

Prithwi Raj Chauhan



EVE OF MUSLIM CONQUEST

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invaded Hindustan, Prithviraja organised a confederacy of his brother Rajput princes, and in 1191 A.D. the combined host inflicted a crushing defeat upon the Muslims at Tarain, not far from Thanesar. But this discomfiture rankled in the mind of the Muslim invader, and he appeared next year at the head of a countless host, which utterly vanquished the Rajputs who died fighting bravely to the last. According to Muslim chroniclers Prithviraja was captured and mercilessly beheaded.¹¹ The Hindu power suffered an irreparable blow, and the victorious invader was saluted as the overlord of Hindustan.

Jaichand (Jayachandra) of Kanauj remained aloof in proud isolation, immovable and indifferent. He did nothing to avert the calamity that befell the Chauhans of Delhi, probably in the belief that it would lead to the destruction of a rival prince, who had given ample cause for offence, and who was the only formidable aspirant for supremacy in Northern India.

The conquest of Delhi cleared the way of the Muslim conquerors. The feuds between the Rathors of Kanauj and the Chauhans of Delhi and their keen contest to win supremacy over all Hindustan, disabled

¹¹ It is written in the *Rasau* that Prithviraja was taken as a captive to Ghazni, where, in an attempt to exhibit his skill in archery, he shot the Sultan and was then cut to pieces. This story is not true. The Sultan was assassinated by the Khokhars in 602 A.H. (1205-06 A.D.)

Chand Bardai says that when Jayachandra saw that he could not subdue Prithviraja in battle, he had recourse to a stratagem. He gave his brother Balak Rai as an ally to Shihabuddin and encouraged the latter to invade Delhi. This statement is incorrect and is not corroborated by any Muslim historian. [Shyam Sundar Das, *Rasau-Sar* (Hindi), p. 143.]

Mr. Har Bilas Sarda in his *Ajmer*, p. 155, positively asserts that the Rathors of Kanauj and the Solankis of Gujarat conspired together and invited Shihabuddin Ghori to invade the dominion of Prithviraja. This statement, however, is apocryphal and is obviously based upon the *Rasau*. If Jayachandra had been in league with the Muslims, their historian would have certainly mentioned the fact with pleasure.



their strength and prepared the way for the destruction of both. Having defeated Raj Pithaura of Delhi in a deadly encounter, Muhammad Ghori turned against Kanauj, overpowered Jayachandra at the head of an invincible host, and sounded the death-knell of the Rathor monarchy. Having failed to stem the tide of the Muslim conquest, a great many members of the Gaharwar clan left Kanauj and migrated to Rajputana where they founded the modern principality of Jodhpur, rightly esteemed in these days as one of the premier Rajput states. The able generals of Muhammad soon completed the work of conquest by reducing Gwalior, Anhilwad and Kalinjar, and his gallant slave Qutbuddin, who enthroned himself at Delhi, was greeted as their overlord by the numerous chiefs and princes of Northern India.

The other Rajput dynasties of importance in North India were the Chandelas¹² of Jaijakhukti (modern Bundelkhand) and the Kalachuris of Chedi who exercised their sway over the territory now comprised in the Central Provinces.

¹² Regarding the origin of the Chandelas Smith says:

"The Chandelas themselves have a silly legend to the effect that they are descended from the union of the Moon (Chandra) with a Brahman maiden. The only significance of the myth is its implied admission that the pedigree of the clan required explanation which was best attained by including it in the group of 'Moon-descended' Rajputs, and adding respectability by inventing a Brahman ancestress. As a matter of fact the Chandelas are still regarded as a clan of impure descent. It seems quite clear that the ancestors were not immigrants from the North-West, and had nothing to do with the Huns, and such people, who appear to be largely represented in the present day by the 'fire-descended' Rajputs, the Chauhans and others. The indications are fairly distinct that the Chandel clan originated in the midst of Gonds, with whom other similar tribes were intermixed."

V. Smith's article on the History and Coinage of the Chandel Dynasty in *Ind. Ant.*, 1908, pp. 114—48.

Early History of India (1924 edition), p. 249; J.A.S.B., 1877, Pt. I, p. 233.



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Their territories being contiguous, they came in close contact with each other, and their history in mediæval times is a record of matrimonial alliances alternating with wars due to ambition and clash of jurisdiction. The rulers of Chedi are also styled as "Kalinjaradhipati" by reason of their possession of Kalinjar, and it appears that at one time they exercised sway over the territory of Telang.

