else give me a frank refusal, as no time remains for writing and discussion.

Sadashiv Rao Bhau had no time to wait for hardly his message reached its destination, the Maratha army began to move.

### *The Battle Plans*

Maratha leaders were sharply divided over the strategy to be employed on the battlefield. Malhar Rao Holkar and many others like Surajmal earlier, favoured the



traditional method (*Ganimi Kawa* or the guerilla 'hit and run' tactics) whom the Muslim historians contemptuously called 'mode of robbers or brigands'. In this method, in which the Marathas were at home, aimed at ravaging the country where the enemy was encamped.<sup>155</sup> This was strongly opposed by Ibrahim Khan Gardi backed by Sadashivrao who favoured straight action by infantry. The battle was to be offered on the entire front and as such no specific plan seems to have been drawn.<sup>156</sup> The main Maratha objective was 'to breakthrough the ranks of the Afghan army, advance past the right hand corner of its camp, carry the entire army and baggage to the enemy's rear and with the river at the back fight out an action',<sup>157</sup> but unfortunately the women, camp followers and the heavy cannons made its execution rather impossible. It was only through a decisive action deliverance of the Maratha army was possible.<sup>158</sup>

In view of the diverse and mutually irreconcilable elements such as Najib-ud-daulah and Hafiz Rahmat Khan in the army, the Durrani had been very careful in working out his plan of war.<sup>159</sup> To rule out any possibility of defection of his Indian allies, Ahmad Shah put his own troops in between their forces, kept his reserve ready for any emergency and placed himself not in the front but behind the fighting line in order to direct and control the warfare.<sup>160</sup>

### *The Battle*

The battle which lasted 6-7 hours, from about 9 in the morning to about 3.30 in the afternoon, passed through three distinct phases—in the first, the Marathas gained initial success which, however, they lost in the second but continued to give a tough fight till the reinforcements thrown in by Abdali turned the table against the Marathas, while the last stage saw the collapse of the Maratha resistance and the complete rout of their army.<sup>161</sup>

The Marathas began the offensive with a cannonade and fought with valour gaining some initial success. Ibrahim Khan Gardi charged the right wing of the Durrani army led by Hafiz Rahmat Khan and Dunde Khan so furiously that about eight to nine thousand of the Ruhelas were wounded or slain. While the infantry advanced, the heavy guns had to be left behind because of the difficulty in moving them on an uneven ground. Nor were the Maratha losses any less serious. Six of Ibrahim's battalions were almost entirely washed out while he himself was badly wounded. The assistance of the cavalry which the Gardi needed most could not be provided.<sup>162</sup>

In another front, Sadashivrao Bhau's cavalry attacked the Durrani Centre under Shah Wali Khan and pressed it so hard that he seemed to carry everything before him. 'The fighting was so violent', observed Kashi Raj, 'that the earth and sky could not be seen and the eye of heaven became dazzled at beholding this spectacle'.<sup>163</sup> The Afghan casualties were very heavy, and among them was Haji Atai Khan, the slayer of Govind Pant. With no immediate rescue the Wazir's despair was natural, but on the other hand, Bhau too could not force his advantage to

the extent of pushing through in the Wazir's ranks to the river bank. Abdali's reserves would not have allowed him to proceed unmolested. Besides, women and large number of non-combatants in Bhau's camp posed a problem for there was no certainty about their safe escort nor could they be left to the tender mercies of the enemy.<sup>164</sup>

But the Abdali's reinforcements of 13,000 fresh troops to the right wing and the centre at this critical stage turned the scale decisively against the already exhausted Maratha army.<sup>165</sup> Bhau, on the other hand, does not seem to have left any reserve nor does he seem to have 'maintained dependable line of communication which would have kept him informed of the battle in its changing fortunes'. He, however, continued the fight desperately against enormous odds.<sup>166</sup>

The Abdali's left led by Najib, Shah Pasand Khan and Shuja-ud-daulah faced the combined forces of Holkar, Sindhia and such other officers as Shamsher Bahadur, Yashwant Rao Pawar and Satvoji Jadav. In the first round there was no activity on this front, perhaps Bhau deliberately put Holkar and Sindhia on this front whose morale could not be expected to be very high due to their discomfiture at Durrani's hand a number of times before. The only expectation on this front was Najib who had converted his entire troops of 15,000 into infantry and following the smoke of his rocket fire advanced slowly but steadily towards Sindhia's troops.<sup>167</sup>

At a quarter past two in the afternoon a *zamburak* ball struck Vishwas Rao on the forehead. The news completely shattered Bhau, and 'spreading like wildfire in the Maratha camp, sharply dampened the morale of the Maratha army'.<sup>168</sup> It was indeed the signal for the rout which was further hastened by the action of a contingent of 2,000 renegade Afghans employed by the Marathas who started looting the camp and creating havoc in the already despaired ranks of the army.<sup>169</sup> The Abdali had also rushed in the meanwhile six units of his select corps to the centre. But despite these overwhelming onslaughts it must be noted that Sadashiv Rao Bhau managed to deliver as many as three heavy counter charges.<sup>170</sup>

The Durrani's gained upper hand both on the right and left of the Marathas. In the left Damaji and Vitthal Shivdeo were wounded but safely retired, while Ibrahim Khan was taken prisoner.<sup>171</sup> On the right Najib and Shah Pasand Khan were closing in. Malhar Holkar decided to flee and carried with him that part of Janakoji's contingent under Mahadaji and others which had fallen apart from the main body. Najib and Shah Pasand were pressing hard on Janakoji's men and the escape route of Bhau had been closed.<sup>172</sup>

### *The Final Scene*

The battle which took a decisive turn after Vishwas Rao's death now entered into its final stage. The Abdali's rushing in of his reserve force at the centre had completely broken down the Maratha resistance and Bhau's repeated charges 'were



eloquent not so much of the means to resistance that he commanded but a tribute to his own desperate bravery in what must have seemed to him now a forlorn, hopeless cause'.<sup>173</sup> And as put by Kashi Raj 'in the twinkling of an eye the Maratha army vanished like camphor, and none remained in the field except heaps of corpse here and there'.<sup>174</sup>

Before his end Bhau changed his horse thrice and was joined by Tukoji and Janakoji. The *Bhau Sāheb Bakhar* recounts an argument between Tukoji and Bhau, the former insisting that unless he (Bhau) was saved they could not take revenge. The Maratha leader, however, chary of facing Nana Saheb, repeated again and again, 'we shall not run away'.<sup>175</sup> (This was what Ibrahim Shah Sur said to his wazir in the first battle of Panipat more than two hundred years ago). Nana Phadnis tells us that he reached Panipat after parting company with Bhau just as the sun set in the Heaven'.<sup>176</sup> It is said that Bhau was fighting to the very last till only 200 men remained by his side.<sup>177</sup> The last moments of Bhau on the battlefield of Panipat have been narrated by Kashi Raj. He wrote<sup>178</sup> :

Bhau had received a spear wound and a musket shot in thigh—the latter had thrown him on the ground, and lurching on the field, he was attacked by a few Durrani horsemen. The wounded lion turned at bay and struck two or three of his assailants with his spear before he himself was killed, his head chopped off and carried by his slayers.

Sadashiv Rao Bhau died a heroic death. Life had no meaning for him and death no longer frightened him. He did not perish as contended by Prof. Sarkar, 'on the grave of his reputation', nor 'of the imperial dreams of his race',<sup>179</sup> but as very justly put by P.L. Mehra 'with all the limitation of circumstances placed on him, with the instrument which he had ready to hand, with the adversaries he had to contend with—not to talk of quite some generations of unsympathetic, if not indeed positively hostile, historians—Bhau did not do a bad job'.<sup>180</sup> It may be recalled that thirty eight years later, another heroic Indian prince, the Tipoo Sultan 'after the wreck of his army and cause, came to his end on the battlefield of Seringapatam resisting an alien spoiler's hand on his person'.<sup>181</sup>

### *The Sequel*

The third battle of Panipat has been aptly called 'a nation wide disaster... There was not a home in Maharashtra that had not to mourn the loss of a member, and several houses their very heads. An entire generation of leaders was cut off at one stroke'.<sup>182</sup> The contemporary Persian accounts no doubt give an exaggerated account of the Maratha casualties and the spoils of the victors, but on a more sober analysis, it would seem that more than half of the actual (Maratha) troops present on the field perished there, in number roughly 30,000 and those killed in pursuit or taken prisoners may be placed about 20,000.<sup>183</sup> The news of this awful disaster was



conveyed to the Peshwa in a merchant's message : 'Two pearls have been dissolved, twenty seven gold *mohurs* have been lost, and of the silver and copper the total cannot be cast up'.<sup>184</sup> The Peshwa already suffering from a wasting disease could not survive this calamity. He died broken hearted at Poona on June 23, 1761.

Of the two pearls Vishwas Rao and Sadashiv Rao died fighting, Gardi was among the twenty-two gold *mohurs*, others included were Tukoji Sindhia, Yashwant Rao Pawar, Santaji Wagh, Janakoji, Antaji Manakeshwar and Shamsheer Bahadur. The Persian sources give a much exaggerated account of the victor's spoils—thousand horses, camels and bullocks laden with property<sup>185</sup>—which cannot be justified in view of the utter lack of food and fodder and financial bankruptcy of the Bhau's camp. But there seems no doubt that the Durrani gains must have been enormous in terms of war material for 'it was the entire army they had worsted, an army nearly as big as their own and not too poorly equipped either'.<sup>186</sup>

The fugitives, rapidly pursued, must have been slaughtered in large number as the countless heaps of the dead and the dying which littered the surrounding area would suggest. 'No quarter was given by a cruel, unrelenting enemy, but equally plainly a proud, self respecting army had asked for none'.<sup>187</sup> Further on their way to the Gangetic *doab*, they were attacked by the Jat peasantry of Haryana, hostile and full of hatred due to the continuous pillage of their region by them.<sup>188</sup> Safety they could get only when they reached the territory of Surajmal, who showed 'every mark of kindness and hospitality, giving free ration to every Deccani soldier or camp-followers and medical attendance to their wounded and when they were rested and recovered, conveyance to their own city of Gwalior'.<sup>189</sup> And Ahmad Shah, after settling the affairs of Delhi left on March 20 and reached Ambala on the 27th. He appointed Zain Khan Faujdar at Sarhind which included Ambala, Jind, Kurukshetra and Karnal districts while the rest of Haryana was occupied by Najib, the most powerful noble of the Delhi court.<sup>190</sup>

Why were the Marathas defeated at the battle of Panipat? Various causes are attributed to the Maratha debacle—their inferior leadership and military system suffering from the chronic diseases of feudal organization and denationalisation, lack of food supply, too large and heavy artillery, tactical mistakes, inadequate defence and weak diplomacy.<sup>191</sup> A detailed analysis of these factors would perhaps not be within the scope of the present study for which attention may be drawn to the meticulous researches of J.N. Sarkar, G.S. Sardesai, H.R. Gupta, T.S. Shejwalkar and S.M. Pagadi. Here only a few observations need be made. First, the genesis of the battle may be seen in the rise of Najib-ud-daula and in the Islamic revivalist movement propounded by Shah Waliullah which together sowed the seeds of the destruction of all the Hindu forces—the Sikhs, the Jats and above all the Marathas and further, even went to the extent of inviting openly the Abdali to replace the decadent Mughal rule with that of his own. Second, the personal rivalry between the Sindhias and the Holkars also added to the Maratha failure. Of the two, Holkar in his heart of heart, did not favour Peshwa's rising ambitions in the north



which perhaps might be the basis for the accusation of his collusion with Najib and Shah Pasand Khan on the day of the battle. Third, Bhau in a number of his despatches had made it abundantly clear that his aim was to defend the honour and prestige of the Mughal empire and to destroy the aliens, the Durranis. This is reinforced by Bhau's policy in declaring Ali Gauhar as the Emperor and his son Jawan Bakht as the heir apparent before leaving for Kunjapura to meet the invaders. And last but not the least, it must also be admitted that the policy of aggression and plunder which the Marathas too followed in the north alienated the sympathies of the people—the mainstay at the time of struggle against a foreign aggressor, and turned them completely hostile.

For an objective assessment of what happened at Panipat a critical comparative study of the contemporary accounts—both Persian as well as Marathi, is essential. In the light of fresh evidence old views need to be modified and revised. The older school of historians seem to be particularly severe on Bhau for his failure at Panipat forgetting that he was the product of the then political, social and economic conditions of the Maratha state. The Maratha defeat is sometimes attributed to the abandonment of the traditional method of fighting and the use of heavy artillery. But it must be remembered that the Maratha system of guerilla warfare could not have been effective in northern setting and that the Marathas could survive for two months at Panipat simply because of the artillery. And for the valour and bravery of the Marathas the best tributes are those of Kashi Raj and Shamlu who served the opposite camp.<sup>192</sup>

The Marathas thus fought in a glorious cause. They were the only power in India that faced the main brunt of the Durrani attack, while others either sided with the enemy or kept aloof. To quote Prof. H.G. Rawlinson 'never in all the annals did the Maratha armies cover themselves with greater glory than when the flower of the chivalry of the Deccan perished on the stricken field of Panipat, fighting the enemies of their creed and country'.

Panipat, the scene of such decisive action of Indian history, therefore remains a subject of the special interest of the historian, and a place of reverence of the people. It is a befitting place for the setting up of a national monument to preserve the memory of the Indians who went down fighting the invaders in a spirit of defiance even in their worst hour of defeat.<sup>193</sup>

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100. *Ibid.*, Sarkar, p. 153.
101. *Ibid.*
102. Gupta, *op. cit.*, 128.
103. *Ibid.*, Sarkar, p. 156.
104. *Ibid.*, Sarkar p. 154.
105. Gupta, *op. cit.*; Sarkar, *op. cit.*; *SPD*, ii, 114; xxi, 181, 182, 185; xxvii, 247; Rajwade, i, 153, 156, 157, 165; ii, p. 154; iii, 566.
106. Sarkar, p. 157.
107. Gupta, pp. 131-2; *SPD*, ii, 120, 121; xxi, 187-188.
108. *Ibid.*, p. 132.

#### Towards Panipat

109. *SPD*, i, 9, 83; Rajwade, i, 155, 157, 164, 165; Sarkar, p. 166.
110. Khare, i, 14; Rajwade, i, 167, 168; Sarkar, 167.



111. Gupta, 149.
112. Sarkar, pp. 171-72.
113. *Purandare Daftar*, i, 387, p. 292.
- 113a. Gupta, p. 152.
114. Sarkar, p. 173; *SPD*, ii, 121, 124, 127; Rajwade I, 186, 191, 194, 196, 198, 200, 204, 209, 212, 215, 216, 217; vi, 509.
115. Gupta, p. 153.
116. *Panipat Chhā Ranasamgrām* (ed.) P.M. Limaye, Introduction S.N. Joshi; No. 3, pp. 5-6.
117. *Life of Nana Fadanavis* (Marathi), *Kavyetihāsamgraha*, No. 192; Rajwade, VI, 409.
118. Rajwade, I, 224, 191, 233, 236, 246, 247; Gupta, 154.
119. Gupta, p. 155.
120. *Ibid.*, pp. 155-56.
121. Grant Duff, *History of the Marathas*, Calcutta, 1912, I, p. 609; Sarkar, II, p. 180; Natwar Singh, *Maharaja Surajmal* (1707-1763), Vikas Publishing House, New Delhi.
122. Gupta, p. 156 and S.M. Pagadi 'Sunday Lokasattā' 27.6.82 for the refutation of the view; also see *SPD* xxi, 190; XXVII, 258; Rajwade, i, 222.
123. Gupta, p. 157; Rajwade, i, 231, p. 337.
124. *SPD*, xxi, 193, 255; XXVII, 257, 258; II, 130, 131; Sarkar, p. 186.
125. *SPD*, XXVII, 257.
126. *Ibid.*, II, 130, 131.
127. *Purandare Daftar*, I, 389, p. 293.
128. Gupta, p. 163.
129. *Ibid.*
130. *SPD*, XXI, 194; Rajwade, I, 258, p. 361.
131. *SPD*, XXI, 191, 192, 193, 198; Rajwade, I, 255, 258, 259, 260, 265; III, 507; VI, 405.
132. *SPD*, XXI, 194; Rajwade, I, 261, 265.
133. Rajwade, I, 260, 261; Shejwalkar, p. 59; Sarkar, pp. 197-99; Gupta, pp. 168-69.

