



These questions will be further illustrated hereafter, when the Greek accounts of ancient India have been brought under review, and it becomes necessary to deal with the history of Buddhist India.⁶¹ Meantime it may be as well to inquire into the real significance of the terms Nirvána and Buddha, and to ascertain how far they were likely to be associated in the life and teaching of Gótama. It is certain that the two conceptions indicate two important stages in his religious career. First, there is the selfish longing to lead a life of religious mendicancy for the sake of entering Nirvána. Secondly, there is the benevolent longing to become a Buddha in order to teach mankind how to attain Nirvána.

CHAPTER III.

Significance of the terms Nirvána and Buddha.

There must always have been a strange conflict between these two forms of religious thought, and it is difficult to conceive how they could ever have intermingled in the same channel. The selfish longing to attain Nirvána induced men to sever every tie of affection in order that they might lead a life of contemplation without duties, and consequently without cares. The measures taken by Gótama to attain Nirvána were those, not of an apostle of benevolence, but of a cold-hearted voluptuary. He may have been surfeited with pleasure. He may have acquired a distaste for existence. He may have been oppressed by a religious melancholy bordering on mania. But whatever may have been the cause, he evidently violated every duty of the affections in order to carry out the wild vagary which had taken possession of his soul. In other

Antagonism between the two conceptions.

⁶¹ See *infra*, chap. v.



CHAPTER III. words, he sacrificed the happiness of his parents, his wife, and his infant son in order to lead a life of seeming independence as a wandering mendicant in the garb of religion. His subsequent training under Brahmanical auspices calls for no special remark. Like many enthusiasts, he had fondly imagined that religious instruction, observances, and contemplation would supply every spiritual need; and in due course he discovered that Brahmanism with its metaphysical speculations was as unsubstantial as chaff or wind.

Conflict of selfishness and benevolence.

The benevolent longing to become a Buddha was an inspiration of a very different character. According to the monastic story, out of the strong love which Gótama bore to all animated beings, he desired to become Buddha, in order that he might deliver the human race from the miseries of successive transmigrations. But such a sentiment of universal benevolence is not only strained and artificial, but directly opposed to the monastic discipline which was supposed to purify the soul by cleansing it of all affections and desires. Again, the longing to enter Nirvána was simply a selfish dream; and the longing to become a Buddha must surely have been something more than a sentimental desire to communicate this selfish dream to the world at large.

Gótama, a teacher of loving kindness.

The transformation of Gótama into Buddha was preceded by a significant incident. A young woman had mistaken him for a god, and presented him with an offering of thanksgiving in return for having become a happy wife and mother.⁵²

⁵² Bigandet, page 71 et seq.; Hardy's Manual, page 166.



This episode belongs entirely to the world of humanity. It touched the heart of Gótama. It awakened the dormant affections which really formed a part of his nature, but had been stifled by sensual indulgences and metaphysical speculation. That a religious mendicant could be moved by such an incident to preach a cold and selfish creed, like that of Nirvána, to the world at large, is beyond all credibility. The plain truth appears to be that Gótama became Buddha in order to teach Dharma, or the religion of duty and loving-kindness, which would promote the happiness of the whole human race both in this life and the next. This, indeed, would have been true and universal benevolence; and the story of the grateful wife and mother would form the natural prelude to such religious teaching. The monastic biographer seems to have accepted the incident, but converted the benevolence which sought to make humanity happier into a benevolence which sought to annihilate humanity altogether.⁵³

⁵³ The primitive religion of Gótama Buddha appears to have taught that every relation in life has its corresponding duty; and that every fulfilment of duty is a merit, and every deviation from duty a demerit; and that according to the balance of such merits and demerits, so the individual soul would be rewarded or punished in a future life. To teach such a religion might properly be regarded as true benevolence. When, however, monasticism sought to escape from all transmigrations, and consequently from all future states of reward or punishment, the benevolence was converted into the desire to convert mankind into monks. See *infra*, chap. v.

Under this view the antagonism between Nirvána and Buddha becomes more palpable. Nirvána involves the law of deliverance from existence; Buddha involves the duties of existence. Nirvána involves the idea that men should separate themselves from parents, wives, children, and dependents, and devote their whole lives to celibacy, mendicancy, and abstract contemplation. Buddha involves the idea that every relation in life has its corresponding duty; that servants have duties to fulfil towards masters, and masters towards servants; that parents have duties to fulfil towards children, and children towards parents; that kinsfolk and neighbours have duties to fulfil towards each other; that the laity have duties to fulfil towards religious teachers such as priests and monks; and



CHAPTER III.

Demarcation
between priest
and layman.

There is thus a broad line of demarcation between the abstracted monk who seeks to obtain Nirvána by discipline, and the pious but worldly layman who seeks to obtain happiness by religion. This line is perpetually slurred over in ancient and modern Buddhism, and yet it finds general expression throughout the Buddhist world. The monks scarcely appear to interfere with the religion of the masses. They teach the boys in the monastery schools, but that is in accordance with their discipline. Occasionally they appear to preach, but it is only to recite certain precepts and observances, or certain passages from the life of Buddha, in a kind of chorus. So too the laity have little to do with the monks, unless they themselves enter the monastery. They are ever ready with their alms of food and clothing, and ever ready to pay visits of respect and reverence, but this is only a part of their religion. Still on all occasions there is a genuine and kindly veneration displayed towards the monk, which is rarely exhibited by the people of India towards the arrogant and exclusive Bráhmaṇ.

that humanity itself has certain duties to fulfil towards the whole range of animated beings.



CHAPTER IV.

GREEK AND ROMAN INDIA.

THE year B.C. 327 marks an important era in the history of India. More than two centuries are supposed to have elapsed since the death of Gótama Buddha. The great empire of Magadha was apparently falling into anarchy, but Brahmanism and Buddhism were still expounding their respective dogmas on the banks of the Ganges. At this juncture Alexander of Macedon was leading an army of Greeks down the Cabul river towards the river Indus, which at that time formed the western frontier of the Punjab. The circumstances under which the Greeks appeared in that remote quarter are amongst the most extraordinary in the history of the world. Alexander was only twenty-eight years of age, yet he had already scattered the armies of the great king in three victories which convulsed Asia; and had then ascended the throne of Darius as sovereign lord of Persia and her satraps. He was a hero, a demi-god, who had introduced a new power into Asia, which was a terror and a mystery. The Macedonian phalanx was an embodiment of union and strength; a development of that political cohesion amongst Europeans, which Asiatics can never under-

CHAPTER IV.

Invasion of the Punjab by Alexander of Macedon, B.C. 327.



CHAPTER IV. stand, and against which they are powerless to contend.¹

Character and
policy of Alexander.