It has now been established beyond doubt that the Chandelas came into power by depriving the local Parihar chieftains of their dominions. But the dynasty did not emerge into the arena of history until the beginning of the 9th century A.D. when Nannuk Chandela established a small kingdom for himself consisting in its early stages of the territories included in the southern parts of Jaijakhukti.¹⁸ The Chandelas appear to have been the vassals of the Panchalas of Kanauj, but during the first half of the tenth century they had shaken off the yoke of Kanauj and assumed independence.

Harsa Chandela was an ambitious ruler who seems to have taken a prominent part in the politics of the time. By marrying a Chauhan princess, he raised the

It is a matter on which there is much conflict of opinion and hence it is not easy to come to any definite conclusion. The Chandela Khyatas ascribe a Brahmana origin to them, while at the same time the Chandelas claim a Rathor pedigree.

Tod's Rajasthan, edited by Gaurishankar Hira Chand Ojha (Hindi), p. 479.

Tod's Rajasthan, edited by Crooke, I, pp. 139-40.

¹⁸ Jaijakhukti is derived from Jaijak, a Chandela king, who succeeded to the kingdom after the death of his father Vakpati, son of the founder of the dynasty.

The boundaries of the Chandela kingdom varied from time to time. From about 930 A.D. up to 1203 A.D., the date of Parmala's death, the kingdom always included Khajuraho, Kalinjar and Mahoba. There has been found no trace of Chandela rule in parganas Hamirpur and Sumerpur to the North of the Hamirpur District and it appears probable that this tract was covered with jungle during this period and was inhabited here and there by wild tribes.



status of his family, and augmented its political prestige by rendering assistance to Mahipala, the ruler of Kanauj, against his formidable antagonist, Indra III, the Rastrakuta king of the Deccan. His son and successor was the gallant prince Yasovarman who defeated the Kalachuris of Chedi and compelled them to surrender the fortress of Kalinjar. Thus strengthened, he turned against Kanauj, and by compulsion obtained from its ruler a valuable image of Visnu, a peculiarly mediæval recognition of his superior power which was solemnly installed in a temple at Khajuraho, one of the capitals of the Chandela kingdom.

Yaśovarman was succeeded by his son, Dhanga (950—99 A.D.), who was a remarkable king of the Chandela dynasty. His kingdom extended from the Jumna in the north to the frontier of the Chedi dominion in the south, and from Kalinjar in the east to Gwalior and Bhilsa in the west. When Subuktagin invaded Hindustan, he joined the Rajput confederacy that was formed by Jayapala to resist the Muslim invaders, and he also sustained a defeat like his other allies. He lived to a ripe old age, and finally died at the confluence of the Ganges¹⁴ and the Jumna, while deeply absorbed in meditation. Ganda (999—1025 A.D.) his son and successor, carried on the warlike policy of his father, and in 1008 A.D. when Mahmud of Ghazni invaded the kingdom of Lahore at the head of an irresistible army, the instinct of self preservation led him to make common cause with Anandapala and his allies to repel the invaders. But the attempt was not a success; Kanauj fell prostrate at the feet of the conqueror and accepted his over-lordship. The Rajputs did not approve of this abject surrender, and Ganda sent his son, Vidyadhara, to chastise Rajyapala, the

¹⁴ We learn from an inscription that Dhanga died at Prayag (Allahabad) "closing his eyes, fixing his thoughts on Rudra, and muttering holy prayers." The inscription records that he "abandoned his body," which does not mean that he committed suicide. (J.A.S.B., Pt. I, Vol. XLVII, p. 47.)



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ruler of Kanauj, who had sullied Rajput honour. Rajyapala, who had already been crushed by the Muslims, could offer no resistance; he was overpowered and killed. When Mahmud heard of this inhuman murder, he set his forces in order and advanced against Ganda who encountered him with a large army, but he failed to obtain victory over the Chandela king who escaped this time the fate that overtook him later. Thus foiled in his attempt to reduce Ganda, Mahmud, a few years later, marched against him and compelled him in 1023 A.D. to sign a treaty by which he surrendered Kalinjar and acknowledged his over-lordship. After Ganda's death the Chandelas and Kalachuris came into collision with each other for both aspired to the overlordship of Hindustan. The originator of this scramble for power was Gangeya Deva Kalachuri (1015—40 A.D.) who pushed his conquests towards the east as far as Tirhut.¹⁵ When he died, his son Karan Deva (1040—70 A.D.) followed the ambitious policy of his father and waged wars against the rulers of Malwa and Magadha. The Chandela king, Kirtivarman Deva (1049—1100 A.D.), suffered a crushing defeat at his hands and lost his kingdom, but he soon retrieved his losses through the assistance of his Brahmana commander-in-chief, Gopala, who marched against the Kalachuri king and avenged the wrongs done to the house of his master.¹⁶ Henceforward the history of the Chandelas

¹⁵ Bendall, *History of Nepal*, J.A.S.B., 1903, I, p. 18.