#### The rival camps

134. P.L. Mehra in Gupta's *Marathas and Panipat*, pp. 177-79; 'Bhau's Ballad', *Bulletine of the Deccan College Postgraduate and Research Institute*, IV, No. 3, pp. 161-85.
135. Mehra, pp. 179-80.
136. *Ibid.*, pp. 211-12. For the accounts of Kashiraj and Shamlu the Marathi versions of the Original Persian see Phathak and Pagadi, pp. 88-89, 116-19; also see Raghunath Yadav, *Pānīpat Chī Bakhar* ed. L.N. Sane, 1923, pp. 16-18.
137. Sarkar, p. 232.
138. *Ibid.*, p. 203.
139. *Ibid.*
140. Mehra, p. 184.
- 140a. *Ibid.*, p. 186 based on Kashiraja's account.
141. Sarkar, p. 204.

#### The Pre-Battle Encounters

142. *Ibid.*, p. 218; *Bhāu Sāhebānchī Bakhar* ed. S.N. Joshi, Poona, 1972, pp. 119-21; *Life of Nana Fadanavis* (Marathi) ed. V.V. Khare, 1892, p. 16.
143. Rajwade, I, 261, 264, 265; *Purandare Daftar*, I, 391.
- 143a. Mehra, pp. 195-96; Sarkar, pp. 215-16.
144. *Ibid.*, pp. 197; *Ibid.*, pp. 223-250.

145. *Ibid.*, pp. 198-201; *Ibid.*, pp. 223-25; Rajwade, i, 272, *Itihāsasamgraha*, III, p. 55; *Aitihāsika Patravayavahāra*, 97.
146. *Ibid.*, p. 201; *Ibid.* pp. 226-27; Rajwade, i, 281, fn. 324; Shejwalkar, p. 71.
147. Mehra, p. 202; Sarkar, p. 227; Shejwalkar, pp. 71-3; Phatak and Pagadi, p. 93 (Kashirāja's account).
148. *Ibid.*, p. 204; *Ibid.*, p. 221.
149. *Ibid.*; Sarkar, pp. 221-22.
150. *Ibid.*; Sarkar, p. 228; Phatak and Pagadi, pp. 93-95 (Kashirāja's account).
151. Sarkar, pp. 228-29.
152. *Bhāu Sāhebānchī Kaiḥiyat* ed. B.R. Kulkarni, Poona, 1982, p. 34; *Bhāu Bakhar*, pp. 126-27
153. *Ibid.*
154. Phatak and Pagadi, p. 94 (Kashirāja's account).

#### The battle plans

155. Mehra, pp. 213-14.
156. *Ibid.*, pp. 214-15; *Bhāu Sāheb Bakhar*, pp. 128-29; *Bhāu Sāheb Kaiḥiyat*, pp. 33-4.
157. *Ibid.*
158. Sarkar, p. 236; Mehra, p. 216.
159. *Ibid.*, p. 231; *Ibid.*, p. 217.
160. *Ibid.*

#### The battle

161. Mehra, p. 220.
162. *Ibid.*, pp. 221-22; Sarkar, pp. 238-40; *Bhāu Bakhar*, 130, 132, 133; *Bhāu Kaiḥiyat*, pp. 36-8; Phatak and Pagadi, p. 96 (Kashirāja's account).
163. Phatak and Pagadi, pp. 97.
164. Mehra, p. 225.
165. Phatak and Pagadi, p. 99; Sarkar, pp. 242-25 for details of Durrani tactics.
166. Mehra, pp. 227-28; G.S. Sardesai, *A New History of the Marathas*, Bombay, 1948, II, pp. 438-39; Shejwalkar, p. 74.
167. Mehra, pp. 228-29, Phatak and Pagadi, pp. 98-9.
168. *Bhāu Bakhar*, pp. 130-31; Mehra, pp. 230-31.
169. *Ibid.*, p. 131; *Ibid.*, p. 231; Shejwalkar, p. 93.
170. *Bhāu Bakhar*, 131; Mehra, p. 232; Sarkar, p. 245.
171. *Bhāu Bakhar*, p. 132; *Bhāu Kaiḥiyat*, pp. 37-38; Mehra, p. 233.
172. *Bhāu Bakhar*, pp. 133-34; Mehra, p. 234.

#### The final scene

173. Phatak and Pagadi, pp. 99-100.
174. *Ibid.*
175. *Bhāu Bakhar*, p. 134-35; *Bhāu Sāheb Kaiḥiyat*, pp. 38-9.
176. *Life of Nana Fadnavis*, ed. V.V. Khare, pp. 16-7; Pagadi, pp. 34-35.
177. *Ibid.*
178. Phatak & Pagadi, pp. 104-05 for Kāshirāja's detailed account of Bhāu's death.
179. Sarkar, p. 247.
180. Mehra, p. 235.
181. Sarkar, *op. cit.*



**The Sequel**

182. *Ibid.*, p. 252.
183. Mehra, p. 239; Kāshirāja and Shamlu's accounts (Phatak and Pagadi, pp. 100, 104; 121-22).
184. James Grant Duff, *History of the Marathas*, p. 621; Mehra, p. 239.
185. For details of Kāshirāja's and Gulam Ah's accounts Phatak and Pagadi, *op. cit.*, pp. 100, 59; Mehra, p. 241; Sarkar, p. 251.
186. Mehra, p. 243.
187. *Ibid.*, p. 236.
188. Sarkar, pp. 253-54.
189. *Ibid.*, p. 254; *Bhāu Sāheb Bakhar*, pp. 142-43; *Bhāu Sāheb Kaifiyat*, pp. 44-5.
190. Sarkar, p. 278.
191. For details see Gupta, pp. 247-59 (S.P. Sangar's paper 'Causes of the Maratha defeat at Panipat'); Sen, S.N., *Military System of the Marathas*, Orient Longmans, Bombay, 1958; Sarkar, II.
192. N.R. Pathak and S.M. Pagadi, *Pānīpat Chā Sangrāmā*, Bombay, 1961, pp. 7-8.
193. The Government of Haryana has recently erected such memorial at Panipat.

## CHAPTER IX

# Religious and Cultural Activities

Situated between Punjab and Delhi, Haryana had been the scene of frequent warfares which left disturbing effects and made life rather difficult. Although the Muslim rulers, by and large, adopted an intolerant attitude towards the Hindus and frequently destroyed their holy places, the Sufi movement soon wove itself with the complex culture-pattern of India and helped removing the spirit of mistrust and isolation between the two religionists.<sup>1</sup> Some aspects of the Muslim rule on the cultural life of the people of Haryana may be described here.

### 1. The rise and growth of Sufism

During the Sultanate Haryana witnessed the growth of Sufism. The earliest sect of this order in the region—the Chistis, named after their founder Khwaja Muinuddin Chisti, had their centre at Hansi, which was considered to be the frontier between Chishti and Suhrawardi jurisdictions.<sup>2</sup> These orders, introduced simultaneously with the foundation of the Sultanate, built up in the following century, their organization and established themselves in their respective zones.<sup>3</sup> Early in the 14th century, a traveller informed Shihab-ud-din al Umari in Damascus 'In Delhi and its surroundings are *khanqahs* and hospices numbering two thousand'.<sup>4</sup>

The most outstanding figure of the Chishti *silsilah* associated with the region during the thirteenth century was Shaikh Farid-ud-din Masud Ganj-i-Shakar (1175-1265). He transformed the *silsilah* into an organised spiritual movement.<sup>5</sup> After completing his studies in mystic discipline at the feet of Shaikh Qutb-ud-din Bakhtiyar Kaki, he settled at Hansi.<sup>6</sup> Shaikh Jamal-ud-din, a descendant of Abu Hanifah of Kufah and the then *khatib* of Hansi was to deliver discourses and pronounce judicial decisions. As informed by Mir Khurd<sup>7</sup> and Abul Fazl<sup>8</sup> he renounced his office and became the disciple of Shaikh Farid. Consequently he had to suffer starvation and poverty. When he requested Shaikh Nizamud-din-Auliya to inform Shaikh Farid about his misery, the latter replied 'Tell him (Shaikh Jamal-ud-din) that when a *wilayat* (spiritual territory) is assigned to any one, it is his duty to bear its burden'.<sup>9</sup> These sufferings rewarded him with high degree of virtue and higher spiritual



experience. Pointing out his position among the *Kalifahs* of Shaikh Farid Abul Fazl wrote :<sup>10</sup>

To whom so ever the Shaikh Farid gave a certificate of vicegerency he would send him to Jamal-ud-din on whose approval the certificate took effect. If he did not approve, the Shaikh would say that what Jamal tore up Farid could not repair.

Shaikh Jamal was a man of wide learning. His two books—a Persian *diwan* and an Arabic treatise *Mulhamat* bear testimony to his scholarship.<sup>11</sup> The *Mulhamat* is a work of general mystic interest, a condensation of the mystic thought of the preceding generation also bringing out a clear distinction between the externalists and the mystics. 'A *Zahid* (externalist)', he remarked, 'keeps the exterior clean with water; an *arif* (mystic) keeps his interior clean from passions'.<sup>12</sup> The *Diwan* throws considerable light on the contemporary religious thought and institutions.<sup>13</sup> The Shaikh died at Hansi during the life time of his master and was succeeded by his son Maulana Burhan-ud-din. Shaikh Burhan did not enrol any disciple—this he left to Hazrat Nizam-ud-din Muhammad for whom he had greatest regards.<sup>14</sup> He was succeeded by his son, Shaikh Qutb-ud-din Munawwar (d. 1358), a distinguished disciple and *khalifah* of Shaikh Nizam-ud-din Auliya.<sup>15</sup> One of the three disciples of Shaikh Nizam-ud-din (the other two being Shaikh Nasir-ud-din Chiragh and Shaikh Shams-ud-din Yahya) who, in accordance with the demand of the Shaikh from his disciples of a promise to abstain from the service of the state, strongly opposed Muhammad Tughlaq and withstood his threats with courage and determination which elicited universal praise.<sup>16</sup> Even the bait of a *jagir* of two villages could not entice him into the trap of royal service although a *firman* to this effect was personally carried by Kazi Kamaluddin *Sadre-Jahan* to him.<sup>17</sup> The emperor could not lay his hand on the Shaikh. When convinced that some persons out of jealousy has misinformed him about the Shaikh, the Sultan honoured him and allowed him to stay at Hansi, his ancestral place.<sup>18</sup> He was succeeded by Shaikh Nuruddin (d. 1359) a contemporary of Firuz Tughlaq and an author of several Arabic and Persian works on Muslim theology.<sup>19</sup> Afif gives an account of Shaikh Nuruddin (his preceptor's) interview with the Sultan whose request to settle at Hisar-i-Firuz (his newly founded town) for the benefit of the people was declined by the Shaikh on the ground that Hansi had been his ancestral home and the abode of his predecessors.<sup>20</sup> As fate would have it Hisar suffered due to Mongol invasion while the town of Hansi not only remained unaffected but it offered protection to the people of Hisar who took refuge there.<sup>21</sup> Shaikh Nuruddin was a friend of Maulana Ahmad Thanessari, an Arabic poet, whose noble elegies 'the whole of which are copied into *Akhhār-ul-Akhyar*' bear testimony to his eminent talents and genius.<sup>22</sup> Shaikh Jalaluddin Tabrizi, one of the Saints of the Suhrawardi order also had short stays at Hansi.<sup>23</sup> Other distinguished



men of the town then were Maulana Fakhruddin,<sup>24</sup> Kazi Kamaluddin, Nizamuddin and Samsuddin.<sup>25</sup>

Other towns which also felt the impact of Sufism were Narnaul, Kaithal, Jhajjar, Payal, Hisar and Panipat. Shaikh Nasiruddin Chiragh told people that prayers at the tomb of Shaikh Muhammad at Narnaul resolved all difficulties.<sup>26</sup> The Shaikh was one of the earliest Sufis who accompanied Muinuddin Chisti to India. He was murdered by Hindu fanatics in 1243.<sup>27</sup> One of the disciples of Shaikh Munawwar, Sayyid Tajuddin Saiswar (b. 1300) also died at Narnaul.<sup>28</sup> Shaikh Nizamuddin Auliya referred to Maulana Kaithali, as one of the three *danishmands* (externalists), a category of learned men who spent their time in academic pursuits and did not harken after worldly prestige or glory.<sup>29</sup> Barani mentions Saiyid Mujibuddin, Saiyid Mugisuddin, Saiyid Alauddin and Maulana Jalal-ud-din, Saiyid (of Kaithal), Malik Tajuddin Jafar, Malik Jalal-ud-din, Malik Jamal and Saiyid Ali (of Jhajjar) and Maulana Wejeh-ud-din of Payal as the celebrated men during the Khalji reign,<sup>30</sup> while at Hisar was Gula Mira, Nobahar, a descendant of Shaikh Farid (d. 1348).<sup>31</sup>

Among the saintly personages of Panipat there was Shaikh Sharafuddin (early fourteenth century) better known by his patronymic Abu Ali Qalander. At the age of forty he came to Delhi and received his spiritual training under the able guidance of Khwaja Qutbuddin.<sup>32</sup> His merit as a teacher was recognised by many learned men of the age and for twenty years he was associated with the administration of justice.<sup>33</sup> In one of his writings he makes the following remark about himself :<sup>34</sup>

Unexpectedly I received a call from God, and throwing all my learned books, into the Jumna, I set out on travel. In Roumelia I fell in with Shamsuddin Tabrizi and Maulana Jalaluddin Rumi who presented me with a robe and turban and with many books which in their presence I threw into the river. Subsequently, I came to Panipat and there lived as a recluse.

The passage illustrates how useless he considered the bookish knowledge for God realization and how disinterested he was in worldly affairs. He spent the remaining years of his life at Panipat (where lies his tomb) as a recluse meditating on what he had learnt through experience. His correspondence with Shaikh Bakhtiyaruddin is an important source of Sufism in India.<sup>35</sup>

A contemporary of Abu Qalandar was Hazrat Khwaja Samsuddin Turk whose teacher Shaikh Ala-ud-din Sabari had advised him to stay at Panipat but which the latter could not because of his failure to satisfy the spiritual needs of the people.<sup>36</sup> He, therefore, went over to the military profession under Balban. Fade up also with his new job, he returned to Panipat at the command of his master and came there in contact with Abu Qalandar and succeeded in acquiring the friendship of the latter which continued till his death (1318).<sup>37</sup> He was succeeded by Kabir-Al-Auliya Hazrat Shaikh Jalaluddin Makhdum (d. 1364).<sup>38</sup> Saiyyid Alauddin was another noted



figure of the town, a contemporary of his namesake the Sultan, he was the author of numerous Persian and Arabic works which are now untraceable but were probably known to Barani who makes complementary remarks about their author's erudition and scholarship.<sup>39</sup>

Under the Mughals Sufism extended to various other parts of Haryana. Hansi, its important stronghold during the Sultanate, lost its former glory and Thanesar and Panipat emerged as the new centres of the Sufi activity. We are fortunate in having the accounts of Abul Fazl<sup>40</sup> and Badaoni,<sup>41</sup> the noted historians, for their details on the lives and works of the Sufi saints and the influence which they exerted on the popular mind.

Hazrat Jalaluddin was the most outstanding Sufi Saint connected with Thanesar. According to Badaoni<sup>42</sup> he was a disciple of Shaikh Abdul-Quddus of Gangoh (a town in Saharanpur district where lies his tomb). A number of Shaikh Abdul's letters (in the *Collection of his Letters*) are addressed to Shaikh Jalal.<sup>43</sup> In exoteric and esoteric learning he was profound. He was an expert in imparting instruction in divinity. Towards the last years of his life, living in complete seclusion, he absorbed himself in meditation and in reading the Quran.<sup>44</sup> At the age of ninety-three, 'although exceedingly weak and feeble yet no sooner did he hear the call to prayer, he would rise without any assistance, put on his shoes, take his staff in his hand, perform his ceremonial ablutions and stand up for prayers. After this he would go to reclining position on a couch.'<sup>45</sup> Badaoni quotes the following couplet about him :<sup>46</sup>

When the veins of an aged man, in consequence of his abandonment of worldly desires, stand out on his skin. Then it is that he becomes, as it were, a ruler to guide disciples in the way of righteousness.