Ostensibly, as captain-general of Hellas, Alexander had avenged the wrongs inflicted upon Greece by Darius and Xerxes. Personally, as Alexander of Macedon, he had sought to realize that dream of universal dominion which had long taken possession of his soul. He was not a mere Tartar leader, eager only to plunder and destroy. Neither was he the leader of a new crusade for carrying Greek culture into Asia. He was a soldier statesman of the true Aryan or political type, who identified himself with the empire he had conquered. When he had seated himself upon the throne of Darius, he saw, what every Asiatic statesman has seen, from Cyrus to Nadir Shah, that Persia can never be strong unless she can maintain a paramount power over all the barbarous Scythic tribes to the north and eastward. Accordingly he invaded the north, crossed the western Himalayas, and conquered Balkh; and then crossed the river Oxus and conquered Khiva and Bokhara as far as the Jaxartes. Then, having subdued every enemy in his rear, he approached the Punjab, with the view of realizing his ambitious dream in all its fulness. He believed India to be the extremity of the earth towards the eastern ocean; and he resolved to make it the eastern province of his Asiatic empire.

But the power of the Macedonian phalanx was already on the wane. The Hellenic tie to which it

¹ The best authorities for the details of the expedition of Alexander are Arrian and Strabo. Where other authors have been consulted, they will be specially cited. The object has been to indicate the general course of Alexander's invasion, and to omit all unnecessary details which throw no real light upon the history of ancient India.



owed all its strength was beginning to be weakened by orientalism. In identifying himself with a Persian sovereign, Alexander committed the fatal error of endeavouring to recommend himself to his Persian subjects by descending to a Persian level. He exchanged the Greek helmet for the Persian tiara, and became a Persian in his thoughts and ways. He had no passion for women like his father Philip; but he fell in love with Roxana, the beautiful damsel of Bactria, whom he actually made his wife.² Under these circumstances he began to imbibe the oriental vices of effeminacy, vindictiveness, and greediness of praise. He listened to the voice of flattery until he believed himself to be something more than mortal. India had been conquered by Herakles and Dionysos;³ and his parasites assured him that his exploits were already surpassing those of the gods. His passion for fame and glory amounted to a craving which nothing could satisfy short of worship and adoration. How far that passion was gratified during his lifetime, it is impossible to say; but to this day his oriental name of Sekunder is as widely renowned throughout Mussulman Asia, as that of Alexander of Macedon in the western world.

CHAPTER IV.
Orientalizing of
Alexander and
his army.

The main plan of Alexander's invasion may be sketched in a few words. The Cabul river flows due east past the cities of Cabul, Jellalabad, and Peshawur, and finally empties itself into the Indus

Plan of the Punjab campaign.

² Stories are told of the amours of Alexander, but they are mere rumours. The real truth is sufficiently indicated in Athenæus, Book x. c. 45. Alexander was more devoted to wine than to women.

³ The legend of the conquest of India by Herakles and Dionysos has a religious origin. It seems to have been derived from two different cults, namely:—from the worship of the Sun as Vishnu or Hari; and from that of Siva or Mahadeva as an orgiastic deity. The idea of a military conquest by these deities is purely mythical. See *ante*, page 68, and *infra*, chapter vii.



CHAPTER IV. near the fort of Attock. Eastward of the Indus is the fertile territory of the Punjab, which is watered by seven tributaries, namely, the upper Indus, the Jhelum, the Chenab, the Ravee, the Beas, the Sutlej, and the Saraswatí; all of which, excepting the Saraswatí, flow into the main stream of the Indus, which thence runs south through the country of Scinde into the Indian Ocean.⁴ The design of Alexander was to conquer all the region westward of the Indus, including the territory of Cabul; and then to cross the Indus in the neighbourhood of Attock, and march through the Punjab in a south-easterly direction, crossing all the tributary rivers on his way; and finally to pass down the valley of the Ganges and Jumna, viâ Delhi and Agra, and conquer the great Gangetic empire of Magadha or Pataliputra between the ancient cities of Prayága and Gour.

Necessary conquests.

This plan involved the conquest of several petty kingdoms in succession. Before crossing the Indus there was amongst others a queen of the Assacani, who reigned in a city named Massaga, which was apparently situated in Cabul territory. Again, after crossing the Indus, there were at least three kingdoms in the Punjab to be subdued one after the other, namely;—that of Taxiles between the Indus and the Jhelum; that of Porus the elder between the Jhelum and the Chenab; and that of Porus the younger between the Chenab and the Ravee. Porus the elder was said to have been the most powerful

⁴ Five only of these rivers were personally known to Alexander, namely, the Indus, the Jhelum or Hydaspes, the Chenab or Acesines, the Ravee or Hydraotis, and the Beas or Hyphasis. Alexander does not appear to have advanced eastward to the Sutlej. (Compare Burnes's Bokhara, vol. i. chap. 1.) In former times the Saraswatí flowed into the Indus, but it now loses itself in the sand.



sovereign of them all; but he was placed between CHAPTER IV.
two fires, for both Taxiles on one side, and his nephew Porus the younger on his eastern frontier, were his enemies. There were also other kings both on the north and on the south, who were apparently either at war with Porus the elder, or else in friendly alliance. It would thus seem, from the eminence assigned to Porus the elder, that his authority was not limited to the extent of his kingdom; and that he was at least the nominal suzerain or lord-paramount of the Punjab, if not of Cabul; whilst the so-called hostile sovereigns were originally nothing more than refractory vassal kings.⁵

Here it should be remarked that Asiatic empires are generally speaking mere congeries of provinces, satrapies, or vassal kingdoms, severally ruled by local governors or kings, who are each expected to pay a yearly tribute to the suzerain, and to contribute a military contingent in the event of an imperial war. Such a political system is naturally exposed to dismemberment from internal revolt, to sudden revolutions from court factions, and to foreign invasion in moments of weakness or false security. It can only be maintained by the sword, supported as far as may be by an aristocratic priesthood; and hedged round with the pomp, prestige,

Political system
of ancient India.

⁵ This supremacy of Porus is further confirmed by Hindú tradition. The existence of an ancient Kshatriya empire in the Punjab, under what is known as the Lunar dynasty of Rajas, or children of the Moon, is frequently referred to in Sanskrit literature. It was known as the empire of Puru, Bharata, and the Pándavas; and the Sanskrit name of Puru seems still to be preserved in the Greek Porus. Ferishta, the Mussulman historian, states that Porus or P'hoor conquered the whole of Hindustan, including Bengal, as far as the ocean, and that he refused to pay tribute to the king of Persia. Ferishta adds:—"The Brahmanical and other historians are agreed that P'hoor marched his army to the frontier of India in order to oppose the invasion of Alexander. Introductory chapter on the Hindus, vol. i. Briggs' translation.