¹⁶ It is written in the *Prabodha Chandrodaya* drama that Karan Deva had deprived the Chandela ruler of his kingdom and that the latter was able to recover his ancestral dominion through the help of his Brahmana commander-in-chief, Gopala. A full abstract of his play is given by Sylvain Levi (*Le Theatre Indien*, pp. 229—35). The final victory of Kirtivarman and the production of the play must have taken place in or about 1065 A.D., sometime after the accession of Kirtivarman. The drama commemorates a brilliant victory won by the Chandela ruler. The *dramatis personae* are all allegorical and the play ends with the happy reunion of king 'Discernment' and Queen 'Theology' which is blessed by 'Faith in Visnu.'



is a record of wars with their neighbours, the result of which often depended upon the personality of the combatants on both sides.

Madanvarman Deva was a powerful ruler who fought against the Solanki kings of Gujarat and maintained his power intact, but when Parmala or Parmardi Deva (1165—1203 A.D.) came to the throne, the Chandela dynasty plunged into prolonged and bitter wars with the Chauhans of Delhi with the result that Prithviraja fell upon it with his overwhelming might and completely crushed it in 1182-83 A.D. Parmardi heroically struggled to save his power and possessions, but the great revolution that had been brought about in the politics of Northern India by the successful Muslim raids, left him along to carry on the war of independence against the Muslims. Tradition represents Parmardi as a coward and praises Alha and Udala, the heroes of Mahoba, for offering resistance to the Chauhan prince of Delhi, but this is not quite correct. When Qutbuddin advanced against Kalinjar in 1202 A.D., Parmardi fought with a heroism worthy of his race, and lost his life in the attempt to save his kingdom and his honour. Henceforward the Chandelas ceased to have any political importance, although they continued to hold a portion of the original territory until the 16th century. Their rivals, the Kalachuris of Chedi, also became subject to the same process of decadence, and about beginning of the 13th century their possessions on the Godavari fell into the hands of the Ganapatis of Warangal and the Yadavas of Devagiri, while their dominions on the Narbada were absorbed by the Baghela Rajputs after whose name the country was called Bundelkhand.

Equally distinguished was the Parmar clan of Malwa. The Parmars of Malwa are well-known in history owing to their liberal patronage of letters. The kingdom was founded by Krisna Raja *alias* Upendra in the 9th century A.D., and was afterwards enlarged by his successors who made it extend over a great part of the ancient

The Parmars of
Malwa.



kingdom of Avanti, while its southern boundary touched the Narbada. The Parmars were surrounded by powerful and ambitious neighbours, who were all engaged in the task of extending the limits of the principalities which they had founded for themselves. They had to wage wars ceaselessly against the Chandelas of Mahoba, the Kalachuris of Chedi, the Solankis of Gujarat, and the Chalukya rulers of the Deccan. The sixth ruler of the dynasty, Siyaka, known as Sri Harsa, had acquired considerable fame by inflicting a defeat upon the Huns when they invaded Hindustan. His son Munja was a remarkable ruler (974—994—7 A.D.) who led successful attacks against the Chola, Chedi, Kerala, and Karnata kings. His rising power aroused the jealousy of the Chalukyas of the Deccan and in the encounter that followed he succeeded in inflicting six defeats upon Tailapa II, but when he attacked them for the seventh time, the tables were turned upon him, and he was defeated and slain in a mortal combat some time between the years 993 and 997 A.D.¹⁷ Himself an accomplished scholar, Munja patronized men of letters, and authors like Dhanapala, Padmagupta, Dhananjaya, Dhanik, and Halayudha were the recipients of his liberal bounty. His nephew Bhoja came to the throne

¹⁷ Munja was variously styled as Vakpati, Utpalaraja, Amoghavarsa, Prithvivallabha.

From the two copper-plate grants of Munja it appears that he ascended the throne about 974 A.D. Munja was living when the Jain scholar Amitagati wrote his work '*Subhasitaratnasandoh*' which was completed towards the close of 994 A.D. Tailapa died in 997 A.D. Therefore it is clear that Munja must have died between 994 and 997 A.D. The dates given by Buhler, Smith and K. A. Aiyangar are approximately correct.