Badaoni<sup>47</sup> had the honour of attending him twice in 1561-62 and 1573-74. In 1561-62 the Shaikh had visited Agra in connection with the settlement of some matter regarding his *aima* holding in Thanesar.<sup>48</sup> Emperor Akbar's visits to him, once with Biram Khan and next with Abul Fazl have already been mentioned.<sup>49</sup>

According to Abdul Haq Mahaddis Dehlavi, Shaikh Jalal remained occupied through out his life in devotion to the Almighty, in teaching and preaching of *Zikr* and *Sama*.<sup>50</sup> He also wrote a commentary on *Sama* and a treatise entitled *Irshad-ut-Talibin*.<sup>51</sup> Badaoni calls him 'crucible of austerity and devotion and paragon of the people of rapture and ecstasy'.<sup>52</sup> The *Iqbalnāma* adds that the Shaikh was 'respected by all, that for eighty years he read the whole of the Qoran every day and that he never went out of his cell'.<sup>53</sup> He died in the year A.H. 989 (January, 1582).<sup>54</sup>

Another noted personality of the town was Shaikh Abu-l-Fath, a profound scholar who mastered Islamic tradition under Saiyyid Rafi-ud-din, the traditionalist, and later shifted to Agra where he shared his knowledge with eager and inquisitive students for forty years.<sup>55</sup> Badaoni and Miyan Kamaluddin Husain were taught by him.<sup>56</sup> Abul Fath Thanesarwari was present along with Mir Saiyyid Rafi-ud-din Safawi,



the traditionalist, Mulla Jalal and other eminent *Ulama* in the assembly summoned by Islam Shah to discuss traditions on Mahdiism. On the opposite camp was Shaikh Alai of Biyana, one of the most distinguished disciples of Shaikh Abdullah Niyazi.<sup>57</sup>

Haji Sultan was yet another well-known figure of Thanesar during Akbar's times. He had undertaken pilgrimage to Makkah and Madinah.<sup>58</sup> He had a phenomenal memory and could reproduce religious text verbatim. He was one of those eminent scholars engaged by Akbar for the Persian translation of the *Mahabharata* known as *Razmnamā* (or the book of wars) and also the *Rāmāyaṇa* which was begun by Naqib Khan.<sup>59</sup> Badaoni who was one of the translators, tells us about the small extent of Faizi's share in that work and is full of praise for the work done by Haji Sultan.<sup>60</sup> He states that when the first draft was completed 'Shaikh Faizi was directed to convert the rough translation into eloquent prose and verse, but he did not complete more than two sections'.<sup>61</sup> Haji Sultan then revised these two sections, put right the defects in the first edition, supplied the omissions and comparing it word by word with the original, brought to such a point of perfection that not a fly mark of the original was omitted'.<sup>62</sup> At the time when Haji Sultan was translating the text someone asked him what it was that he was translating. He replied, 'I am translating what was well known ten thousand years ago into the modern tongue'.<sup>63</sup> Haji Sultan was profound scholar, meticulous and painstaking.

As already stated earlier, Sultan who was charged for killing a cow at Thanesar was banished to Bhakkar by the imperial order.<sup>64</sup> Khan-i-Khanan, the *subedar* of Multan and a friend of Sultan treated him kindly and after the complete subjugation of Multan allowed him to return secretly to his native place.<sup>65</sup> After the Asirgarh and Burhanpur expeditions Khan-i-Khanan made a petition to the emperor for the reversal of Sultan's sentence. The request was granted and the emperor privately ordered Abul-Fazl to appoint him *Karori* of Thanesar and Karnal.<sup>66</sup> Later on, the *ryots* again petitioned against his oppressive rule, and when it was found that the charges have some substance, he was sentenced to death.<sup>67</sup>

In the line of Shaikh Jalaluddin, there was Shaikh Chehali Bannauri, (i.e., of Bannur) a Sufi saint after whom is named the marble tomb in Thanesar. Shaikh Chehali seems to be a popular name, who is variously mentioned as Abdur Rahim, Abdul Karim or Abdul Razak.<sup>68</sup> Probably he was the spiritual adviser of Dara Shekoh, and also the author of a book entitled *Lives of the Walis* (Muhammadan saints).<sup>69</sup> Though Cunningham could not identify the saint, but on the basis of the style of the tomb, he thinks that the Shaikh was the contemporary of Dara Shekoh about 1650 A.D.<sup>70</sup>

Other towns of Haryana which continued to be spiritually benefitted by the Sufi movement under the Mughals were Panipat, Narnaul, Hisar, Sadhaura, Jind, Sohna and Safidon.

The earliest known saint of Panipat of this period Shaikh Amanullah Panipati (1467-1549) was deeply influenced by the Advaita-philosophy. He is the author of



two works—*Asbāt-lā-Hādīs* and a commentary on the well known composition *Lavāh* of Maulana Jami.<sup>71</sup> Muhammad Afzal, the author of *Vikaṭ Kahānī* was also associated with the town (d. 1623).<sup>72</sup> Shaikh Abdul Kabir's son Shaikh Jindapir, a contemporary of Shaikh Jalal of Thanesar, was another noted figure of Panipat. Held in high veneration both by Hindus as well as by Muslims, the Shaikh breathed his last at Panipat (1590) and was succeeded by his worthy son Shaikh Nizamuddin (d. 1609).<sup>73</sup> Shaikh Man, the disciple of Shaikh Muhammad Hasan, was another noble soul of Panipat who had the good fortune of enjoying the companionship of Shaikh Salim-i-Chisti, whom he put the question 'Was it induction or revelation that was the means of your attaining to your goal?' and the Shaikh replied, 'Our means is heart to heart', probably referring to the method of the Sufis of the revelation of God, who Himself draws them to the mysterious bonds inflaming their hearts with an ardent love for Him.<sup>74</sup> Shaikh Man is known as the composer of a work *Ghairiyyah* which though not traceable, is supposed to be a polemic on theology or rather mysticism of the Sufis.<sup>75</sup> The work seems to have invoked considerable interest for Shaikh Azizullah, another theologian wrote in its reply *Risālā-yi-Ainiyyah* wherein the questions regarding essential unity of all things were discussed.<sup>76</sup> This tradition of Sufi saints and scholars was continued by Shaikh Shah Ali Chisti (d. 1624) and Sanullah Panipati, both descendants of Kabir-ul-Auliya, the latter a writer of merit but whose works written in Persian script remained in obscurity and very little of it has come to light.<sup>77</sup>

Shaikh Nizamuddin was a noted sufi saint of the Chisti order of Narnaul. Although a disciple of Shaikh Khanun of Gwalior, his real spiritual *guru* was his elder brother, Shaikh Ismail. He was one of those few Sufis who had overcome worldly desires, and had chosen a religious life voluntarily and deeply influenced those who came in his contact.<sup>78</sup> Badaoni informs that the Shaikh used intoxicant for the purpose of inducing 'a trance or mock state of religious ecstasy'.<sup>79</sup> He spent a strictly religious life for nearly forty years guiding the needy and also visiting far off places of pilgrimages such as the holy shrine of Khwaja Qutb-ud-din Bakhtyar of Ush (in Transoxiana) till he grew too old, and celebrated the saint's festival at Narnaul itself.<sup>80</sup> According to Badaoni<sup>81</sup>:

In abandoning all outward show he followed the footsteps of his spiritual guide, and in his freedom from ceremoniousness and formality he regarded rich and poor alike, observing the same impartiality also in admitting disciples.

Akbar, the Mughal emperor, visited the Shaikh in 1578 but was not, however, impressed by the latter. Abul Fazl calls him 'a vaunter of simplicity' possibly attacking the boastful nature of the Shaikh.<sup>82</sup> He died in the year H 997 (A.D. 1588-89).

At Hissar there were Shaikh Junaid, Ghurbati and Mihnati. Shaikh Junaid's (d. 1495) tomb lies towards south of Nagauri gate at a distance of about 300 yards.<sup>83</sup> Ghurbati (d. 1558-59) is supposed to have participated in an assembly of *darvishes* convened by Shaikh Hussain of Khwarazm for the chanting of devotional songs.<sup>84</sup>

The Shaikh who too experienced the holy rapture and an ecstasy, spontaneously uttered the following couplet :<sup>85</sup>

Whether Thou showest me favour or  
Whether Thou showest it not,  
I am one of that brotherhood,  
Who wear the ring of Thy service in their ears.

'His Holiness' writes the Shaikh, 'seized me by the hand and whirled me round with him, and the delight of that moment never leaves my heart'.<sup>86</sup> Minahati was a poet educated at the Delhi *madrasā*. He received his poetical name from the emperor Akbar. In a few of his verses he thus expresses himself :<sup>87</sup>

I found in my path the print of her foot,  
  
Why should I not press my cheek against it ?  
I have found her place.  
The folk has lost their heart in meditating on  
her waist, slender as a hair,  
I too, among them, have lost my broken heart.

Among other contemporaries of Akbar mention may be made of Saiyyid Najumuddin Husain (Jhajjar) ; Mulla Shah Mohammad (of Shahbad), a learned man who translated Badaoni's *History of Kashmir* in Persian ; Shah Qumaish, the son of Abdul Hayat, and the seventeenth descendant of Abdul Kadir Jilami, and the founder of Qumaishia order, a branch of the Kadiriya at Sadhora (in Ambala district) where lies his tomb and an annual fare is held ; Shah Dujan (Jind), a disciple of Sadruddin Maleri, Dujana a *qasba* in Rohtak is named after him (d. 1550).<sup>88</sup>

Shaikh Chayan Ladh of Sohna (a pargana town of Mewat) was one of the most renowned successors of Shaikh Abdul Aziz of Delhi. Although in early life due to extreme poverty the Shaikh had suffered hardships, he continued imparting instructions to worthy pupils in Sufi texts such as *Fusus* and the *Naqd-i-fusus*. Towards the close of his life he gained favours of emperor Akbar who consulted him on several important matters of the state. He had his residence in the *ibādatkhānā* and was admitted to private interviews at night in connection with prayers and recitations of the holy scriptures. He died in A.D. 1590.<sup>89</sup>

Last but not the least was Mulla Nuruddin Muhammad Tarkhan Safidoni. As a poet, he wrote under the *takhallus* of Nuri and hence he was called Nuri of Safidon also because he held that place as *jagir* for sometime.<sup>90</sup> He attained distinction for his mastery in geometry, exact sciences and astrology. He had a comprehensive knowledge of philosophy and rhetoric and was a man of pleasant disposition. A close associate of emperor Akbar, he received from the latter the title of Tarkhan.<sup>91</sup> Badaoni thus wrote about him :<sup>92</sup>



He was unequalled in liberality, generosity, munificence and conviviality for which qualities he was proverbial.

He is the composer of a *diwan* and was known for his public welfare activities. He constructed a canal from Jamuna to Karnal and beyond, which facilitated cultivation of more land adding to the prosperity of the region.<sup>93</sup> In 1586 he was appointed by Akbar as a trustee of the tomb of Humayun in the imperial capital.<sup>94</sup> An idea of his poetic talent can be gathered from the following verse :<sup>95</sup>

Sad at heart am I sitting,  
Far from those shining lips,  
Like the rose-bud am I sitting,  
With my head cast down to my collar.

Among other Sufi saints of Haryana who, in the succeeding ages continued the propagation of their creed and worked for the moral regeneration of the people were much noble souls as Ismail Shah (Hisar), Abu Shakur Silma and Shaikh Dada Sahab (Sirsa), Shah Sodha (Safidon), Hidayatullah and Shaikh Muhammad (Dadri), Gaus Ali Sahab and Maulavi Ahmadullah (Panipat), Shaikh Muhammad (Ambala), Shaikh Abdul Quddus (Mahendragadh) and last but not the least, Gulam Kadar Jilani (1749-1819) of Rohtak who brought about a happy synthesis of Advaitism, Vaiṣṇavism and Sufism.<sup>96</sup>

## 2. The impact of Sikhism

Haryana also felt the impact of Sikhism. Several Sikh Gurus visited Kurukshetra and other parts of Haryana and in their memory various Gurudwaras were built here. An account of these visits is available in the works of Macauliffe<sup>97</sup> and the Sikh traditional literature of Bhai Santokh Singh who had received instruction in Hindu religion from a Pandit of Kaul (in Kurukshetra Distt.).<sup>98</sup> He also served under Sardar Megh Singh of Buria (in Ambala Distt.) and under his auspices produced Hindi translation of *Amarakośa*, a Sanskrit work.<sup>99</sup> In 1823 Santokh Singh wrote *Nānak Prokāsh* i.e. the life and teachings of the founder. During his service under Bhai Udai Singh of Kaithal, with the assistance of several Brahmins he translated various other Sanskrit works in Hindi and then completed his well known work in 1843 under the title *Gur Partāp Sūraj* in six ponderous volumes.<sup>100</sup>

Guru Nanak, the founder of Sikh religion visited Kurukshetra on the occasion of solar eclipse. That was a great occasion for the Guru to preach his message to thousands of pilgrims gathered together from far and near. The story goes that a disciple of the Guru presented him a deer which he ordered to be cooked. The Brahmin priests protested against this 'sacrilegious act', and expressed their horror at the use of flesh on a sacred day. The Guru silenced his critics by his brilliant

exposition of the superstitions which figure in daily life.<sup>101</sup> Nanak gave the following parting message to his followers :<sup>102</sup>

Live in harmony, utter the creator's name and if any one salutes you therewith, return his salute with the addition true and say *Sat Kartar*, the True creator in reply. There are four ways by which, with the repetition of God's name, men may reach Him. The first is holy companionship, the second truth, the third contentment, and the fourth restraint of the senses, by whichever of these doors a man enterth, whether, he be a hermit or a house holder, he shall find God.

After a careful study of the passage one is reminded of what King Kuru of the antiquity had practised, and what Aśoka had inscribed on his pillar edict at Topra (in Ambala district). In Kurukshetra near Brahasara there stands a Gurdwara known as Sidha Bati to commemorate this visit.