CHAPTER IV. and supposed divine right of royalty. In spite, however, of revolution and practical dismemberment, such is the conservative character of Asiatic ideas, and the force of routine and traditional authority, that the nominal supremacy of a suzerain will often be retained long after the political ties have been virtually destroyed. Such apparently was the state of Cabul and the Punjab at the time of the invasion of Alexander; although, as will be seen hereafter, he deemed it politic to treat the refractory vassal kings as independent sovereigns.⁶

Strategy of
Alexander.

The military operations of Alexander were not those of an ordinary invader. His oriental experiences had already rendered him suspicious of intrigues, but had not entirely destroyed the native generosity of his character. In like manner his oriental indulgences had perverted his moral sense, but had not vitiated his military and political culture. He came flushed with the glory of his Asiatic conquests, profoundly believing in his own high destiny, proud of himself and his irresistible phalanx, but, like a true soldier, neglecting no measure of precaution that would guard against any probable or possible disaster. He feared no enemy in front, but his knowledge of Asiatics taught him that danger might always be apprehended in his rear; that he must make every footing sure before advancing another step; in other words, that he must obtain by policy or force the full submission of every enemy

⁶ The state of India under the Mogul empire during the eighteenth century was much in the same condition; and Clive and Hastings followed the policy of Alexander in treating Subahdars and Nawabs of provinces as independent sovereigns. But such is the power of a mere name, that generations after the Mogul emperor had been stripped of every shred of authority, his shadow of a throne became the rallying point of the mutineers in 1857.



whom he might be compelled to leave behind him. CHAPTER IV.
He was prepared to be liberal to those who submitted without a battle; and to be equally liberal to those who only surrendered after an obstinate resistance. But he was resolved to punish with remorseless severity all who attempted to revolt after once submitting, or who sought to deceive him by cajolery or lies.

The first measure of Alexander was a wise stroke of policy. On reaching the Cabul river he sent messengers in advance to the neighbouring princes to announce his arrival, and call upon them to attend his camp and tender their submission. Probably he thus acted in the capacity of sovereign lord of Persia, to whom the whole region had been tributary in a previous generation;⁷ but the measure invested him with the character of a protector to all who were hostile to Porus. The result was that many of the princes of the country hastened to his camp. Amongst these was Taxiles, who brought presents for Alexander of extreme richness and rarity. The submission of Taxiles was very gratifying to Alexander. The kingdom of Taxiles intervened between the river Indus and the kingdom of Porus, which commenced at the Jhelum; and thus formed an admirable basis for military operations against Porus. Accordingly Alexander sent a detachment northward to occupy the city and kingdom of Peukelaotis, with the view of making preparations for ferrying the army across the Indus.⁸

Policy in Cabul:
submission of
Taxiles.

⁷ Herodotus, iii. 94, 95, 102.

⁸ Taxiles accompanied the expedition, and evidently had an eye to his own interest. He was at enmity with Astes, the king of Peukelaotis; for he had previously harboured a political refugee from Astes, named Sangæus; and it is difficult to avoid the suspicion that he now intrigued to procure the transfer of the



CHAPTER IV.

Warlike character of the tribes in Cabul.

Reduction of the Assacani. Capture of Aornos.

Whilst preparations were in progress at Peuke-laotis, Alexander was engaged in reducing the tribes eastward of the Indus. These people were dwelling in the territory, which is now called Cabul, and occupied by the Afghans. They are described as being more war-like than any of the other Indians. When defeated in the plains they retired to their walled towns, and when their towns were taken by assault they fled to the mountains. Sometimes they were so alarmed at the reports of Alexander's prowess that they burnt down their towns, and escaped to the mountains, before he came up. At last after some desperate fighting they lost courage, and dispersed to their more distant strongholds.⁹ The most formidable enemy was a queen of a tribe called the Assacani. Her name was Cleophes, and she reigned in a city named Massaga. She had engaged seven thousand brave mercenaries from the interior of India, who marched out into the plain and offered the Macedonians battle. Alexander drew them some distance from the city by pretending to retreat, and then turned round and attacked them with his phalanx. The Macedonians gained a complete victory, but could not prevent the fugitives from escaping to the city. Massaga was then besieged, and made an obstinate resistance. At last the mercenaries were disheartened by the death of their commander and their own losses in killed and wounded, and sent a herald to Alexander, and

kingdom from Astes to Sangæus. The incident, however, is very simply narrated by Arrian. Astes attempted a revolt, and his city was captured after a thirty days' siege, and he himself was slain. The kingdom was then given to Sangæus by Alexander. Arrian, *Exped.* iv. 23.

⁹ Arrian, *Exped.* iv. 25, 26.



offered to enter his service. The offer was accepted. CHAPTER IV.
 The mercenaries left the city, and drew up on a little hill near the Macedonian camp. Alexander, however, discovered that they intended to desert that very night, rather than fight their own countrymen; and he accordingly surrounded the hill and cut them all off. He then captured the city, and finally received the submission of queen Cleophes, and re-instated her in the possession of her kingdom.¹⁰
 The campaign westward of the Indus was brought to a close by the capture of a famous natural fortress known as Aornos, which was deemed impregnable, and had been a place of refuge for a large number of defeated warriors. Alexander took it after a prolonged struggle. It has been identified with the Mahabun mountain.¹¹

When Alexander had fully established his authority in Cabul he crossed the Indus into the Punjab. Here he halted some time at the city of Taxila, and then marched to the river Jhelum, and found that Porus the elder was encamped on the opposite bank with a large force of cavalry and infantry, together with chariots and elephants. The decisive battle which followed on the Jhelum is one of the most remarkable actions in ancient story. Alexander had to cross the river, not only in the face of his enemy, but whilst exposed to the wind and rain of the south-west monsoon. The passage

Alexander crosses the Jhelum in the presence of the enemy.

¹⁰ Quintus Curtius relates (viii. 10) that this queen obtained the restoration of her kingdom by the sacrifice of her honour. Justin (xii. 11) repeats the story. Quintus Curtius was no doubt a romancer, but still the incident is not in itself opposed to the law of war as regards women, which prevailed amongst the ancient Kshatriyas. See *ante*, p. 23.

¹¹ Arrian, *Exped.* iv. 25—30. General Cunningham prefers identifying Aornos with a ruined fortress named Rāni-gat.—*Ancient Geog. of India*, p. 58.