Indian Antiquary, VI, p. 51.

Buhler, Epig. Ind. I, pp. 222—28, 294, 302.

Bhandarkar, Early History of the Deccan, p. 214.

Smith, Early History of India, p. 395.



about the year 1010 A.D.,¹⁸ who fully maintained the traditions of literary achievement and military greatness established by his predecessor, which have earned for him an abiding place in the history of Northern India. He avenged the death of his uncle by waging wars against the Chalukyas, and made also the rulers of Gujarat and Chedi, Anhilwad and Karnatic¹⁹ feel the weight of his arms and compelled them to acknowledge his sovereignty. A warrior of undoubted prowess, Bhoja's fame mainly rests upon his literary achievements. Himself a scholar, well-versed in poetry, architecture, astronomy and other branches of learning, he was a prince of exceptional genius, who extended his patronage to men of letters. For the promotion of learning and culture he established a Sanskrit college called *Saraswati Kanthabharana* at Dhara, wherein he placed some valuable works on drama, history and other subjects inscribed on stone slabs, but it was destroyed by the Muslims, who reared a mosque named Kamal Maula in place thereof to commemorate this act of wanton desecration. Bhoja was a magnificent builder. The famous Bhojapur lake to the south of Bhopal, which extends over an area of 250 square miles, was constructed during his reign, and it continued to testify to the greatness of his architectural designs

¹⁸ Bhoja's predecessor was Sindhuraja, Munja's brother. Munja bore a rancorous hostility to his brother and had him blinded and confined in a wooden cage. Bhoja was born during his father's imprisonment. Munja tried to murder him, but struck with remorse by a letter handed over to his executioner by Bhoja, he changed his mind and chose him as his successor.

For Sindhuraja's date and works see Ind. Ant. 1907, pp. 170—72. Archaeological Survey Report, 1903-4, pp. 238—43. Aufrecht *Catalogus Catalogorum*, I, p. 418; II, p. 95.

¹⁹ It is written in *Prabandha Chintamani* (p. 80) that Bhoja conquered Anhilwad and Karnatic. This statement may or may not be true, for *Prabandha Chintamani* is not a historical work but there is no doubt that Bhoja had frequent scuffles with the rulers of these countries.



until its waters were drained off by Hushang Shah of Malwa in the fifteenth century. Towards the close of his life, Bhoja's enemies became very strong and powerful, and they determined to feed fat their old grudges. The rulers of Gujarat and Chedi who had suffered considerably at his hands led an attack against him with a redoubled force with the result that this literary warrior was completely overpowered. Soon afterwards Bhoja died in 1053-54 A.D. His death was an irreparable blow to the Parmar clan; its power declined so steadily that it soon dwindled into insignificance. Having passed through great vicissitudes, the Parmar territories, now reduced to the dimensions of a petty principality, were conquered by Ala-ud-din Khilji in 1310 A.D. During the reign of Akbar in the 16th century Malwa was finally incorporated with the Mughal empire after an infructuous attempt of the local dynasty at independence.

The Solankis of Gujarat also claimed to have sprung from the sacrificial fount of Vasistha at Mount

The Solankis of
Gujarat.

Abu but it appears that they were descended from the lunar line. Mulraja was the founder of the dynasty who murdered the Chavd Raja Samant Singh and usurped the throne in 960 A.D. Mulraja waged wars against the kings of the north and the south, the chief of whom were Vigraharaja of Shakambhari and Tailapa of the Deccan. Mulraja died in 995 A.D. and was succeeded by his son Chamundaraja. He was a sensual, pleasure-loving despot whose conduct so disgusted his own kinsmen that he was deposed, and his eldest son Vallabharaja was placed upon the throne in 1009 A.D.