On his way to Delhi Guru Nanak and Mardana halted at Panipat where an interesting dialogue between him and a successor of Shaikh Abu Ali Qalandar took place. The Shaikh inquired about the Guru's religious sect, his loin-cloth and asked about the meaning of 'darvish'. To all the questions the Guru gave philosophical answers. And the Shaikh who was convinced of the nobility of the Guru's soul concluded with the following remark : 'Well done ! Why make a further examination of him who beareth witness to God ? Even to behold him is sufficient'. And then shook hands with the Guru, kissed his feet and departed.<sup>103</sup>

Guru Amar Das (1479-1574) in the course of his pilgrimage to various *tirthas*, visited Pehowa and Kurukshetra. The purpose of his visit was to bring about the moral regeneration of the people by means of preaching. Amar Das went to Pehowa. The Pandits and Brahmins were pleased to see him and greatly admired his discourse. At Pehowa he made a scathing criticism of religious bigotry and the caste system. In the eyes of God, he said, 'all his children are equal. The Śūdras were as dear to Him as the Brāhmaṇas'. A Gurudwara at Pehowa commemorates this visit.<sup>104</sup> The Guru next visited Thanesar 'the place par excellence of Śiva, the destroyer'. Guru Amar Das was asked why he had abandoned Sanskrit, the language of Gods, and composed hymns in the popular language ; he replied, 'Well water can only irrigate adjacent land but rain water the whole world', suggesting that his message was not meant for Sanskrit scholars only but for common people of all castes and classes.<sup>105</sup> The Sikh traditional sources do not provide authentic data of the Guru's visit to Kurukshetra. Dr. Balbir Singh on the basis of a hymn in *Guru Granth Sahib* and its commentary *Faridkot Tīkā* which provides astronomical data for calculation, has worked out the date of his visit as January 14, 1553.<sup>106</sup> Explaining it further, Dr. Singh states, 'It becomes clear that when the Guru went to Kurukshetra it was the occasion of the solar eclipse and that it was the ruling conjunction of the Nakshatra Abhijit'.<sup>107</sup> Further, he points out that during the period of the pontificate



of Guru Amar Das (i.e. between 1552-74) the solar eclipse occurred nineteen times but the conjunction of Abhijit Nakshatra occurred only twice i.e. on January 14, 1553 and January 15, 1572. The choice, therefore, lies between these two dates.<sup>108</sup>

The hymn of the *Ādi Granth* also states that the Guru was not called upon to pay the pilgrim-tax, though tax collectors were posted for this purpose. The pilgrim-tax had been remitted by Akbar in 1563 A.D. The visit of the Guru to Kurukshetra might therefore be placed before this date, on January 14, 1553.<sup>109</sup>

There are also two Gurudwaras in Kurukshetra named after the sixth Guru Hargovind (1606-645) and the seventh Guru Har Rai (1645-1661). But in the absence of authentic information, the local tradition about their visits to the place cannot be relied on. It is possible that some of the disciples might have built the Gurudwaras and named them after the Gurus. Macauliffe mentions the visit of the eighth Guru Har Krishna to Panjokhera (near Ambala) on his way to Delhi. Here the Guru entered into discussion with a Brahmin through a water carrier Chhajju on question related to the philosophy of the *Gītā*.<sup>110</sup>

The ninth Guru, Teg Bahadur (1664-1675) visited Kurukshetra and its adjoining area. He first visited Tekpur also called Baharjakh (one of the traditional *Yakhs* forming the boundary of Kurukshetra) and stayed with a carpenter who took him to Kaithal. Kaithal has two Gurudwaras in his memory, one in the town and the other outside the Dogran gate to the north of the town.<sup>111</sup> From Kaithal the Guru proceeded to Barna, a small village near Pehowa. Here he preached against the use of tobacco, the 'pernicious stimulant'.<sup>112</sup> The Guru thereafter visited Kurukshetra on the occasion of a solar eclipse. During his stay here he gave discourses on 'Sat Nam'. At Bani Badarpur he contributed money for the construction of a well.<sup>113</sup> The Gurudwaras at Jind, Rohtak and in its surrounding areas are connected with the visits of Guru Tegh Bahadur who passed through the Haryana tract more than once during his journeys to and from the eastern provinces and to Delhi where he was executed in 1675 under the orders of Emperor Aurangzeb for expounding the cause of the Kashmiri Brahmins against forcible conversions to Islam.<sup>114</sup>

Since there is a Gurudwara known as Gurudwara Dasham Padshahi it is believed that Guru Gobind Singh, the tenth Guru also visited Kurukshetra. In the absence of any historical evidence the credibility of this popular belief remains doubtful.

The Nirmal Sadhus, a sect of Sikhism, had their centre at Kurukshetra. One of their leader Bhai Gulab Singh (b. 1632) who had his education at Varanasi set his āśrama (hermitage) at Prāchīnīrtha. He was the disciple of Man Singh, another saint of the Nirmalas residing near the Sannihit tank. Bhai Gulab Singh had renounced worldly life early, and made Kurukshetra his permanent place of residence. He is known to have composed about twenty-five works on spiritual themes of which only four exist namely, *Bhāvarasāmīta* (Sam. 1834), *Mokshapantha Prakāśa* (Sam. 1835), *Ādhyatma Rāmāyaṇa*, *Karmavipāka* and *Prabodhachandrodaya Nāṭaka* (Sam. 1846).<sup>115</sup>



### 3. Religious and secular literature

Besides the growth of Sufism and Sikhism and their devotional literature, the region also produced literary figures in Prākṛt, Sanskrit, Hindi and Urdu.

The most important of the Prākṛt scholars was Thākura Pheru who was born at Kannana, a village lying about 8 kms from Charkhi Dadari (in district Mahendragarh).<sup>116</sup> Thākura Pheru belonged to the Śrīmāla stock and Dhandiya family (*Dhandhakula*) of the Vaishya caste.<sup>117</sup> His father and grandfather are mentioned as Thākura Chaṇḍa and Seth Kalio respectively.<sup>118</sup> He was a devoted Jaina as his sectarian title *Paramajaina* would suggest.<sup>119</sup> We are informed that Thākura Pheru was appointed an officer by Alauddin Khalji and was very intimately connected with the management of treasury and mint.<sup>120</sup>

His encyclopaedic knowledge prompted him to write on a variety of subjects with equal mastery. His works which have come down to us are a very important source of history of India of the thirteenth century. His earliest work *Yugapradhānachatuspādikā* (A.D. 1290) was written in Apabrahṃśa at Kannana under the supervision of his teacher Vachanāchārya Rajasēkara.<sup>122</sup> It provides a biographical survey of the Jaina Āchāryas from Mahāvīra to Yugapradhānāchārya, of the Kharataragachcha sect. Some events of historical value are alluded to in the said work.<sup>121</sup> The *Ratnaparikshā* (A.D. 1315) as the name suggests, deals exhaustively with gems—their types, availability, value, qualities and effects.<sup>123</sup> *Vastusāra* (A.D. 1315) also written at Kannana, is a treatise in Prākṛt dealing with Jaina sculpture and architecture.<sup>124</sup> The *Gaṇitasāra*, another Prākṛt work, is a valuable source of information on the economic conditions as prevailed during the thirteenth century. It deals with prices, weights and measures, varieties of textiles, measurement of land and such minute details as production per *bigha* of various commodities in southern Haryana.<sup>126</sup> *Dhātotpattikaraṇi-Vidhī* is a work on metallurgy, while *Jyotishasāra* (A.D. 1315) gives in a historical perspective, an exposition of movements of the stars and planets and their effect on human life.<sup>126</sup> The last of Pheru's works *Dravyaparikṣā* (A.D. 1318) is an invaluable source for the study of contemporary economic history. Also dealing with metallurgical subjects such as methods of purification of gold, silver, copper, tin, lead and other metals, it deals exhaustively on the system of coinage, exchange, classification, weights, coin-value and the ratio of the ingredients in the alloys.<sup>127</sup> Another noted writer of Apabrahṃśa was Bucharāja, a poet whose contributions were *Mayaṇḍujha*, *Santoshajayatilaka*, *Chetana Pudgala Dhamala*, *Tāṇḍānā* and *Kākaḍāmanjarichaupai*. He belonged to Hissar and flourished in the first half of the sixteenth century (V. 1591).<sup>128</sup> Yet another was Jina Vallabha Sūri, a scholar from Hansi whose important works in Apabrahṃśa were : *Sākṣmārtha-Siddhāntavichāra-Shraddhāṣṭi*, *Śraddhāṣṭaka-Dharmaṣikṣā*, *Praṇottara-shloka* and *Śramgaraṣṭaka*.<sup>129</sup> After Jina Vallabha, no noteworthy contribution was made to the Apabrahṃśa literature possibly because after the seventeenth century Sanskrit regained importance and eminent scholars started writing in that language.



Haryana also witnessed the development of early Hindi literature which had its origin in the Prākṛit works of the early medieval Jaina authors and in the writings of the Siddha and Nāth sects.<sup>130</sup> Pṛthudaka was one of the chief centres of Nāth order in this region.<sup>131</sup> The earliest Hindi author of this order was Chaurangnātha, a resident of Asthal Bohar (district Rohtak) who flourished in the thirteenth century. Although known as an author of a number of works in *Khaḍī Bolī* (Hindi) only two of them namely, *Vayutatvabhāvanopadeśa* and *Prāṇasangalī* have survived. These works give an exposition of the Nirguṇa philosophy.<sup>132</sup> He was followed by another author of the Nāth order—Mastanātha whose noteworthy composition was *Baṇīyān*.<sup>133</sup> During the fourteenth century Isardasa of Faridabad wrote a number of works in Hindi of which the noteworthy are—*Angada Paija*, *Bharata Vilāpa* and *Satyavati Kathā*. His language shows influence of Avadhi.<sup>134</sup> Suradasa, one of the most outstanding poets of Hindi of the fifteenth century, have been claimed by some as belonging to Sihi (Faridabad).<sup>135</sup>

The growth of Hindi literature in Haryana was further stimulated by the contributions of the scholars of the succeeding generations. Among these Virbhān of Narnaul—the founder of the Satnāmī sect; Māldev of Sirsa—the author of thirty books in Prākṛit, Sanskrit and Hindi (16th century); Hṛidaya Rām alias Rām Kavi of Gharaunda who later on settled at Thanesar and produced a number of works on religious themes; Rūp Chand Pande of the village Salempur; Bhagavati Dās of village Buria (in Ambala district); Ānandaghana of Sirsa, who wrote on subjects related to Jain religion and ethics; Sundardās of Karnal, Banārasī Dās of Biholi (a village near Rohtak) and Khaḍgasena of Narnaul (17th century) deserve particular mention.<sup>136</sup>

In the eighteenth century were born Garīb Dās (1717-1791) and Nischal Dās (1791-1863), the greatest poet-saints of the region. Garībdās is the earliest known Nirguṇa saint poet of Haryana. He was born at Chhudani in A.D. 1717 in a Jat family.<sup>137</sup> His *padas* (religious hymns and songs) numbering about 17000 or 18,500 give a brilliant exposition of the Nirguṇa philosophy.<sup>138</sup> No other saint poet of medieval India has written in such abundance and on so many facets of spiritual life.<sup>139</sup> He founded his own sect named after him as Garībdāsi which in course of time established its branches at various places in Punjab, Haryana, Uttar Pradesh, Rajasthan, Union Territory of Delhi and even in Gujarat (Ahmedabad).<sup>140</sup>

Garīb Dās's contribution to the contemporary Indian religious thought was his universalism. He stood for the fatherhood of God and brotherhood of men. He strongly condemned hatred, bitterness between divergent creeds and advocated close understanding between various religions and unity and equality between the rich and the poor, the high and the low.<sup>141</sup> Like Kabir, he worked for bringing about a healthy synthesis between the progressive elements of Hinduism and Islam and hence he easily found followers both among Hindus and Muslims.<sup>142</sup> Garīb Dās believed that God realization can be achieved in any walk of life, and hence renunciation of worldly life is not at all necessary. His songs reflect a happy reconciliation of worldly and spiritual life.<sup>143</sup>



According to Dr. Mohan Singh, Garīb Dās was :<sup>144</sup>

the last of the Hindu Rāj Yogīs and Bhakta poets who had as great a mastery of popular poetic language and style as Ghulām Farīd had, but whose range of thought and knowledge of other Indian languages was greater than that of any other Indian poet of Medieval India, the only poet who comes near to him being Shah Qayam Din Chisti of Kari Goan in Bombay.

And Dr. K.C. Gupta, the biographer, who calls him 'Haryana's Saint of Humanity' observes :<sup>145</sup>

Shrī Garīb Dās was a true saint in the sense that he never sought the patronage of any court. During his life-time, many invasions and upheavals took place . . . But we do not find a single reference to events to which he was almost an eye witness . . . although he was born in a Hindu family and lived his whole life in Haryana in the eighteenth century, his songs transcend all sectarian, spatial and temporal bounds and express man's eternal seeking for the Divine.

Nischal Dās (1791-1863) was born at Kungad (Hansi tehsil) in a Jat family. As he himself informs us he received his instruction in Sāṅkhya, Nyāya, Vyākaraṇa and Vedānta at Varanasi.<sup>146</sup> He was a follower of the Dādūpantha. One of his disciples was Ram Singh, the Raja of Bundi.<sup>147</sup> He was a prolific writer in Sanskrit as well as Hindi. Among his Sanskrit works mention may be made of *Īśopaniṣad*, *Kaṭhopaniṣad*, *Mahābhārata* (all commentaries), *Vṛttavivarṇa*, *Vṛttidīpikā* and *Āyurveda*, but unfortunately these have not come to light so far.<sup>148</sup> His distinctive contribution to the Hindi literature are his philosophical treatises *Vichārasāgara* and *Vṛttiprabhākara* and *Muktiprakāśa*—the first has since then been translated in Marathi, Bengali and English.<sup>149</sup> Swami Vivekananda was greatly influenced by Nischal Dās's contribution, and considered his *Vichārasāgara* as the 'most influential work that has been written in any language within the last three centuries'.<sup>150</sup>

Among other contemporary saint-poets who made noteworthy contribution to the Nirguṇa literature were Nityānanda of Narnaul, the author of *Satyasiddhānta-prakāśa* and *Barākhodī*; Jait Ram, a son of Garīb Dās who composed a number of works on devotional themes of which the most important is *Janmakathā* (the life story of the Saint Garīb Dās); Dayāl Dās, a disciple of Garīb Dās who composed *Vichāraprakāśa* (or *parīkṣā*), an exposition of the Advaita philosophy.<sup>151</sup>

The period also witness the development of Urdu and Hariyāṇvī. The noteworthy contributors in Urdu were Muhammad Afzal (1539-1626) of Panipat (the author of *Bikaṭa Kahānī*); his contemporary Shaikh Jivan (the author of *Fiqabā-i-Hindī*, *Mahsharnāmā*, *Dar-ī-nāmā*, *Khawābnāmā* and *Dābirnāmā-i-Bībī Fatimā*); Abdul Ves of Hansi, the editor of first Urdu-Hindi dictionary; and the poets of humour—Mir Jafar 'Jatal' (1659-1713) and his brother Abdul Jabil 'Jatal' of Narnaul.<sup>152</sup> Composi-



tions in different dialects of Hariyāṇavi of this period have also come to light. The *padas* (or devotional songs) of Saint Deḍhrāj of Gharsu (near Narnaul) in Ahirwāt; of Bābā Hari Dās in Bangru; and of Gulam Rangila in Mewati come under this category.<sup>153</sup>

These literary traditions of Haryana were continued in the succeeding periods by a number of scholars and poets of whom the following deserve mention. Ram Das of Agroha, author of a number of works including one on the tīrthas; Umadas of Thanesar one of the scholars employed by Patiala state for the translation of the Mahābhārata into Hindi (five Parvas) and the author of numerous works including the one entitled (*Kurukshetra Mahātmya*; Sahab Singh and Atma Singh of Jind whose works reflect influence of Vaṣṇava and Sikh religious philosophy; Sambhudās (also of Jind); Nanda and Mukunda (Hisar); Yugal Kishor Bhat (Kaithal); Babu Balmukand Gupta (Jhajjar), a prominent Urdu-Hindi newspaper editor,<sup>154</sup> whose weekly paper *Hindī Bangavāsi* published from Calcutta, is considered by R.C. Majumdar as 'the most influential Hindi newspaper during the two closing decades of the nineteenth century'<sup>155</sup> which considerably advanced the Hindi prose style; Madhav Prasad Misra, a great Hindi journalist of his times, who wrote learned articles on contemporary political, social, economic issues; Viśvambhar Nāth Kaushik, a renowned story writer and a well known editor; and Bhadanta Anand Kausalyayana who wrote on subjects of Buddhism.<sup>156</sup> Among the Urdu writers worthy of note were—Rao Man Singh, a *bakshi* of Rao Tula Ram of Rewari who wrote *Ābhirkuladīpīka*, a history of the Ahīrs dealing also with the history of the Rewari State from A.D. 1555 to the close of the nineteenth century, throwing light of the political, social and cultural life of Haryana of that period; Ghulam Nabi, author of *Tārikh-i-Jhajjar*, a comprehensive history of that state from 1803 to 1858 similarly is an important source of history for the period it covers.<sup>157</sup> Jafar Khan of Thanesar, a leader of Wahabi movement sentenced to life imprisonment in Andamans, whose two works—*Tārikh-i-Ajāba* and *Tārikh-i-Ajīb (Kālā Pānī)* (1884) give a graphic account of his sufferings. The style of Jafar's composition is simple and chaste, and 'is free from rhetorical flourishes and verbiage which was a common feature of the contemporary Urdu prose'<sup>158</sup> and last but not the least, Altaf Husain Hali of Panipat, 'the innovator of the modern spirit in Urdu'<sup>159</sup> as rightly observed by R.C. Majumdar. A master of many languages—Urdu, Persian and Arabic, Altaf Husain contributed a number of scholarly works in prose as well as in poetry of which *Muqaddima-i-Sher-o-Shairi*, is considered as 'an epoch making work' which sums up 'the essentials which have been recognised on all hands as forming the life and substance of all good poetry'.<sup>160</sup>

#### 4. Architecture

In Haryana during the medieval period there has been considerable interest in the construction of buildings mostly in the form of tombs (in the sacred memory of Muslim saints and men of eminence), mosques and other associated religious establish-



ments for prayers, recitation and the teaching of the holy scriptures. These are scattered all over Haryana particularly at Sohna, Jhajjar, Hissar, Narnaul, Hansi, Panipat, Thanesar, Kaithal, Sadhaura and Pinjore.