CHAPTER IV. could only be effected by surprise. At length one dark and stormy night he succeeded in reaching a small island in the river with part of his infantry and a select body of cavalry; and then, amidst a tempest of rain and thunder, he and his troops waded through the remainder of the stream breast high, and reached the opposite bank. The lightning probably revealed the men and horses plunging through the river; for the Indian scouts at once rushed off to carry the news to Porus. The Indian king was evidently taken by surprise, but hurriedly despatched his son with a force of cavalry and chariots to oppose the invaders. A sharp engagement ensued, but the Indian chariots could not be drawn through the wet clay, and were nearly all captured. Alexander lost his horse Bucephalus in the action, but the son of Porus was amongst the slain.¹²

Defeat of Porus
the elder.

When Porus heard of this disaster, he at once moved against Alexander with the greater part of his army. He took up a position on a firm and sandy plain. In front was a line of two hundred elephants, each about a hundred feet from his neighbour. This line of elephants was supported from behind by masses of infantry; whilst the two flanks of the army were formed of chariots and cavalry. Alexander was strongest in cavalry. Instead, therefore, of attacking the enemy's centre, he assailed the two flanks, and drove in the Indian horse upon the elephants. Porus endeavoured to oppose his elephants to the Macedonian cavalry, but the unwieldy animals could not keep pace with the rapid movements of the horse; and at length were wounded

¹² Arrian, *Exped.* v. 1—16.



and frightened, and rushed madly about trampling CHAPTER IV.
down the Indian infantry. Porus fought with a
valour which excited the admiration of Alexander,
but was at last wounded and compelled to fly.
Ultimately he was induced to tender his submission,
but in the true spirit of a Rajpoot he demanded to
be treated as a king. Alexander responded with his
usual generosity, and the two princes who had
recently met as deadly foes now regarded each
other as firm friends.¹³

The victory over Porus established the ascend-
ancy of Alexander in the Punjab. It was probably of
more consequence to the great Macedonian than his
flatterers would acknowledge. A defeat would have
been destruction ; for Porus would have undoubtedly
followed up his success by the conquest of Taxiles ;
and Alexander would have been left single-handed
to cut his way through the war-like mountaineers of
Cabul, who had already given him considerable
trouble. The victory, however, not only decided
the question between himself and Porus, but enabled
him to open up a new communication with Persia,
viâ the river Indus and the Indian Ocean. He sent
out woodmen to cut timber for ship-building in the
northern forests, and to float it down the Jhelum ;
and he founded two cities, Bukephalia and Nikæa, one
on each side of the Jhelum ; ostensibly in memory
of his horse Bukephalus, and in commemoration of
his victory, but in reality as suitable spots for the
construction of a flotilla on the Indus. The forma-
tion of a fleet was indeed in accordance with that
soldierly instinct which led Alexander to take on all

Results of the
Macedonian vic-
tory : formation
of a Macedonian
fleet on the
Jhelum.

¹³ Arrian, *Exped.* v. 15—20.



CHAPTER IV. occasions every precaution that would ensure the safety of his army. But still in dealing with his motives, a large allowance must always be made for his boundless imagination. He had seen crocodiles in the river Indus, and at first fancied that this river was the same as the Nile; and even arrived at the conclusion that by descending the Indus he might find himself in Egypt and the Mediterranean. Further information convinced him of his error, but awakened a new idea. He was assured that the ocean intervened between India and Egypt; and it had ever been the object of his ambition to penetrate to that mysterious ocean, which Homer had supposed to surround the world. It was partly to realize this dream that he purposed conquering the lower Ganges as far as this ocean; and failing that, he hoped to reach the same distant sea by the Jhelum and Indus rivers.

Advance of
Alexander to
the Chenab :
flight of Porus
the younger.

Whilst the fleet was being constructed, Alexander continued his march to the Chenab, and crossed that river into the dominions of Porus the younger. This prince, like Taxiles, had been prepared to support the Macedonian invader out of hostility to Porus the elder; but having heard that his uncle had been re-instated in his kingdom and reconciled to Alexander, he was seized with such a panic of fear that he hastily abandoned his throne and went into exile. Alexander accordingly made over his kingdom to the elder Porus, and nothing afterwards is heard of the nephew.¹⁴

Alexander next crossed the Ravee, when he was called back by tidings of importance. The Kathæi,

¹⁴ Arrian, Exped. v. 21.



an important tribe between the Chenab and the Ravee, had broken out in rebellion; and as Alexander never permitted an enemy in his rear, he hastened back and reduced them to obedience by the capture of their capital at Sangala.¹⁵ But meantime the Macedonians had grown weary of their campaign in India. Their spirits had been broken, not so much by the toils of war, as by the wind and rain of the south-west monsoon; and by this time their love of ease and sensual gratification had blunted that passion for glory and dominion which had formerly animated the phalanx. Accordingly they utterly refused to advance to the Ganges, and clamoured loudly to be conducted back to Greece. Alexander remonstrated with them in vain. He urged that the river Ganges was not far off; that it fell into the eastern ocean which communicated with the Caspian; and that if they proceeded they would obtain immortal renown by their conquests and discoveries. But the Macedonians sullenly resisted every attempt to lead them beyond the Sutlej; and Alexander, making a virtue of necessity, at last consulted the oracles and found that they were unfavourable to an onward movement. The expedition of Alexander now loses its interest. He returned with his army to the Jhelum, and embarked on board the fleet with a portion of his troops, whilst the remainder of his army marched along either bank. In this manner he proceeded almost due south through the Punjab and Scinde towards the mouth of the Indus; engaging in hostilities against

Spirit of the
Macedonians
broken by the
south-west
monsoon.

¹⁵ The Kathæi had formed a confederation with the Oxydrakæ and Malli, who appear to have occupied the territory in the neighbourhood of Multân. After the fall of Sangala these two tribes tendered their submission to Alexander.



CHAPTER IV. certain tribes who offered resistance, or who revolted after making due submission. In some cases the insurgents were encouraged by the Bráhmans; but Alexander wreaked his vengeance by slaughtering every Bráhman that came in his way. At last he reached the Indian Ocean, and beheld for the first time the phenomena of the tides; and then landed his army and marched through Beloochistan towards Susa, whilst Nearchos conducted the fleet to the Persian Gulf, and finally joined him in the same city.¹⁶

Return of the expedition to Persia.

Surface observations of the Greeks who accompanied Alexander.