The most remarkable king of the line was Kumarpala (1142—73 A.D.) who was a devoted admirer and disciple of the famous Jain scholar Hemacharya. Brave and warlike, Kumarpala attacked the Chauhan Raja of Ajmer over whom he seems to have obtained a victory for he is described in the inscriptions as 'the conqueror of the king of Shakambhari in battle by the strength of his own arms.' The king of Malwa who

came to help the Raja of Ajmer was killed in battle. Twice did the Solanki king invade the territories of Mallikarjuna of Konkan who was defeated with heavy losses and finally beheaded by Somesvara. Mallikarjuna's capital was taken and plundered and the sovereignty of the Solanki king was completely established. The great Jain sage and scholar Hemacharya, who has been mentioned before, had a great influence over the king. It does not appear that Kumarapala officially accepted the tenets of the Jain faith for in contemporary inscriptions he is said to have prospered through the favour of Siva.' But there is evidence to show that he subscribed to certain Jain practices. At the instance of Hemacharya, he forbade slaughter of animals and proclaimed the principle of *Ahimsa* (want of injury to a living being) throughout his wide dominions. Kumarapala was a great builder; he built several new temples and repaired old ones,—the chief of the latter being the temple of Somanatha. He died in 1173 A.D. and was succeeded by his nephew Ajayapala. The latter was killed in 1176 A.D. by Mulraja. Several kings followed after his death but they lacked the capacity to administer the affairs of such a large kingdom. The twelfth Solanki king Tribhuvanapala was over-powered by the Baghela branch of the Solankis about the year 1243 A.D. The last of the line was Raja Karan, who struggled desperately to check the rising tide of Islamic power in the Deccan in the time of Alauddin, and was at last defeated by his generals Ulugh Khan and Nusrat Khan and deprived of his dominions. With him ended the power of the Baghelas.

In its palmyest days the empire of Harsa included Bengal as far as Kamrup or Assam and exercised full sovereign authority over Western and Central Bengal. Harsa's death plunged the empire into confusion and Bengal, Orissa and the provinces in the far east were split up into small principalities. We have no materials to construct the history of Bengal during the next century after the death of Harsa and

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this state of uncertainty continues until in the eighth century a definite power is established, when the people who had grown tired of anarchy elected Gopala as their king.²⁰ Gopala reigned for nearly forty-five years and exercised sovereignty over Magadha and South Bihar, seats of ancient Hindu kingdoms, though he suffered a defeat at the hands of Vatsaraja, the Gurjara King of Rajputana.²¹ Gopala was a pious Buddhist; he built a monastery at Uddanadapur or Uttantapuri to signify his devotion to Buddhism.

He was succeeded by Dharmapala (875—95 A.D.), whose rule, according to the Tibetan historian Taranath, extended from the Bay of Bengal to Delhi and Jalandhar in the north and to the Vindhya mountains in the south. The Buddhist historian is guilty of exaggeration, but this much is certain that he was a powerful king who had defeated the Panchala ruler, Indrayudha, and installed Chakrayudha in the *gaddi* of Kanauj with the assent of the neighbouring powers who are described as the Bhoja, Matsya, Madra, Kuru, Yadu, Yavana, Avanti, Gandhara and Kira king.²² He was also a Buddhist by persuasion, and it was entirely through his munificence that the monastery of Vikramasila was built, which included 107 temples and six colleges for education in the principles of Buddhism.

Dharmapala was succeeded by Devapala who is described as the most powerful king of the dynasty.²³ He conquered Assam and Kalinga, but his great

²⁰ The Pala kings have been described as Kshatriyas and Brahmanas, but it is very difficult to determine this point conclusively. There is plenty of literature on the subject, but the ordinary reader will be confused by too many references.

²¹ Indian Antiquary, XI, p. 136; XII, p. 164. Epig. Ind., VI, pp. 240—48.

²² Indian Antiquary, XV, p. 304; XX, p. 308. Epig. Ind., IV, p. 252. Tod's Rajasthan, edited by Gaurishankar Hira Chand Ojha, p. 533.

²³ J.A.S.B., LXIII, Pt. I (1894), p. 41.



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achievement consists in the wars which he waged against unbelievers for the propagation of his faith. The monastery of Vikramasila which contained 107 temples and six colleges was built by him. After a reign of forty years the Palas were overpowered, though temporarily, by a hill tribe called the Kambojas who established their sway about the year 966 A.D.²⁴

The Kamboja rule was short-lived. Mahipala I recovered the lost power of his house and re-established his sway during the latter part of the tenth century. He was a staunch Buddhist and did much to revive that religion in Tibet where missions were sent by his son, Nayapala, also, to interpret it to the people. After the death of Vigrahapala, the successor of Nayapala, in 1080 A.D., the fortunes of the dynasty declined under his two immediate successors, but they were soon retrieved by Ramapala who established himself on the throne of his forefathers about 1084 A.D., Ramapala, being a capable military leader, at once began to adopt measures to extend his dominions and soon after his accession to the throne he defeated the Kaivarta Raja, Bhima, took him captive and conquered the kingdom of Mithila which included the Champaran and Darbhanga districts.²⁵ During his reign Buddhism began to show signs of decline, although much was done by the king to resuscitate its influence in his own kingdom as well as abroad. The successors of Ramapala did not possess the capacity to wield the sceptre, and internal weakness and foreign complications considerably diminished their authority. A large portion of the dominion of the Palas was seized by a redoubtable captain of war Samantasena, who probably came from the Deccan, and who laid the foundations of a new dynasty

²⁴ Journal and Proceedings, A.S.B., 1911, p. 615.