Situated under the shadow of Aravali Hills, by the Delhi Jaipur road, the hamlet of Sohna has a number of tombs, mosques, *sarais* and other structures constructed during the medieval period. The Sila Kund at the foot of a perpendicular rock, is one of the very few secular buildings of the Muslim period and is believed to have been constructed in the fourteenth century, though it has been subjected to subsequent heavy alterations and repairs. This was originally the tomb of a saint built in Lodhi architectural style during the early sixteenth century. The Kala Gumbad and the Lal Gumbad built sometime before 1570 A.D. and an eighteenth century fort constructed on the brow of the hill overlooking the town are other notable structures of the place.<sup>161</sup>

The monuments at Jhajjar, a group of tombs built mainly of *kankar* stones in Pathan style, in view of their planning, design and decoration probably belong to the sixteenth century. Commenting on their architectural features Mulk Raj Anand and R.S. Bisht write<sup>162</sup> :

The monotony of the facades is relieved by the use of bold outlines. The near hemispherical and proportionate domes over heavy necks make them interesting survivors of the Pathan style into the Mughal period. The whole impact is of modesty and rhythmic elegance. Thus they stand out as a class of their own. These structures are silhouetted against the lightly wooded, serene environment of an open country side, far from the crowded town, which enhances the gravity of purpose of the monuments for which they were meant. The verse engraved on all the walls of the first tomb purports to say that : 'all man's worldly desires and hopes lead him nowhere but to the dust'. (indeed an appropriate epitaph on that period of marauders and free booters !)

Important monuments at Hisar, built during the times of Firuz Shah are Lat-ki-Masjid, the Kotla and the Haus Khas. They stand out as 'ambitious architecture incorporating the basic elements of Tughlaqabad in the context of his (Firuz's) own ambitions'. The slightly slanting walls, the *jalīs* and the columns are adopted respectively from Seljuk, Hindu and Buddhist styles. Space is, however, occupied for the function of Muslim prayers.<sup>163</sup> Firuz Shah's constructions at Fatehabad have already been mentioned. The town also has a 'small and unassuming, but exquisitely proportioned and enamel decorated little mosque' perhaps the oldest one, which according to local tradition was built by Emperor Humayun in course of his flight to Amarkot.<sup>164</sup>

The most imposing architectural monument at Narnaul is the tomb of Ibrahim Khan, an officer of the Lodhis at that place. Built by Sher Shah Suri (1538-46) the former's grandson, it was constructed under the supervision of Shaikh Ahmad



Niyazi. A perfect Pathan style square tomb it is 'characterised by massive outlines, exquisite details and pleasing interplay of colours'. Among its other remarkable features which have given it 'balance, strength and dexterity' mention may be made of 'a high terrace, double storey simulation, bold arches, low domes, beautiful *kiosks* on carved pillars, slender turrets (*guldastas*) and elegant merlons'. As rightly observed by an eminent scholar 'the use of deep red, grey and white stone, encaustic tile-work, painted ceiling with excellent brush work, and subtle lapidary, give it a richness which is unique among such buildings in Haryana'.<sup>165</sup>

Shah Quli Khan, Akbar's trusted Governor of Lahore, is known to be the builder of splendid buildings, tanks and gardens at Narnaul. His garden aptly named as *Aram-i-Kauser* of which what remains today is its enclosure walls, a well, and the gateway complex. The finest monument is perhaps his own mausoleum, built inside the garden 'constructed in bluish grey and red stones, on an octagonal plan' which, in fact, is a variation of the Pathan tomb style. Among other of the Khan's constructions are *Jal Mahal* or *Khan Sarover* (1591 A.D.) and *Jami Mosque* (1590). The former, located in the centre of a large tank, is surrounded by five *kiosks*, the larger in the centre and the rest in the corners; the latter is 'a moderate size mosque, with three arched openings leading to triple bays, surmounted by corresponding domes on its roofs'.<sup>166</sup> Among other remarkable constructions of Narnaul are *Chor Gumbad*, Tomb of Shah Wilayat and Chatta Mukand Das.

The tomb of Shah Wilayat and the adjoining complex were constructed sometime during the reign of Firuz Tughlaq. The author of *Gulzar* attributes part of its construction to Alam Khan Mewati (A.D. 1357).<sup>167</sup> The old constructions are of course those displaying simplicity and grandeur, the characteristics of the Tughlaqs. The curved arches, hemispherical domes suggest Pathan style. The inside paintings are said to have been added at a much later period. The Persian inscription over the doorway gives A.H. 531, the date of the demise of the saint.<sup>168</sup> The *Chor Gumbad* in view of its wide low dome and *ogee* arches may also be placed, in the Tughlaq period. Called the 'signboard of Narnaul' it provides a beautiful view of the surrounding area. It is a big square monument with single chamber inside. As the second level is marked by an open circumscribing *verandah*, the monument appears to be double-storeyed from outside. It was constructed by Jamal Khan, an Afghan, as his tomb. It remained a hideout for thieves and highwaymen which explains its popular name *Chor Gumbad*.<sup>169</sup> But the most notable appears to be the spacious palace of Ray-i-Rayan Mukand Das, the Diwan of Narnaul under Shah Jahan. 'Dexterously planned and embellished, its exterior is unostentatious and drab'. It was once a five-storeyed building with several halls, rooms and pavilions. Most of the structure has now collapsed and its interior is filled with debris and dust,<sup>170</sup> but it still tells us something about its purpose and architectural planning :

The extensive open terrace on the south, light elliptical pavilions on different levels, halls on pillars and running *verandah* around a central court, once adorn-



ed with a marble fountain, impart to it spaciousness and light. The profuse use of marble for veneering, and pillars and drains, might have been cosy retreat during the tropical summers.<sup>171</sup>

The other structures of the palace are a dilapidated well, for supply of water to the reservoirs, and to the west an exquisite isolated gateway-complex, well provided with projecting balconies, and marble veneering.<sup>172</sup>

Hansi, a strong strategic fort under the early Sultans of Delhi, remained a centre of Sufi religion and learning specially because of its association with the famous Baba Shaikh Farid who spent twelve years in a small den here. The mortal remains of his four disciples namely, Jamal-ud-Din Hansavi (1187-1261), Burhan-ud-Din Munawar (1261-1300), Qutb-ud-Din Munawar (1354) and Nur-ud-din Nur-i-Jahan 'Mughalkush' (1325-1397) also lie buried in a tomb popularly known as *Chahar Qutb*. The *dargah* celebrates the annual fair.<sup>173</sup>

The most beautiful building is the tomb of Mir Tijarah, the chief surveyor of Sultan Hamid-ud-Din. He was a disciple of Jamal for whom the tomb was originally built. The latter is said to have remarked, who knows for whom it is intended? As fate would have it, Mir who died earlier, was buried there. 'It is a fine mausoleum 11 metres square and 15 metres high, balanced and showing brilliant encaustic tile decoration. In the northern enclosure lies the most imposing edifice, the big mosque constructed by Firuz Shah Tughlaq. About three metres across is a little monument called Chhatra, a square canopied tomb. Four carved sandstone pillars support the enamelled canopy and the vault contains two graves, said to have been the oldest in Hansi.<sup>174</sup>

In the fort complex there are a few other monuments which deserve mention. Among such is the Barsi Gate in the southern wall of the outer defences of Hansi fort, constructed in the year 1304-5 as the Persian epigraph on its doorway suggests. This may be assigned to the reign of Ala-ud-Din Khilji who, in view of frequent Mongol inroads, was interested in the construction of strategic forts. 'It is a fine example of fort architecture. Its protruding round bastions, big rectangular forms, bedecked with simple panellings, contrasted with encaustic tile-work in the spandrels, give the effect of both strength and beauty'.<sup>175</sup> In the southern wall of the inner circumambulation is another gate-way complex giving access to the citadel, which is now in ruins. The material of old Hindu palaces and temples were freely used for the construction of the whole complex. Next is Baradari, a pillared hall of early Muslim period made of building material of old Hindu monuments. At its northern end are the Khangah structures named after a revered mausoleum of Wali Hazrat Saiyyid Nismet Ullah, who died here fighting during the campaign of Muhammad Ghori in 1191-92 A.D. It is a sacred place for both Hindus and Muslims. There are two mosques alongside this tomb inside an enclosure collectively called *Rauzah*.<sup>176</sup>

The most important monument at Panipat is the tomb of Abu Ali Shah. Its main enclosure measures 155'×143', the northern 138'×146' and the southern, a



small one of 60' × 51'. The tomb is in the northern enclosure, but has entry from the middle one, outside it is 42 square and inside 25'. It has *verandahs* on its southern side, the outer one having 8 pillars of Kasauti stone. A perforated stone screen separates the tomb from the enclosure. The tomb itself seems to be the old part of the entire surroundings. It is said to have been built by Khizr Khan and Shadi Khan, the sons of Alauddin Khilji. Abu Ali died in 724 H. Khizr Khan is also known to have built his own tomb at Sonapat. The Kasauti pillared *verandah* was added by Rizquallah Khan, son of Muqarrab Khan in 1660 A.D. in the time of Aurangzeb which presently bears beautiful paintings and stylistic calligraphy on its walls. The marble screen in its front is of fine workmanship.<sup>177</sup> Other medieval buildings of the town are the tomb of Ibrahim Lodhi,<sup>178</sup> of Muqarrab Khan, the Governor of Gujarat during the reign of Jahangir, and of Nawab Sadiq Ali Khan (also known as Lutfullah and Shams-ud-Daulah) who was warder of the fort of Delhi in the time of Nadir Shah and Wazir of three emperors—Bahadur Shah, Farrukhsiyar and Muhammad Shah.<sup>179</sup> In the westside of the main enclosure lies the mosque of Abu Ali, a red sandstone structure in a perfect condition. The buds on the voussoirs of the arches are remarkably beautiful. The whole building is very striking. Round the enclosure there are also rooms for the keepers of the tomb and pilgrims, and a tank with adjoining well in the south-west corner.<sup>179a</sup> About 8 kms of the town of Panipat is situated the Badshahi Sarai—its flanking towers with projection after Qutab fashion and the small ones at each end of the elevation are unique. The whole building is now in ruins.<sup>180</sup>

The city of Thanesar also felt the impact of Muslim architectural activity. A few Persians inscriptions found here, belonging to various reigns i.e. of Muhammad Tughlaq, Bahlol and Sikandar Lodhi, and Humayun, refer to the construction of mosques by the local officers. The location of these mosques is no more possible as the old town is almost in ruins.<sup>181</sup> Among notable structure which have survived the fury of time may be mentioned : the Pathariya Masjid, the tombs of Shaikh Jalaluddin and Shaikh Chehali, the Madrasa and the Chiniwali Masjid.

The Pathariya Masjid, a red sandstone construction consists of a long room supported by pillars and pilasters and has a beautiful roof showing parallelograms with geometric and floral designs. Cunningham assigns to it the time of Firuz Tughlaq or towards the close of the fourteenth century while Rodgers thinks that it was built during the times of Sikandar Lodhi.<sup>181</sup> The tomb of Shaikh Jalaluddin (a contemporary of Akbar), a red sand-stone square building lies to the eastern side of the Thanesar fort. According to Rodgers 'formerly it was supported on twelve square sand stone pillars, but the interstices have been filled in with fine lattice-work in brick'.<sup>182</sup> The overhanging eaves are much broken, and under them lies in a deep shadow an Arabic inscription, a quotation, going round the two sides and the back of the tomb. The dome of the tomb is plastered and hemispherical in shape with an inverted flower at the top.<sup>183</sup> The tomb of Shaikh Chehali and Madrasa are situated on a part of the old fort of Thanesar. Rodgers who visited the tomb during his survey tour (1888-89) observed :<sup>184</sup>



The tomb is built on an octagonal platform each side of which is 33'-11". The tomb is itself octagonal each side being 18'-9" outside and 11'-7" inside. The platform is in the middle of an enclosure 174' square and 41' above the level of the plain. The wall of this enclosure has in it twelve cupolas (once covered with coloured tiles). The platform was once surrounded by posts and trellis work : nine posts are still left but only one piece of perforated marble . . . The tomb has arched recesses in each side. Each recess is adorned with two marble perforated screens. The marble eaves are broken in places. The embattlements above them are ornamental. Above these is a round neck on which rests a pear-shaped dome. The whole of the building is of white marble, the workmanship is highly finished.

In the opinion of Cunningham 'the white marble and the noble position combined, make it one of the striking and picturesque monuments in north India'.<sup>185</sup>

Towards south of the tomb enclosures on a lower level is the Madrasa, courtyard 117'-5"  $\times$  123'-2" or 174' outside 'with a deep arcade of 9 openings on each side'. The whole building is made of bricks.<sup>186</sup> Other details of the Shaikh, who was in all probability a contemporary of Dara Shekoh, have already been considered.<sup>187</sup> Rodgers explains the word Chilli as the title acquired by one performing Chilla i.e. a period of 40 days during which the devotee is engaged constantly in devotion. The name of the 'Shaikh's son was Abd-us-Samad or Abd-ul-Wahd.<sup>188</sup> The Chiniwali Masjid, situated near the north-east angle of the fort, is built on a high platform. Measuring 54 feet outside, inside it is divided into 3 rooms covered with very low domes. 'There is a pretty octangular minaret at each end of the eastern wall. The eastern facade is divided into panels which were once filled with coarse inlaid enamelled flowers. On the south minaret is an inlaid, unintelligible but dated (973) inscription, the last line of which reads : *Remember the Truth in the House of Worship*.<sup>189</sup>

The notable monuments at Kaithal are the tombs of Shaikh Salah-ud-Din Balkhi, Abdur Rashid Shah Walayat and Shah Jamal, the Jama Masjid and the mosque of Taiyab. The first, situated on the northern gate of the town, is the oldest building. It is built of old material, pillars, dome and architraves of some old Hindu temple. From the inscriptions found here we know that the Shaikh became a martyr (*Shahid*) in 643 (perhaps in an encounter with the Mongols) and was styled 'Shaikh al Kabir' or the great Shaikh. He was probably Ala-ud-Din Masaud Shah's contemporary.<sup>190</sup> In the middle of the town stands the tomb and mosque of Abd-ur-Rashid Shah Walayat, a contemporary of Ala-ud-Din Muhammad Shah whose name appears in an inscription attached to the place. To the east of the town is the tomb of Shah Jamal measuring 25 feet square and has 'an octagonal neck and hemispherical dome'. Pillars of some old temples were used in the construction of its door. The discovery of old sculptural pieces, big bricks, and capitals of pillars suggest that it must have been an ancient site.<sup>191</sup> The Jama Masjid is situated towards the east of Shah Walayat's mosque measuring 92'  $\times$  32' with 10 domes, two rows of each. On the



basis of its doorways Rodgers is inclined to assign it to early Mughal period. It is in a remarkably good condition. In the south-west corner of its courtyard there is a domed tomb covered with blue enamelled tiles.<sup>192</sup> The mosque of Taiyub lies to the east of Jama Masjid which has three domes banded like those of the Sarai Masjid at Hissar. The bands have green tiles. The eastern facade of the mosque is also ornamented with tiles and with stucco work. The central doorway is large and fine; the side doors are small. The date of the building as gathered from its inscription comes to either 834 or 844 H. According to a tradition, Taiyub—a Hindu converted Muslim, was a contemporary of Akbar. But on the basis of its similarity with the Masjid at Hissar, Rodgers assigned it to the time of Humayun.<sup>193</sup>

Muslim monuments are also found at Sadhaura, the oldest being an old stone mosque to the west of the town of 732 H (1331-32 A.D.) i.e. belonging to the times of Muhammad Tughlaq. Like the Pathariya Masjid of Thanesar it also has minarets (in the west wall). Cunningham and Rodgers who have visited the place have given the ground plans of the monument in their *Survey Reports*.<sup>194</sup> The tomb and mosque of Abdul Wahab are other notable structures. Of the original building of the tomb only the doorway and lower remain. These were built sometime during the reign of Sikandar Lodhi. The mosque measuring 33'-3" × 13'-6" inside, with walls 2'-9" thick has a *verandah* 4'-3" broad. Rodgers provides the following details of the mosque :<sup>195</sup>

The southern facade is covered with tiles and enamelled inscriptions . . . The spandrels of the three arches are full of floral work all of enamelled tiles resembling coarse mosaics. The inner central arch has eight lines of Persian poetry in black letters on yellow ground over it. This gives the date of the completion of the mosque as 1080 H (during the reign of Aurangzeb). The innerside arches have each a Persian couplet on them, in yellow letters on green ground. The three domes have all inner domes considerably lower than the outer ones. This mosque must have once been a beautiful piece of workmanship.