The Greeks who accompanied Alexander into the Punjab were careful and acute observers. They accurately described the face of the country, the numerous towns and villages, the abundant harvests, the variety of fruits and vegetables, the cotton shrubs said to produce wool, the sugar-canes said to yield honey, the pillared shades of the banyan trees, the alligators, the elephants, the monkeys, the large serpents, the small cobras, the scorpions, the lizards, the ants, and all the numerous strange sights which meet the eye of every Indian traveller. But they failed to penetrate into the inner life of the people. They saw only the surface, and not very much of that, for they were campaigners in a strange land, harassed throughout by wind and rain; and notwithstanding the enthusiasm of their leader, it is evident that they were utterly weary of the depressing moisture and sweltering heat of the land of Dionysos and Herakles. Some sights attracted their

¹⁶ Arrian, v. 22, et seq. The military operations carried on by Alexander during his voyage down the Indus are related at considerable length by Arrian, but throw no further light upon the history of India. Some interesting details respecting the identification of localities will be found in General Cunningham's *Ancient Geography of India*.



curiosity, but they disclosed little of the thoughts and aspirations of the general population. One important fact may be elicited, that in the Punjab, or at any rate in the countries traversed by Alexander, there was as yet no appearance of caste distinctions. This is proved by the absence of all allusions to caste in the history of Alexander's expedition. It is moreover confirmed by the absence of all similar allusions in the older and more authentic hymns of the Rig-Veda. Had the institution existed, it could scarcely have failed to have attracted the attention of the Greeks; especially as they were eagerly searching for all resemblances between Egypt and India, and would naturally have been struck by such a remarkable similarity in the caste systems of the respective countries.

CHAPTER IV.
Absence of caste in the Punjab.

The absence of such distinctions in the Punjab may be further inferred from the description of the marriage customs, as furnished by the Greeks who accompanied Alexander. According to the strict law, which, as will presently be seen, already prevailed amongst the people of Hindustan, no member of any caste, or hereditary trade or profession, could marry out of his own class.¹⁷ Yet the marriage customs of the Punjab involved ideas altogether foreign to this law, although not foreign to the difference of tribes. Thus in some tribes virgins were offered as marriage prizes in boxing, wrestling, running, and archery; and the winners chose their own brides, but married them without portions.¹⁸ In other tribes a wife was to be bought for a pair of kine,¹⁹ but a

Variety of marriage customs.

¹⁷ Megasthenes in Strabo, India, sect. 49.

¹⁸ Nearchos in Strabo, India, sect. 66. Arrian, India, c. xvii. This custom may be referred to the ancient Swayamvara. See *ante*, p. 24.

¹⁹ This was the old marriage custom, which prevailed amongst the Vedic Rishis. See *ante*, p. 23.



CHAPTER IV. man might marry as many women as he could maintain. But a custom prevailed in the city of Taxila which plainly indicates that caste, in the modern Brahmanical sense of the word, was unknown. Whenever parents were so poor that they could not procure husbands for their daughters, they exposed the damsels at a marriageable age for public sale in the bazaar or market-place. A crowd of men was collected by the blowing of shell trumpets and beating of drums. The necks and shoulders of the young women were then uncovered; and when a young man was pleased with a damsel, he married her upon such terms as might be agreed upon.²⁰

Two tribes described by the Greeks.

Two important classes or tribes, however, are described by the Greeks who accompanied Alexander, who were evidently regarded as superior races; and each class had its own characteristics, which may have subsequently hardened them into castes. These were the wise men, or Bráhmans, who were also called sophists and philosophers; and the Kathæi, who may have been the ancient Kshatriyas.

The Bráhmans.

The Bráhmans or philosophers followed a variety of pursuits. Some were engaged in public affairs, and attended the Raja as counsellors. Others practised religious austerities by remaining in one posi-

²⁰ Aristobulus in Strabo, India, sect. 54, 62. The disposal of maidens by public sale was an old Babylonian custom. It is described by Herodotus, who considered it to be the wisest marriage custom with which he was acquainted. The maidens were put up to public auction. The handsome ones were sold off first, and would fetch high prices from the rich Babylonians. The plainer maidens were helped off by dowries which were provided out of the proceeds. Thus when a handsome maiden was put up, the rich strove who would give the highest price. When a plain damsel was put up, the poor strove who would take her with the smallest dowry. Thus the handsome girls helped the plainer ones to husbands. Herodotus, i. 196.



tion for days, and exposing themselves to the blazing CHAPTER IV.
sun. Others imparted religious instruction to their
respective disciples. Others pursued the study of
nature; theoretically perhaps by the contemplative
process already indicated, but practically they dis-
played their knowledge by prognostications respect-
ing rain, drought, and diseases. When not other-
wise occupied they repaired to the bazaar or market-
place. They were held in great honour as public
advisers; and were permitted to take what they
pleased from the shops, such as honey, sesamum,
figs, and grapes. They went about in a state of
nudity, but every house was open to them, even to
the women's apartments; and wherever they went
they shared in the conversation, and partook of what
food was present. Two of them came to the table
of Alexander, and took their meal standing; a cir-
cumstance which would alone seem to prove the
absence of caste ideas amongst the Punjab Bráhmans.
When they had finished they retired to a
neighbouring spot, and commenced their religious
austerities exposed to the sun and rain. These
Punjab Bráhmans are said to have regarded disease
as a disgrace, and it is added that those who feared
its approach burnt themselves alive.²¹

Alexander was himself much interested in the Curiosity of
Alexander.
Bráhmans at Taxila. Neither he nor his Mace-
donian followers were religious inquirers in the
modern sense of the word. The worship of the
gods was still maintained in Greece at festivals and
sacrifices, and there still existed a strong popular

²¹ This was not the case with all the Bráhmans; but these Greek accounts will
be brought under more detailed review hereafter. Strabo, India, sect. 61, 65.



CHAPTER IV. belief in oracles; but the fervid interest and deep religious awe with which Herodotus had gazed on the deities and mysteries of Egypt, were neither felt nor expressed by the men whose intellects had been trained in the political struggles which had long distracted Hellas. To them the gods of India were merely Dionysos and Herakles, the popular gods of their own country;²² and the religious worship of the people was apparently regarded with a condescending curiosity which bordered on contempt. But from the first the Bráhmans had attracted the attention of Alexander. He had been struck by their fortitude and resolution in voluntarily subjecting themselves to severe austerities and penances; and he was curious to know something of the dogmas which led to such results. Accordingly he sent for them to come to him, but was told that if he wanted to hear their discourse he must come to them. So he sent Onesikritos to converse with them.²³

Interview between Onesikritos and the Bráhmans.

The interview which ensued must have been a strange one, but only those perhaps who are familiar with India can realize it in all its significance. A green jungle between two and three miles from the city. A group of fifteen naked Bráhmans; some standing on one leg, and holding a log of wood above their heads with both hands; others lying or sitting on the bare stones. All exposed to the pitiless glare of an Indian sun, which alone would account for much of their religious mania. A

²² Mention is also made of Zeus the rainy, who of course was the Indra of the Rig-Veda; and the Hindús are also said to have worshipped the Ganges. Strabo, India, sect. 69.