The gateways of the courtyards of some private dwellings (of the time of Jahangir) towards the eastern side are worthy of note. Erected by Qazi Abul Mukarim and Qazi Abul Muhammad, sons of Shah Qamis, a renowned faqir of Sadhaura during Akbar's times, these were once covered with blue, yellow and green tiles in geometric patterns. The other side of a river on which is situated the town lies burial place of the faqir Shah Qamis and further up the river in the same direction an elegant tomb on a slightly elevated platform of a *bārahdari* fashion, having projected eaves and an oblong dome. The latter monument probably belongs to the times of Aurangzeb.<sup>196</sup>

The ancient town of Pinjore also felt the impact of Mughal architectural activity. Its natural setting—fertile valley, ring of hills and romantic surrounding, drew the attention of Fidai Khan, the Governor of Sirhind under Aurangzeb. The Pinjore

garden, the only surviving monument almost in its original design, was laid out in typical stepped garden pattern of the late Mughal style of Aurangzeb's time. Here are some of the most important features of these gardens :<sup>197</sup>

Unlike most Mughal gardens, here the entrance is from the higher ground. The seven terraces descend from the hill, revealing a fresh view at each level. They do not ascend, as in Shalimar and Nishat in Kashmir. The length of the garden is adorned with an arterial water channel, which is studded with fountains at interval pools, basins, falls and slanting cascades. Other devices are employed among the parterres, so as to make the whole into an effective type of water-flow garden. At the end of central points of terrace, a palace, a loggia, or a pavilion was created. The Shish Mahal and its surrounding pavilion is on the first level. The Rang Mahal with its spacious open hall is on the second. And the Jal Mahal is on the fifth.

Like other Mughal gardens, here also privacy is ensured by surrounding embattled wall. Another fortification wall separating the upper two terraces from the rest offers additional security for the *zenana*. Emphasis on geometrical construction distinguishes the landscaping here from the natural flow of the Hindu idea, which conceived so much garden as space wrested from the forest. The effects are obtained by means of parterres bordered by flowering and aromatic plants. In design and effect, the Pinjore garden is a *tour de force*. And when there is sufficient water, rippling in the canals, or pools, or foaming through the falls, the effect is of an enchanted world rescued from the Shiwaliks.

From the above reconstruction it would appear that Haryana, the meeting place of various currents of religious thought—devotional Hinduism, Sikhism and Sufism, was also the scene of vigorous literary and architectural activity—the first, through the medium of language—Prākṛt, Sanskrit, Hindi, Persian, Arabic and Urdu;<sup>198</sup> the second, in the form of magnificent structures—mosques, mausoleums, pleasure gardens, palaces, forts and *sarais*. Despite the repressive measures of some of its rulers, Haryana continued to be the home of religion and culture during the medieval period.

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131. *Ibid.*
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135. S.P. Goel, *op. cit.*, K.C. Yadav, *op. cit.*
136. S.P. Goel, *op. cit.*, pp. 30-1; K.C. Yadav, *op. cit.*, pp. 200-01.
137. K.C. Gupta, *Śrī Garīb Dās : Haryana's Saint of Humanity*, New Delhi, 1976, p. 32.
138. *Ibid.*, p. 43.
139. *Ibid.*, cover page matter.
140. *Ibid.*, pp. 51-55.
141. *Ibid.*, p. 205.
142. *Ibid.*, p. 206.
143. *Ibid.*, p. 207.
144. *Ibid.*, p. 182; *An Introduction to Punjab Literature*, p. 152.
145. *Ibid.*, over leaf matter.
146. Ranjit Singh, 'Literature in Haryana, 1700-1900 A.D.' (*Haryana : Studies in History and Culture*, p. 117).
147. *Ibid.*
148. *Ibid.*, p. 122.
149. *Ibid.*, p. 117.
150. *Collected Works*, IV, p. 280.
151. Ranjit Singh, *op. cit.*, pp. 116-17; K.C. Yadav, *op. cit.*, p. 201-02.
152. Yadav, *op. cit.*, p. 199; Ranjit Singh, *op. cit.*, p. 120; Sarada, *op. cit.*, p. 62.
153. Ranjit Singh, *op. cit.*, pp. 120-21; Yadav, *op. cit.*, p. 202.
154. S.P. Goel, *JHS*, III, No. 2, 1971, pp. 57-65.
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157. Ranjit Singh, *op. cit.*, p. 123.
158. V.N. Datta and H.A. Phadke, *History of Kurukshetra* p. 143.
159. Ranjit Singh, *op. cit.*, p. 124; R.C. Majumdar, *British Paramountcy*, IX, part II, p. 215.
160. Abdullah, *The spirit and substance of Urdu prose under Sir Saiyyid Ahmad Khan*, pp. 140-41; Latif, *Influence of English literature on Urdu Literature*, p. 102.
161. *Marg*, 'Haryana Heritage', XXVII, No. 4, September, 1974, pp. 41-42.
162. *Ibid.*, p. 23.
163. *Ibid.*, p. 24-25, Plates 22, 23.
164. *Ibid.*, p. 28.
165. *Ibid.*, p. 32.
166. *Ibid.*
167. *Ibid.*, p. 33.



168. *Ibid.*
169. *Ibid.*
170. *Ibid.*
171. *Ibid.*
172. *Ibid.*
173. *Ibid.*, p. 30.
174. *Ibid.*
175. *Ibid.*, p. 29.
176. *Ibid.*
177. C.J. Rodgers, *Report of the Panjab Circle of the Archaeological Survey for 1888-89*, pp. 43-44.
- 177a. *Ibid.*, p. 44; *Marg*, *op. cit.*, p. 41.
178. *Supra*, Ch. VII p. 132.
179. Rodgers, *op. cit.*, p. 44.
- 179a. *Ibid.*
180. *Ibid.*
181. *Ibid.*, pp. 9-10.
- 181a. *Ibid.*, pp. 10-1; A. Cunningham, *ASIR*, II, p. 222.
182. Rodgers, *op. cit.*, p. 11.
183. *Ibid.*
184. *Ibid.*, p. 10.
185. Cunningham, *op. cit.*, p. 223.
186. Rodgers, *op. cit.*, p. 10.
187. *Supra*; Rodgers, *op. cit.*, Cunningham, *op. cit.*, p. 223.
188. Rodgers, *op. cit.*
189. *Ibid.*, p. 13.
190. *Ibid.*, p. 18.
191. *Ibid.*, pp. 19-20.
192. *Ibid.*, p. 19.
193. *Ibid.*, pp. 19-20.
194. Rodgers, *op. cit.*, p. 25, Pls LVI—LVII. Cunningham, *ASIR*, XIV, Pls XXIII.
195. Rodgers, *op. cit.*, pp. 25-26.
196. *Ibid.*, p. 26.
197. *Marg*, *op. cit.*, p. 34; Rodgers, *op. cit.*, pp. 28-32; for more details of the antiquities of the town.
198. The literary activity as inferred from the growth of various languages although presupposes the existence of an educational system yet in the absence of sufficient historical evidence it would be difficult to ascertain its exact nature. The meagre information coming from casual references in contemporary literary sources only suggests that Hindus had *pāṭhāśālās* while the Muslims *maktabs* and *madrāsas* for imparting primary and higher education. The Hindus had such institutions at Thanesar and Bhiwani and the Jains their *mathas* (monasteries) at Bohar (dist. Rohtak), Ghudani (near Jhajjar) and Hansi for imparting knowledge of their respective scriptures and ethics. The Muslim *maktabs* and *madrāsas* which received special royal favours were established by Firuz Shah at Hisar and Fatehabad, by Sher Shah Sur at Narnaul, by Shaikh Jalaluddin and Shaikh Faridabadi at Thanesar and Faridabad respectively besides several others at Panipat, Hansi, Safidon, Gohana, Rohtak, Kaithal and Shahbad (Yadav, *op. cit.*, pp. 190-93).

## CHAPTER X

# *The Epilogue*

Regional studies in India were motivated primarily due to the search for new source-material but they received further stimulation in the nationalist historical writings challenging the imperial historians justification of the British rule. Unfortunately, no such development seems to have taken place in Haryana. This was mainly due to the denial of a separate administrative status to the region for long—it was usually tagged either with Delhi (1803), Northwestern Province (1834) or Punjab (1858), the last position was enforced by the British Government as a sort of punishment for its role in the uprising of 1857 and in the subsequent revolutionary activities of the Wahabis. Even after India gained independence (1947) Haryana remained neglected for quite sometime. As part of the united Punjab it always held a secondary position so far its development was concerned and continued to be so till 1966, when it emerged as a separate state.

B.C. Law and R.C. Agrawala were the earliest Indian scholars who wrote on aspects of history and culture of Haryana much before the creation of the new state. These were in fact pioneer attempts concerned more with the compilation of the original source-material rather than providing any systematic historical reconstruction of the region. These scholars were attracted primarily by the fascinating theme of Kurukshetra, one of the holiest places of pilgrimage of the ancient world. T.S. Shejwalkar's *Panipat 1761*. H.R. Gupta edited *Marathas and Panipat* and S.M. Pagadi's *Pānīpat Chā Sangrāma* are significant works on the Third Battle of Panipat. The first organised attempt seems to have been made through the publication of the *Journal of Haryana Studies* by Dr. K.C. Yadav, devoted mainly to the study of history and culture of the region. *Haryana Through the Ages* by Prof. Buddha Prakash provides an outline of the historical growth of Haryana from the earliest times to the present. The most recent work entitled *The History of Kurukshetra* by the present writer in collaboration with Prof. V.N. Datta is an exhaustive attempt at providing a perceptive study of the past and present of Kurukshetra on the basis of archaeological and literary sources. Prof. J.N. Agrawal and Dr. Silak Ram have worked on the inscriptions of Haryana, while the 'Haryana Heritage' of the *Marg* edited by Dr. Mulk



Raj Anand provides commendable illustrated survey of the art traditions of the region.

The importance of such painstaking research specially for a people who have suffered so long to find their historical identity cannot be gainsaid, but this has further to be pursued not in isolation but in an objective spirit, in relevance to the general historical growth of the country. This has inspired the preparation of the present study. While reconstructing the history of the region from the earliest times to the Third Battle of Panipat, 1761 care has been taken to identify and explain those aspects of its culture which connect the regional with the main current of Indian history. As has been very aptly remarked by Prof. Romila Thapar 'it is at the interpretational level that the interest in regional history assumes greater historical potential, a potential with which we are not altogether fully familiar'.

Haryana's contribution to the main stream of Indian history and culture has been remarkable. A rendezvous of various people it was here that they came, got mingled and contributed towards making of Indian culture. To the literary tradition it has always been the land of plenty and the very heaven on earth. Here on its battlefields—Kurukshetra, Taraori, Karnal and Panipat—decisive actions of Indian history took place and the powers of oppression were defied. It was the meeting place of various streams of religious thought—Hinduism, Buddhism, Jainism, Sufism and Sikhism. The continuity of this rich cultural and spiritual heritage can be captured through the various places of pilgrimage, shrines, mosques and *gurudwaras* scattered all over the region, and also perhaps immortalised in its art traditions.

The religious sanctity and spiritual associations of the region largely depended on its material conditions and geo-political situation. Its geographical background—Himalayas in the north, Aravallis in the south and the great desert of Rajasthan in west—in fact, a gateway to the Ganga Valley, has left tremendous impact on the region's historical and cultural growth. To this strategical importance was added the economic prosperity due to its three main river beds—the Sarasvatī, the Dr̥ṣadvatī and the Yamunā with their numerous feeders. The security and independence of North Indian plains thus depended entirely on the stability in this region.

Haryana in the sense of a geographical entity was not known before 12th century A.D. However, the antiquity of the area it covered has never been questioned. One of the earliest *homo-sapiens* roamed about in the Shiwalik and Aravalli hills and then after a long pause, civic and social life began to develop gradually at its various pre-historic and proto-historic sites—Banawali, Rakhigarhi, Mitathal, Siswal, Daulatpur, Bhagwanpur and Balu. For long scholars were puzzled over the clear breach between the Harappans and the Aryans but the Bhagwanpura (district Kurukshetra) excavations have brought to light for the first time juxtaposition of the late-Harappans and the Painted Grey Ware cultures. This is of considerable significance for the historical reconstruction of the region from the middle of the second to the first few centuries of the first millennium B.C.



The beginnings of civilization and appearance of religion are simultaneous in history. During the process of assimilation and expansion of Aryan culture under the Kurus, the most prominent of the Bharata tribe (after whom the country was called Bhārata) the region and its several parts came to be known variously as Uttaravedi, Brahmavedi, Brahmāvarta, Brahmarṣideśa, Kurudeśa, Kurukshetra and Kurujāngala in Brahmanical and Purāṇic literature suggesting thereby also its religious character. In the making of this region the home of culture, the Kurus made a distinct contribution by their excellence in military skill, by their idealism and innate literary and spiritual reserves.

The Bhārata battle which was fought towards the close of the Ṛgvedic period at Kurukshetra was an epoch making event also inspiring the highly sophisticated and subtle philosophical thought of the *Bhagavadgītā*. The Bhārata battle and the *Bhagavadgītā* both occupy a special place in the life of the nation. There has been much controversy and speculation among the scholars on the historicity and date of the battle. Largely the controversy has arisen due to the conflicting nature of evidence—literary, archaeological and astronomical. However, a critical and comparative study of these sources lead to a reasonable inference that the battle was an actual historical event extending roughly over the area covering Kaithal, Pehowa, Thanesar and Amin and took place in all probability in c. 1200-1000 B.C. Similarly, any attempt at the search of the actual place where the message of the Gītā was expounded would be futile unless satisfactory answers are found to a few basic questions. First, what was the original Gītā which represented the period when the battle was fought; second, what were the different phases of the earlier thought which culminated in the philosophy of the Gītā, and finally, what part of this holy land of Kurukshetra was particularly associated with this spiritual elevation.

Under the Pārikshitas, the successors of the Pāṇḍavas, the importance of the region declined due to Hastināpura's destruction by the floods in the Gaṅgā and the destruction of crops by the locusts forced the Kurus to migrate to the eastern parts of India. The Kurus, renowned for their spiritual knowledge and moral value, were naturally drawn towards Buddhism which initially adopted a rational approach to the understanding of human sufferings. This explains why the Buddha addressed some of his profoundest discourses to the Kurus concerning awareness, canons of causation and permanence so that they may be enlightened on the real purpose and meaning of existence. To commemorate these visits and also to further the cause of propagation of Buddhism many a complex were constructed in the region in the succeeding periods.

One of the causes of Alexander's retreat from India is said to have been the report on the tenacity and material prosperity of the people beyond Beas, a reference which obviously includes the people of Bahudhānyaka well known for martial spirit and sound agrarian economy. Haryana formed a part of the extensive Nanda empire and was included in the administrative division called Uttarāpatha under the Mauryas as is confirmed by the discovery of Aśoka's Edict at Topra (Ambala district), pillars



at Hissar and *stūpas* at Śrughna (Sugh), Chaneti and Thanesar. The edict bears testimony to the king's anxiety for the material and spiritual happiness of the people. The second century B.C. marks the rise of several tribal republics—the Agras, the Yaudheyas, the Audumbaras and the Kuṇindas—in the region. These people resisted the advance of the Bactrian Greeks, the Śakas and the Kushāṇas. The Yaudheyas whose coinage has been discovered from all over the region became the most prominent for ousting the Kushāṇas from the Punjab. Their new coins show the figure of the War-God Kārtikeya while their seals describe them as invincible warriors holding the charm of victory. Under them, the region witnessed the revival of ancient values; martial spirit, love of Sanskrit learning and a curious blend of material and altruistic interests.