²³ Strabo, India, sect. 63 et seq.



mixed crowd of disciples and wondering worship-
pers doubtless stood around. The European visitor
approached in Greek costume, accompanied by his
interpreters; and all present were doubtless eager
to hear what words would pass between the stranger
and the holy men.²⁴ CHAPTER IV.

Onesikritos appears to have been rather too
anxious to propitiate. Moreover the natural arro-
gance of Kalanos, the Bráhmaṇ whom he addressed,
was stimulated by such conciliatory language, and
possibly by the presence of an admiring auditory.
The Greek commenced by saying that the great king
Alexander, who was himself a deity, had heard of
the wisdom of Kalanos, and desired to be informed
of the nature of his teaching. Kalanos was lying
naked on the stones, and replied in the language of
oriental insolence:—"Your clothing is contrary to
nature and offensive to deity: By such pride and
luxury, want and misery have been brought upon
mankind: In former days grain was as abundant as
the dust, and milk and honey, wine and oil, flowed
as freely as water: But the deity grew angry at the
luxury of the human race, and withdrew the abund-
ance; and if such luxury continues, famine and
drought will follow: If therefore you would learn
wisdom, you must return to a state of nature, and
lie down upon these stones."²⁵ Arrogance of
Kalanos the
Bráhmaṇ.

The polite Greek must have been somewhat
startled by this extraordinary demand from a naked
philosopher. Fortunately a Bráhmaṇ, named Man-
danis, interposed, and rebuked Kalanos for his
insolence to a foreigner. "For my part," said Behaviour of
Mandanis.

²⁴ Strabo, India, sect. 63 et seq.

²⁵ Strabo, India, sect. 64.



CHAPTER IV. Mandanis, "I cannot but admire Alexander, who is seeking after wisdom although in possession of an empire: If all kings were like him, the whole world might be compelled to virtue: Know, O Greek! the only true philosophy is that which renders the soul indifferent both to pleasure and pain: Tell me, is this truth known in your country?" Onesikritos replied that Pythagoras had taught a similar doctrine, and had commanded his disciples to eat nothing which had life; and that he himself had heard similar discourses from Sokrates and Diogenes. "So far they are right," said Mandanis; "but they are wrong in being slaves to custom, and in not returning to a state of nature."²⁶

Contrast between the two Bráhmans.

But notwithstanding the better behaviour of Mandanis, neither promises nor threats could induce him to come to Alexander. He derided that king's pretensions to deity; he wanted nothing, and he feared no one. "When I die," he said, "my soul will escape from the trammels of the body, and enter into a better and purer state of existence." Kalanos, on the other hand, was a type of the common Bráhma-man. From one extreme he ran to the other. He attended on Alexander, became a slave to his table, accompanied him when he left India, and rehearsed his praises after the fashion of the old Kshatriya bards. Ultimately he was attacked with disease, and deliberately committed suicide on a funeral pile.²⁷

The Kathæi or Kshatriyas.

The Kathæi were perhaps Kshatriyas or Raj-

²⁶ Strabo, India, sect. 64.

²⁷ The incidents recorded in the text respecting the Bráhmans are based on the authority of Onesikritos himself. Strabo, India, sect. 63—65. The suicide of Kalanos by burning himself alive, will be brought under review hereafter.



poots.²⁹ At any rate their customs were of a Rajpoot character.²⁹ They had a Spartan admiration of strength and beauty. They chose the handsomest man to be their king; and although it is difficult to accept this statement as a well-ascertained fact, yet Porus is said to have been more than six feet high and of excellent proportions. They subjected every child to a public examination when it was two months old; in order that the presiding magistrate might decide whether it was handsome enough to live, or whether death was to be its doom. To this day the crime of infanticide is almost universal amongst the Rajpoots, but it is confined entirely to females. The Rajpoots confess that their daughters are murdered to avoid the difficulty of procuring suitable husbands, and to escape the inordinate expense of marriage ceremonies; and it is impossible to say how far the existing custom has been borrowed from the ancient usage. Marriages amongst the Kathæi were guided by the mutual choice of the bride and bridegroom; in other words, they were a form of the ancient Swayamvara;³⁰ but according to the Rajpoot custom, known as Satî, the living wife was burnt alive with the deceased husband.³¹

Infanticide.

Satî.

²⁹ In modern vernaculars the Kshatriyas are called Kattris. The Kathæi, however, have been identified with the Chatties of Kattagwar in Guzerat.

²⁹ Strabo, India, sect. 30.

³⁰ See *ante*, p. 24.

³¹ According to the Greek authorities (Strabo, India, sect. 30) the Satî was instituted to check a practice of the women to poison their husbands for the sake of a younger lover. This statement does not harmonize with the assertion that the marriages were based upon mutual affection. Satî might have proved a check to poison in days when girls were compelled to accept old men as their husbands; but nothing was to be feared from loving wives. The latter, however, obeyed the ordinance, from being imbued with an unquestioning faith that they would thereby join their husbands in a heaven of felicity.



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Alexander had invaded the Punjab during the rainy season of B.C. 327, and reached the Indian Ocean about the middle of B.C. 326. Meantime Philip remained at Taxila as his lieutenant or deputy, and commanded a garrison of mercenaries and a body-guard of Macedonians.³² When Alexander was marching through Beloochistan on his way to Susa, the news reached him that Philip had been murdered by the mercenaries, but that nearly all the murderers had been slain by the Macedonian body-guards. Alexander immediately despatched letters directing the Macedonian Eudemos to carry on the government in conjunction with Taxiles, until he could appoint another deputy; and this provisional arrangement seems to have been continued until the death of Alexander in B.C. 323.³³

Mutiny of the
Indian mer-
cenaries.

Death of Alex-
ander, B.C. 323:
political an-
archy.

The political anarchy which followed this catastrophe can scarcely be realized. Alexander was not thirty-three, and the conquests which he had already completed were sufficient to fire the imagination of every true soldier throughout all time. Yet his busy intellect had continued to form new schemes of empire and glory. He would circumnavigate Africa and explore the Caspian. He would conquer Arabia, Italy, and Carthage. He would create a universal dominion which should be bounded only by the ocean, and Babylon should be its capital. But these ambitious dreams had vanished in a moment. A drinking bout had been followed by a mortal fever, and the would-be demigod was lifeless clay. The ghastly tidings must have caused universal consternation. The vast empire of Alexander

³² Arrian, *Exped.* v. 8.