During the Gupta period the region became for the first time a centre of political power. The royal seat was called Sthāṇvīśvara after the famous deity worshipped by the Puṣpabhūti dynasty ruling at Thanesar. The Guptas and the Puṣpabhūtis repulsed foreign invasions (this time of the Hūṇas) from the region and in this they followed the Mauryas and the Yaudheyas. With the transfer of the Vardhana capital from Thanesar to Kanauj, the political importance of the region declined for some time but it continued to retain its religious importance. Due to the rise of the cult of *Bhakti* tirthas and temples were largely built in the region. Most of these temples have disappeared during the Turk invasions of the subsequent period but quite a few fragmentary specimens which have survived are sufficient to reveal the artistic activity of these bygone ages. The Purāṇas provide details of the places of pilgrimage with their natural setting, sacred rivers, āśramas and above all, the life of meditation, penance and austerity that was led here. Bāṇa, the biographer of Harṣa, and Hiuen Tsang, the contemporary Chinese pilgrim, supply us valuable information on the socio-economic and cultural life of the people, while their adventurous spirit is reflected in the inscriptions at Laos and Cambodia.

From the eighth century onwards the region came under the rule of several Rajput dynasties—the Pratihāras, the Tomaras and the Chāhamānas, who came to prominence as defenders of the integrity and sanctity of the land against the foreign Ghaznavid and Ghurid attacks. The Topra pillar describes Vighararāja IV Chauhāna as the master of the whole region from Vindhya to the Himalayas and the maker of Āryāvarta once again the abode of the Āryans. The inscription thus provides an idea of the role which the region played in resisting the Turk invaders. The Chauhāna supremacy which lasted about half a century came to an end with the defeat of the Rajput forces in the Second Battle of Tarain (1192). The escape of Pṛthvirāja III towards Sirsa, his capture and subsequent death completely changed the political complexion of the region. Indian history took a decisive turn. Haryana and Delhi along with the forts of Hansi, Sirsa and Thanesar passed on to the new masters, the Sultans of Delhi.

Situated between Punjab and Delhi, Haryana had been the scene of frequent warfare during the Sultanate which left disturbing effects and made life rather difficult.



The new rule was theocracy in theory but was practically a military despotism backed by a foreign aristocracy bent upon exploiting the masses. The latter did not meekly surrender but often revolted and on occasions overthrew their foreign oppressors. This defiance of the power of oppression continued to be a special feature of the history of Haryana in succeeding periods. Although generally a policy of neglect was followed by the Sultans and taxes were imposed even on pilgrims visiting holy places, administrative reforms specially the canal constructions under Firuz Tughlaq, benefited agricultural cultivation in the region. It adjusted itself to the new administrative set-up particularly that of the Surs and the early Mughals (which was not altogether devoid of reforms and innovations) but the frequent and devastating natural calamities—epidemic, draught, scarcity of rains and famines played havoc with the lives of the people. One of the most spectacular popular rising of those times was, of course, that of the Satnāmis of Narnaul who revolted against the oppressive revenue officials of Aurangzeb. Ultimately overpowered by numbers, the Satnāmis fell fighting to the last man yet by their supreme sacrifices they left the field open for others to continue the struggle in the subsequent periods. Under the later Mughals, peace, prosperity and industry completely departed from the region due to the invasions of Nadir Shah and Ahmed Shah Abdali and the plunders and devastations brought by the Sikhs and the Marathas.

Although the Muslim ruling class at times adopted intolerant attitude towards the Hindus and often destroyed holy places, the Sufi movement soon wove itself into the complex culture-pattern of India and helped removing the spirit of mistrust and isolation between the two religionists. Hansi, Thanesar, Kaithal, Jhajjar, Hissar, Panipat and Narnaul were the chief centres of this movement which were visited even by the Sultans and the Great Mughals and where such fundamental metaphysical questions like the 'meaning of existence' and 'cure of melancholy' were raised and answered. Several Sikh Gurus—Guru Nanak Dev, Guru Amar Das, Guru Teg Bahadur and Guru Govind Singh paid visits to the holy places of the region and several *Gurudwaras* exist to commemorate these visits. The meeting place of various currents of religious thought, the region quite naturally stimulated growth of literature in Prākṛt, Sanskrit, Persian, Arabic, Hindi and Urdu. It was also the scene of vigorous architectural activity in the form of magnificent structures scattered all over the region—the Pinjore Gardens—an enchanted world in design and effect, the tomb of Shah Kalandar of Panipat—an example of caligraphic decorative style, the majestic Ibrahim Khan Sur's Mausoleum and the dexterously planned Chatta Rai Mukund Das at Narnaul, the Barsi gate of Hansi—a fine specimen of fort architecture and, last but not the least, the massive red-stone and marble tomb of Shaikh Chehali at Thanesar whose imposing elegance and style places it among the 'most striking and picturesque monuments in north India'. In view of the above it may not be unreasonable to infer that Haryana continued to be the home of religion and culture during the medieval period.

Haryana has been hailed as the land of decisive actions of Indian history. The



course of Indian history took a definite turn in the three battles fought on the fields of Panipat. The first two battles sealed the fate of the Afghan empire in India while in the third, the Marathas, who had emerged as defenders of the later-Mughals against the Afghans, had to face an ignoble defeat, almost a national disaster. Because of its far-reaching consequences and also the availability of extensive source-material, this battle, unlike the first two, has drawn special attention of the historians and hence it has received detailed treatment.

A rational reconstruction of the History of Haryana, as of any other region, is thus possible only through a deep understanding of the factors which enforce the merger of the regional into the main stream of the life of the whole people.





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1. Defence Wall and Bastion, Banavali



2. Harappan Seal, Banavali



3. Harappan Seals, Rakhigarhi

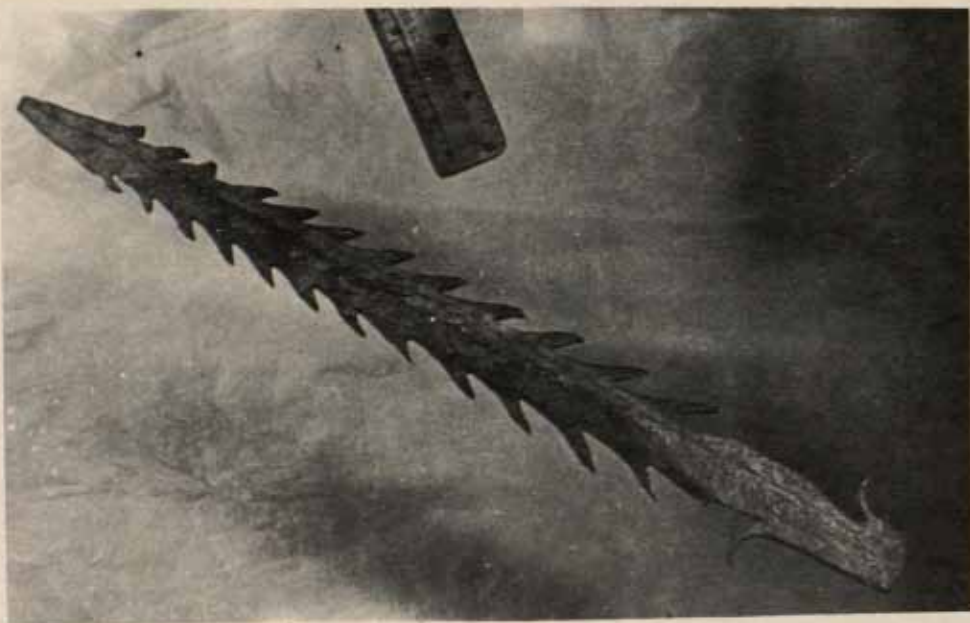


4. Harappan Seals, Rakhigarhi

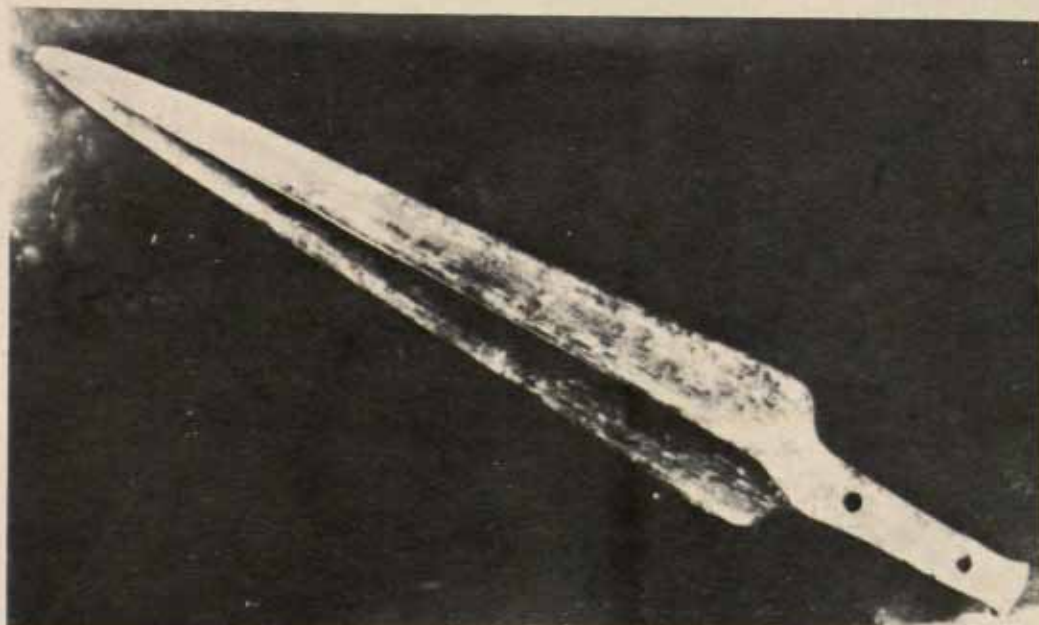


5. Seal, Daulatpur





6. Harpoon, Hissar-Bhiwani



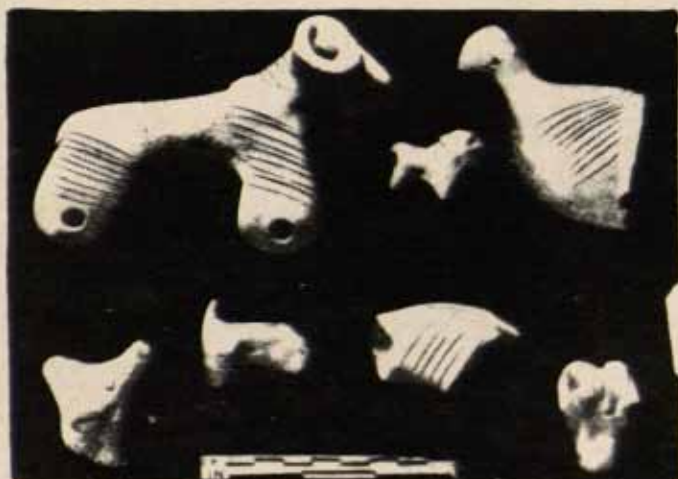
7. Sword, Hissar-Bhiwani



8. Painted Grey Ware, Bhagwanpura



9. Grave, Bhagwanpura



10. Terracotta Figures, Bhagwanpura

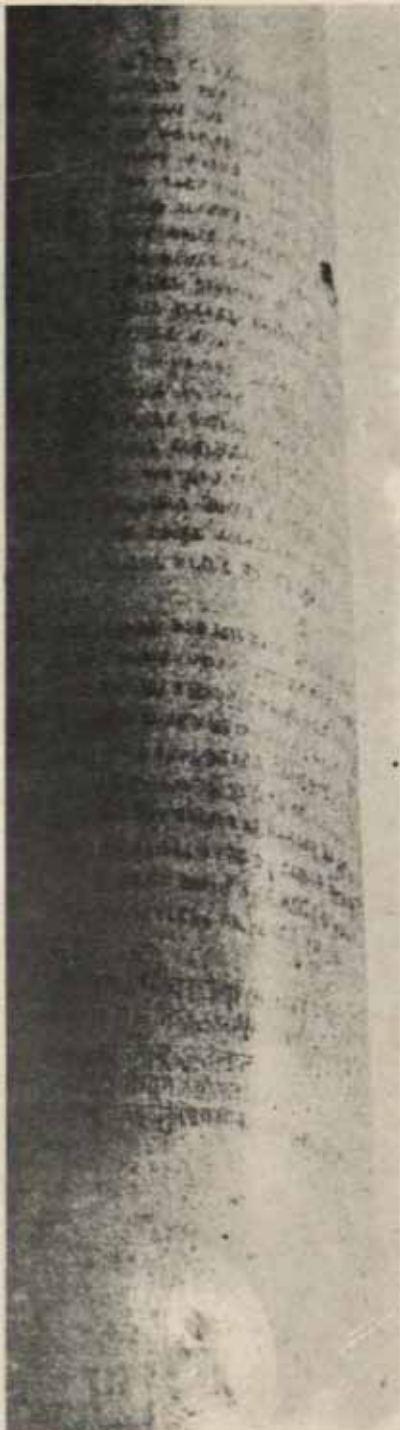




11. Shrine, Agroha



12. Male Head, Agroha



13. Aśokan Pillar, Topra



14. Rock Inscriptions, Tosham





15-a. Punch-marked and Indo-Greek Coins (*obverse*), Sugh



15-b. Punch-marked and Indo-Greek Coins (*reverse*), Sugh



15-c. Indo-Greek and Scythian Coins (*obverse and reverse*)