³³ Arrian, vi. 27.



was held together by no political tie whatever beyond the mere terror of his name. The appointment of a successor was thus of urgent and paramount importance; but there was literally no one to succeed, excepting a bastard half-brother who was hopelessly imbecile, and an unborn babe by an Asiatic wife, who might by chance prove to be a son. Ultimately the idiot and the infant were placed upon the throne as puppets; and the generals of the deceased Alexander hastened to the provinces to prepare for wars against each other which were to deluge the world with blood.³⁴

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Meantime India was forgotten. Eudemos took advantage of the death of Alexander to murder Porus; but was ultimately driven out of the Punjab with all his Macedonians by an adventurer who was known to the Greeks as Sandrokkottos, and to the Hindús as Chandragupta.³⁵ This individual is said to have delivered India from a foreign yoke only to substitute his own. The notices of his life, however, are of considerable interest, as he is the one Indian Raja who is known at once to Greek history, Hindú tradition, the Buddhist chronicles, and the Sanskrit drama.

Expulsion of the Greeks from India by Sandrokkottos.

According to classical writers, Sandrokkottos was at the city of Taxila when Alexander was there at the commencement of his Punjab campaign. He was an exiled prince from the great kingdom on the

Greek accounts of Sandrokkottos.

³⁴ Alexander had two Asiatic wives, Roxana and Stratira. Roxana was the daughter of a Baktrian chief on the upper Oxus, who had attracted his admiration, and whom he had accordingly married. Stratira was a daughter of Darius, and was treacherously murdered by the jealous Roxana after the death of Alexander. Roxana and her semi-Asiatic son were not likely to be held in much esteem by Greek generals; it is not therefore surprising that both were treated as puppets and ultimately murdered.

³⁵ Diodorus Siculus, xix. 1; Justin, xv. 4.



CHAPTER IV. lower Ganges, said to be about eleven days' journey from the Punjab.³⁶ He was bitterly hostile to the reigning sovereign, named Aggrammes, and denounced him as a weak king of mean extraction, who permitted his dominions to be overrun by banditti.³⁷ Sandroktos stated that Alexander could easily conquer the kingdom on the Ganges; but at the same time the Indian exile had so exasperated the great Macedonian by his impertinence, that he only saved his life by a speedy retreat from the Punjab. This impertinence probably consisted in exaggerated notions of his own importance, and a pertinacious assertion of his own claims to the throne of Aggrammes, which would be irritating to a conqueror who respected no claim but that of the sword. After Alexander left the Punjab, Sandroktos experienced a strange run of good fortune. By the aid of banditti he captured the city of Patali-putra, and obtained the throne; and then drove the Greeks out of India, and established his empire over the whole of Hindustan and the Punjab.³⁸

Thirteen years after the death of Alexander, the political convulsions which had shaken the civilized world to its centre began slowly to subside. The vast empire was dismembered into four great provinces; and although the whole area was the theatre

³⁶ It was called the kingdom of the Gangaridæ and Prasii, and probably corresponded to Magadha and Kosala, the modern Behar and Oude. The name of Prasii seems to linger in that of Prasa-najit, king of Kosala. See *ante*, p. 128.

³⁷ The father of Aggrammes is said to have been a barber, who had an amour with the queen, and murdered her husband, and then placed his own son Aggrammes on the throne (Quintius Curtius, ix. 2). The scandal is unworthy of credit. It is simply the oriental form of abuse, which is directed not against the individual, but against his mother and other female relatives. The story of the murder will be explained further on. See Appendix I. Buddhist Chronicles.

³⁸ Justin, xv. 4. Plutarch, Life of Alexander.



of frequent wars, yet the provinces were beginning to harden into independent kingdoms. The region between the Euphrates and the Indus fell to the lot of Seleukos Nikator, who dated his reign from the year B.C. 312, which is the era of the dynasty of the Seleukidæ. Seleukos Nikator had accompanied Alexander in his expedition into the Punjab; and he appears to have been ambitious to carry out the designs of his great commander. Like him he conquered Bactria; and then he turned towards the south and east, and appeared on the bank of the Indus. But he found himself confronted by a far superior enemy to the one whom Alexander had encountered. There was no longer a dismembered empire to be subdued in detail. Sandrokkottos had already consolidated his imperial authority over the Punjab and Hindustan; and was apparently enabled to concentrate such an overwhelming force on his north-west frontier that Seleukos deemed it expedient to cultivate his friendship, rather than assail him as an enemy. A treaty was accordingly concluded between the Greek sovereign and the Hindú Raja. Sandrokkottos supplied his Greek neighbour with a force of five hundred elephants. In return Seleukos ceded the mountain territory westward of the Indus; and also gave one of his own daughters to be the bride of his Indian ally. This alliance was strengthened by the residence of a Greek ambassador named Megasthenes at the court of Sandrokkottos; and it will hereafter appear that the most authentic information respecting the condition and civilization of the Gangetic valley at this period is supplied by Megasthenes.³⁹

CHAPTER IV.
Establishment
of the Greek
Bactrian em-
pire of Seleukos
Nikator.

³⁹ Strabo, India, sects. 36, 53, 57; Ariana, sect. 9. The Greek and Hindú



CHAPTER IV.

Marriage of the
Hindu Raja to a
Greek princess.

The marriage of a Hindú Raja to a Greek princess is an unexpected event in the history of India. In the Punjab it would perhaps have been less remarkable, because of the general absence of caste ideas. But in the Gangetic valley caste institutions had been maintained from time immemorial; and Megasthenes, who resided for a considerable period at Patali-putra, bears direct testimony to the fact that in the kingdom of Sandrokottos no one was allowed to marry out of his caste or hereditary profession.⁴⁰ There is reason, however, to believe that Sandrokottos was a convert to Buddhism, and consequently not unwilling to prove to his Hindú subjects that he had thrown off the trammels of caste. But under any circumstances such a marriage must have created a profound impression amongst a people so conservative as the Hindús. It will be seen hereafter that traces of this marriage between Sandrokottos and a Greek princess lingered for many centuries in both Brahmanical and Buddhist tradition; and the event ultimately gave rise to a controversy, which must have caused considerable agitation in the old Hindú world, as to whether the son of a Raja by a Sudrá queen could rightly inherit the throne.

Hindú civilization described by Megasthenes: authenticity of his evidence.

The pictures of old Hindú civilization which are presented by Megasthenes possess a value which has scarcely been sufficiently appreciated. They are drawn from real life, and generally from what the ambassador himself saw; and though they are confined to the surface of society, they are of the

authorities respecting Sandrokottos are reprinted in Wilson's *Hindú Theatre*, vol. ii. Preface to the *Mudrá Rákshasa*.

⁴⁰ Megasthenes in Strabo, *India*, sect. 49.



highest importance as the authentic observations of a Greek political officer, elaborately drawn up at a period when such literary labour probably formed his chief amusement and occupation amidst the dreary monotony of an Asiatic court with its miserable intrigues and tedious ceremonial.⁴¹ Above all, Megasthenes, like Herodotus, was evidently anxious to furnish correct information. Those of his statements which were based upon mere hearsay evidence, may sometimes prove to be fabulous; but for this the Greek ambassador cannot be held entirely responsible. Asiatics will exaggerate. Their imagination is boundless, and only equalled by their ignorance and credulity. No doubt they told stories, with the utmost gravity and child-like faith, of ants as big as foxes digging for gold, of men strong enough to pull up trees, of people with ears hanging down to their feet, and of other strange monstrosities.⁴² Megasthenes believed these stories,

⁴¹ The position of the Greek ambassadors or residents at Patali-putra, seems to have strongly resembled that of the political agents of the British government at the court of Mandalay, the capital of the kingdom of upper Burma. The author was especially struck with this analogy during a visit to the political agent at Mandalay in 1870.

⁴² Strabo is unduly severe upon Megasthenes, and denounces him as a fabulist (Introd. sect. 9). Yet it is easy for any one conversant with India to point out the origin of many of the so-called fables. The ants are not as big as foxes, but they are very extraordinary excavators. The stories of men pulling up trees, and using them as clubs, are common enough in the Mahá Bhárata, especially in the legends of the exploits of Bhíma. Men do not have ears hanging down to their feet, but both men and women will occasionally elongate their ears after a very extraordinary fashion by thrusting articles through the lobe. Other stories have been discredited, which are based upon actual fact. Megasthenes describes serpents with membranous wings like bats, whose moisture will putrefy the skin; but these are nothing more than the common house lizards, and certainly their moisture will cause acute inflammation. Again, Megasthenes describes a river named Silas, in the Himalayas, on which nothing will float; and here he has been obviously misled by some legend of Kailasa, the mountain heaven of Siva or Mahadeva.

If there was one story more than another which excited the wrath of Strabo,



CHAPTER IV and naturally repeated them; and it may be added that similar stories were related by Sir John Mandeville, and implicitly believed by our forefathers. But when Megasthenes tells us of what he saw, his statements may be accepted as authentic and reliable; although they are susceptible of further explanation by the light of the larger experience which is available in the present day.

Ancient capital
of Patali-putra,
near the modern
Patna.

Of Megasthenes himself little is known beyond the fact that he was a Greek ambassador, and apparently the first of his countrymen who had reached the banks of the Ganges, and entered the great and remote city of Patali-putra. He must have noted, though he does not say so, the quaint shipping in the river, which no doubt kept up a communication through the greater part of the empire, from the neighbourhood of the Punjab to the Bay of Bengal. He certainly observed with a military eye the great wooden wall or palisade which surrounded the city; and he mentions that it was pierced with holes through which the archers could discharge their arrows against a besieging force. Outside this wall was a ditch which ran round the city, and probably communicated with the river; and which served both as a means of defence and a common sewer. He was impressed with the immense size of the city. Patali-putra was a vast metropolis in the shape of a parallelogram, extending ten miles along the bank of the river, and two miles into the interior. There

it was that of a people whose ears hung down to their feet. Yet the story is still current in Hindustan. Baboo Johurree Dass says:—"An old woman once told me that her husband, a sepoy in the British army, had seen a people who slept on one ear and covered themselves with the other." (*Domestic Manners and Customs of the Hindús*. Benares, 1860.) The story may be referred to the Himalayas. Fitch, who travelled in India about 1585, says that a people in Bootan had ears a span long.



the exiled Greek gazed upon the dreamy oriental life which still meets the eye in a Hindú or Burmese capital. The stately elephants, with richly ornamented howdahs moving slowly but majestically along; chariots and horsemen followed by numerous retinues; crowded bazaars, with their endless variety of shops, and industrious artisans of every class; the soldiers with their bows and arrows, their swords, bucklers, and javelins; the shameless Yogis and arrogant Bráhmans. Megasthenes also describes a festival procession such as may still be occasionally seen in eastern cities. An array of elephants with furniture and trappings of gold and silver; numerous chariots drawn by four horses, or by several pairs of oxen; large bodies of attendants, handsomely attired, bearing huge vessels or goblets of gold and silver, as well as tables, state chairs, drinking cups, and bowls of Indian copper, richly set with emeralds, beryls, Indian carbuncles, and other precious stones; whilst the whole procession was invested with a sensational character from being associated with wild beasts, such as hump-backed oxen, panthers, tame lions, and a multitude of birds of variegated plumage and fine song.⁴³

Megasthenes furnishes a picture of the royal palace at Patali-putra, which seems to have been more of a Tartar than an Aryan type. It was a splendid building occupied only by the Raja and his women; for even the body guard was stationed

Royal palace
and zenana.

⁴³ Megasthenes in Strabo's India, sects. 36, 69. Compare also the preparations for the installation of Ráma as Yuvaraja. History, vol. ii., Rámáyana, chap. 8.

A similar procession was to be seen at Rangoon in 1871, when the famous Shwé-Dagon pagoda was crowned with the gold Htee, or royal umbrella, excepting that on the latter occasion there were no wild beasts.



CHAPTER IV. outside the gate. The palace women are said to have been purchased of their parents; but this statement probably refers only to those who filled the place of attendants or slaves. As regards the queens Megasthenes maintains a strict reserve; and thus nothing whatever is known of the married life of the Greek princess. As regards the Raja, it is said that he lived in such perpetual fear of treachery, that he never slept during the day, and frequently changed his bed at night, as a precaution against surprise.⁴⁴ It was unlawful for the Raja to get drunk; and according to a story which was told to the Greek ambassador, any woman who murdered a Raja whilst the latter was in a state of intoxication was rewarded by being made the queen of his successor.⁴⁵ The story, however, is open to question. No doubt it originated in the fact that a woman has occasionally murdered an Asiatic sovereign, on the understanding that she should become the wife of the heir to the throne. Such a promise, however, is generally broken by the new monarch, who can rarely bring himself to make the murderess his queen.

Duties and
amusements of
the Raja.

The Raja was not always secluded in his palace. He left it whenever he took the command of the army, or sat in his court as judge, or offered sacrifice to the gods, or went on a hunting expedition.

⁴⁴ The present king of upper Burma, or Ava, who evidently belongs to the Indo-Chinese type, although he claims a Kshatriya origin, leads a life of seclusion very similar to that of Sandrokkottos. He changes his bed-room every night as a safeguard against sudden treachery.

⁴⁵ Megasthenes in Strabo, India, sect. 55. The laws of Burma are also extremely severe against intoxication; indeed drunkenness is one of the five great crimes in the Buddhist code of morality. In 1845 the reigning sovereign was a drunkard, and had become a terror alike to his queens and ministers; at last he was suddenly seized in a state of intoxication, and placed in a state of confinement; and he is said to have been ultimately smothered in the recesses of the palace.