15-d. Kushana Coins, Kanishka and Vasudeva



15-e. Yaudheya Coins





15-f. Yaudheya Sealings, Naurangabad



𑀧𑀲𑀭𑀸  
𑀧𑀲𑀭𑀸𑀲𑀸  
𑀧𑀲𑀭𑀸𑀲𑀸

15-g. Yaudheya Seal impression (with eye-copy),  
Naurangabad

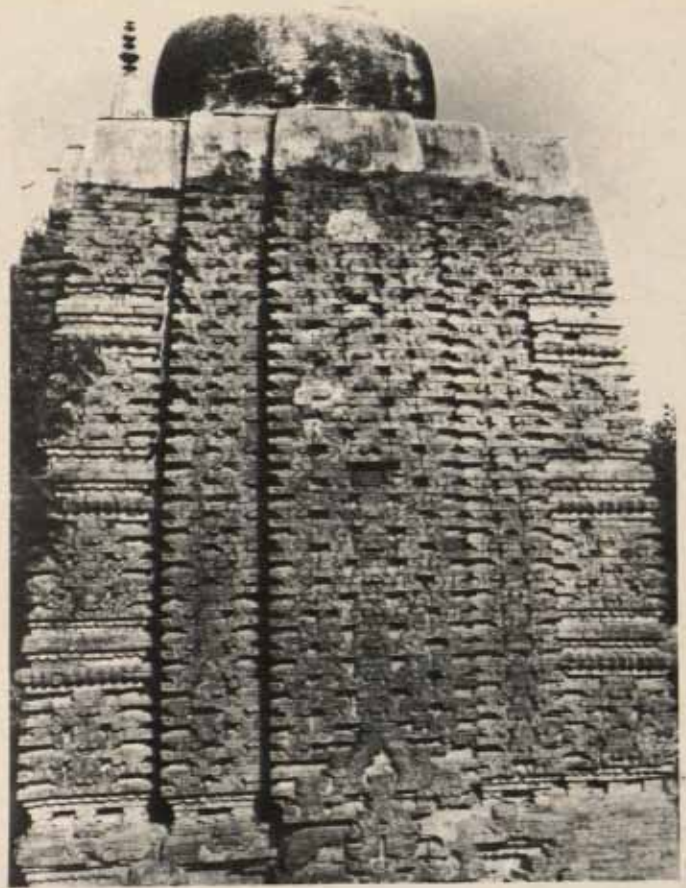


15-h. Seal, Daulatpur



16. Terracotta Dvārapāla, Pehowa





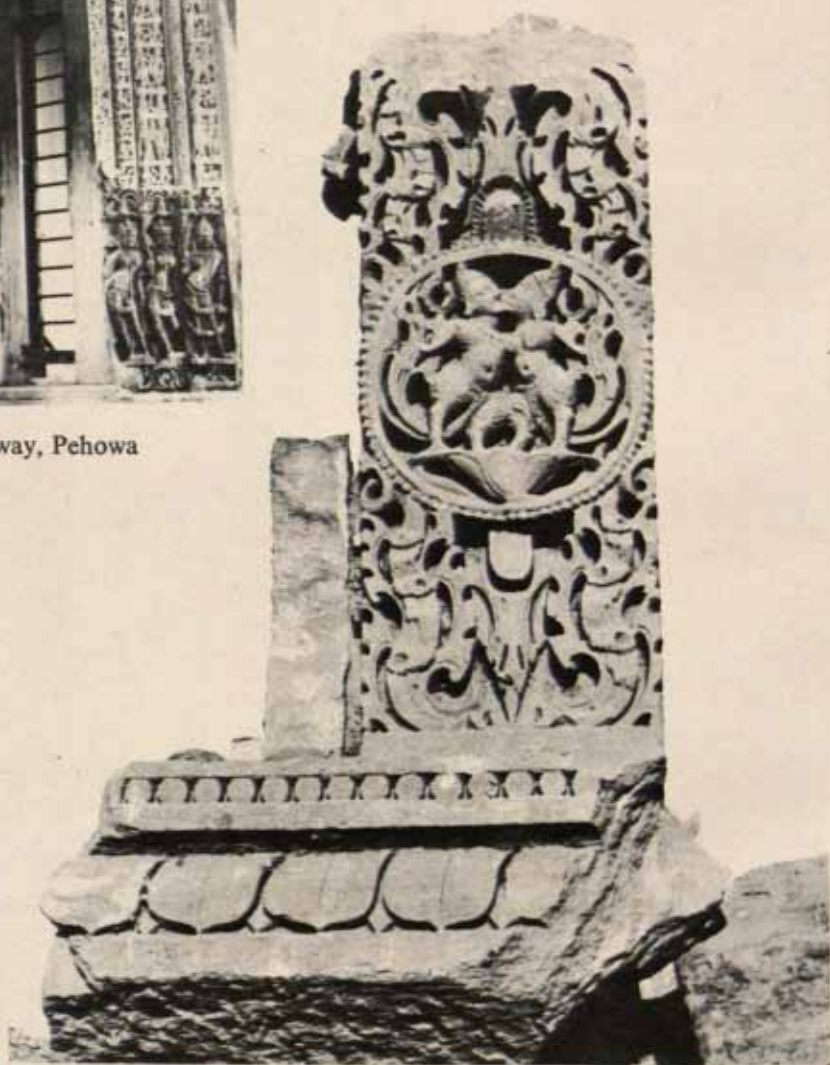
17. Kalayat Temple



18. Fragment of a Viṣṇu Image, Pehowa



19. Saraswati Doorway, Pehowa



20. Window Screen, Pehowa





21. Uma-Māheśvara, Asthal Bohar



22. Kārtikeya, Thanesar



23. Sūrya, Beri (Rohtak)



24. Sūrya, Thanesar





25. Sūrya Torso, Thanesar



26. Sūrya, Hansi



27. Tirthankara, Thanesar



28. Head of Buddha, Sanghi (Rohtak)



29. Female Head, Agroha



31. Pārvatī and Attendants, Gujjarkheri (Sonepat)

30. Fragment of a Viṣṇu Image, Gujjarkheri (Sonepat)



32. Viṣṇu, Thanesar



33. Viṣṇu, Gujjarkheri (Sonepat)



34. Viṣṇu, Asthal Bohar



35. Gaṇeśa, Pinjore



36. Śeṣaśāyī Viṣṇu, Thanesar

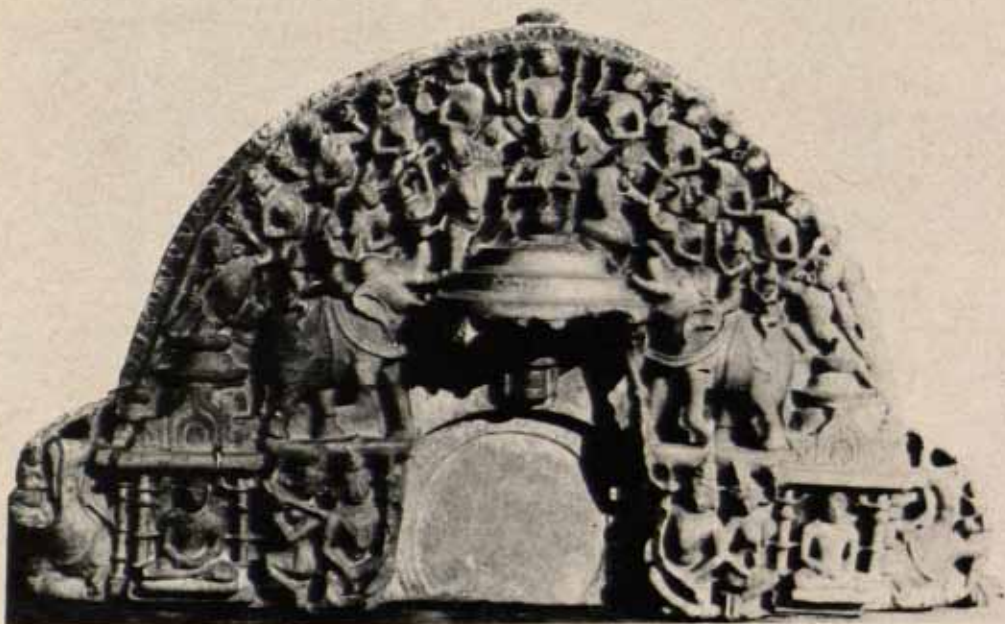




37. Tirthankara, Pinjore



38. Tirthankara, Pinjore

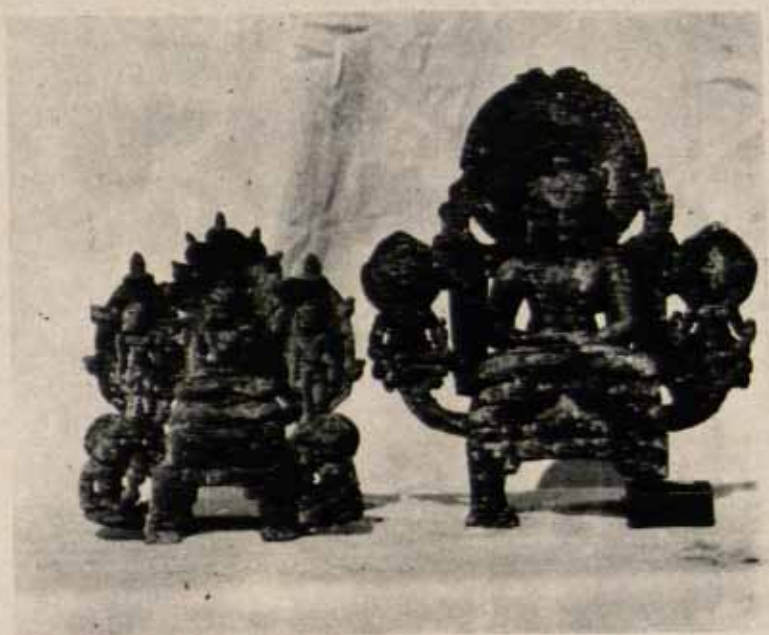


39. Parikara of a Jaina Image, Pinjore



40. Ajitanātha, Hansi





41. Jaina Sculptures, Hansi



42. Excavations at Purana Qila, Delhi



43. Quwwatu'l-Islam Masjid, Delhi



44. Suraj Kund, Delhi





45. Tomb of Mir-Tijarah, Hansi



46. Mosque of Tughlaq, Hansi

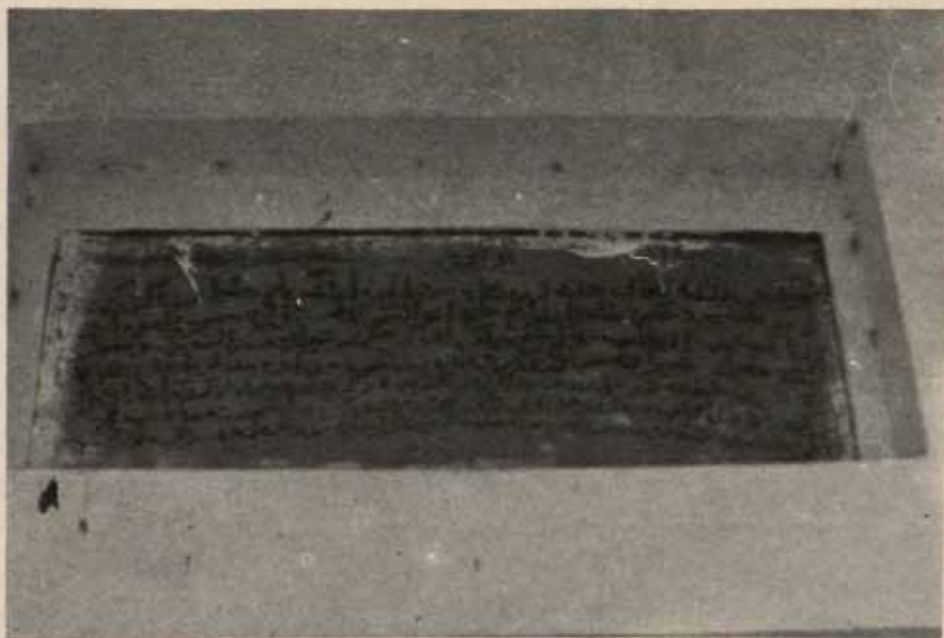


47. Fort, Hansi



48. Barsi Gate, Hansi





49. Inscription on Tughlaq Mosque, Hansi



50. Lāt-ki-Masjid, Hissar



51. Brahmasara, Kurukshetra



52. Sannihit, Kurukshetra

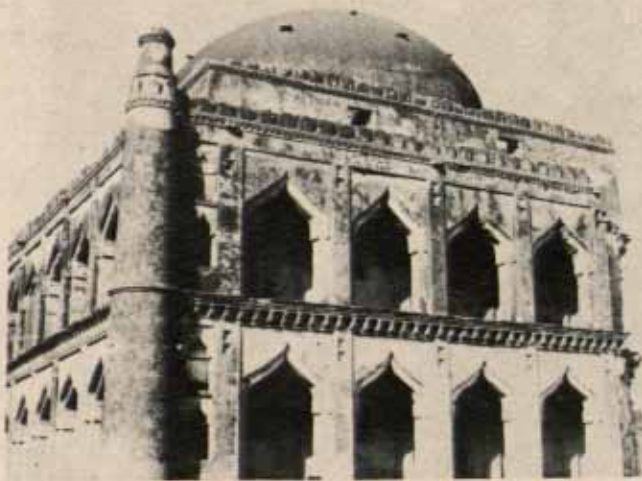




53. Kabli Bag Mosque, Panipat



54. Ibrahim Khan's Tomb, Narnaul



55. Chor Gumbad, Narnaul



56. Jal Mahal, Narnaul

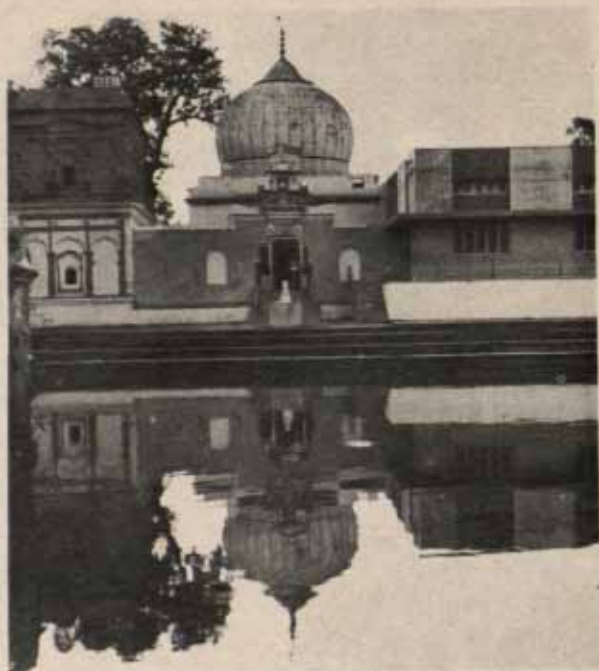


57. Pinjore Garden, Pinjore



58. Gurudwara Chhathi Patshahi, Kurukshetra





59. Thāneśwara Mahadeva Temple, Thanesar



60. Sheikh Chehli Ka Maqbara, Thanesar



61-a. Abu Ali Shah Kalandar, Memorial, Panipat

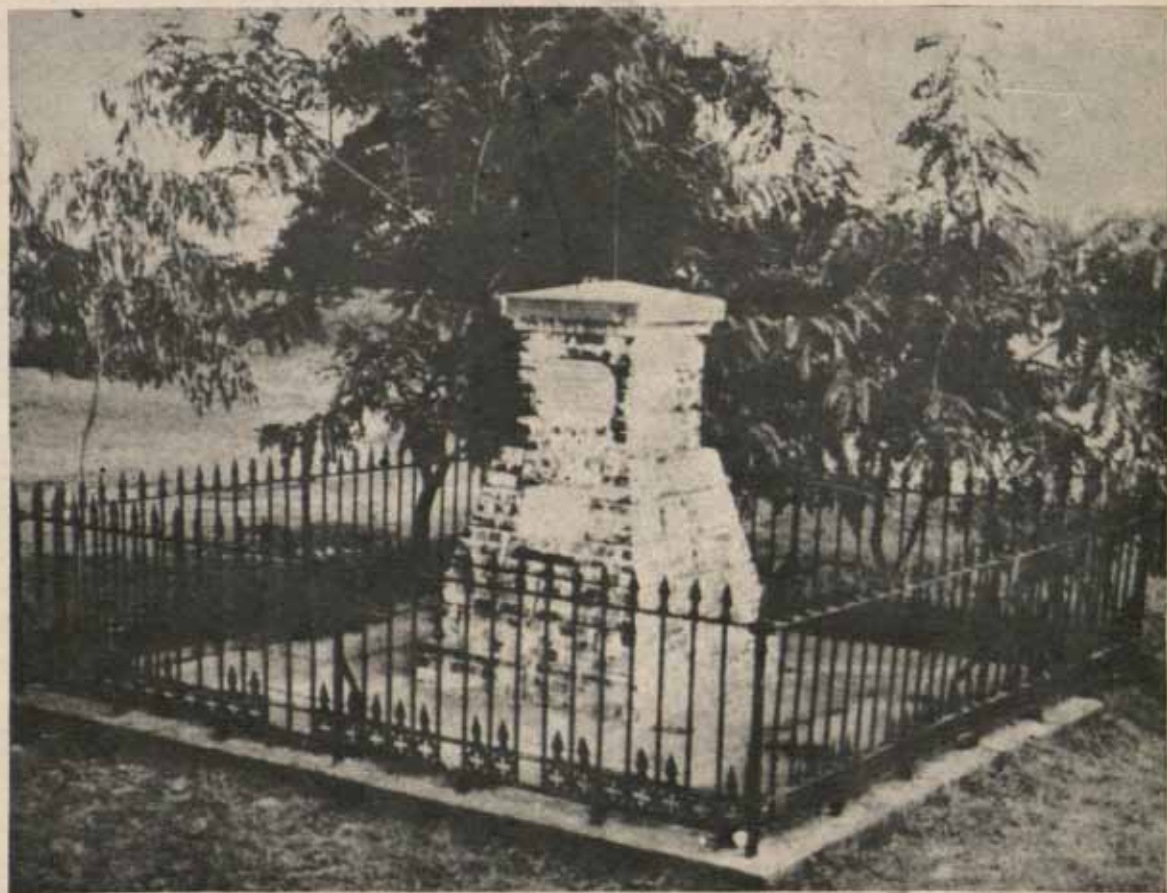


61-b. Caligraphic Decoration



61-c. Caligraphic Decoration





62. Third Battle of Panipat Memorial, Panipat



63. Lord Kṛṣṇa exhorting Arjuna, Jyotisara, Kurukshetra



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