²⁵ In a poetical work written by one Sanadhyakara Nandi it is written that Ramapala defeated the Kaivarta king, Bhima, and took him prisoner. This work was discovered in Nepal and published in A.S.B. Memoirs, III. No. I (1910).



in Bengal²⁶ towards the close of the eleventh century A.D. The Pala kings were great patrons of art and letters. The fine arts reached a high level of excellence, and royal patronage made the production of literary and philosophical works possible.²⁷

Such is the origin of the famous Sena dynasty of Bengal. Samantasena's grandson, Vijayasena, who flourished towards the close of the eleventh or the beginning of the twelfth century, did a great deal to establish the power of his house on a firm basis. His successor was the celebrated Ballalasena²⁸ who came

²⁶ Smith says (Early History of India, pp. 402-3) that either it was Samantasena or his son Hemantasena who came from the Deccan and founded a principality at Kasipuri, now Kaisari in the Mayurbhanj State. This is not in agreement with the views expressed by Dr. Rajendra Lal Mitra. The Sena Kings are sometimes described as Brahmakshatriyas. The subject is a highly controversial one and much has been written upon it. For a full discussion of the origin of the Senas the reader is referred to Appendix O in Smith's Early History of India, 1924 Edition, pp. 431-38.

²⁷ M. M. Hara Prasad Sastri in a learned article (J. Bihar and Orissa Research Society, V., Pt. II, pp. 171-83) gives the literary history of the Pala period. The Brahmana scholars of Bengal had to fight hard against the philosophy of Buddhism. They had recourse to Nyaya and Vaisesika, viz., Logic and Physical Science. The Buddhists also developed their literature in Sanskrit and Vernacular and Buddhist preachers went abroad to propagate the doctrines of their faith.

²⁸ Ballalasena was an accomplished scholar. He is the author of two works, *Dansagar* and *Adbhutsagar*. But before he could complete the latter work, he went to the confluence of the Ganges and the Jumna with his wife and lost his life by drowning himself in the sacred waters. The work was afterwards completed by Lakshmanasena who was also a patron of learning and literature. Jayadeva wrote his famous work, the *Gita Govinda*, during his reign. There is plenty of literature on the subject, but space does not permit of a full account of the literary activities of the Sena kings.

J.A.S.B., I, p. 41.

Ibid., II, pp. 15, 157.



to the throne in 1108 A.D., and who, besides maintaining intact the territories he had inherited from his father, promoted art and literature and introduced the practice of *Kulinism* among Brahmanas, Vaidyas and Kayasthas of Bengal. The bonds of caste became rigid and Brahmanism once again recovered its ascendancy as is evidenced by the missions which were sent to Magadha, Bhutan, Orissa, Nepal and other lands for the propagation of its doctrines. Ballalasena was succeeded about the year 1119 A.D. by his son Lakshmanasena who died long before the raid of Muhammad-bin-Bakhtiyar described by Minhaj-us-Siraj in his *Tabqat-i-Nasiri*.²⁹ The Musalman general raided Bihari in 1197 A.D. and proceeded against Nudiah probably in 1199 A.D. The unbridled ferocity of the Muslims satiated itself by the seizure of immense booty, the slaughter of Brahmanas and the destruction of Buddhist monasteries which adorned the capital. The Sena dynasty was overthrown and Bengal passed into the hands of the Muslims.

For the origin and chronology of the Sena dynasty see Appendix O. Smith's *Early History of India* (Revised edition, pp. 431-38).

²⁹ The story related by Minhaj-us-Siraj is doubted by Bengali researchists. Mr. S. Kumer concludes his article in the *Indian Antiquary* (1913, pp. 185-88) by saying that Lakshmanasena was dead long before the event described by Minhaj took place, and that 1119 A.D., or Saka 1041 is the approximate date of the death of Ballalasena and the accession of Lakshmanasena. Mr. R. D. Banerjee has expressed a similar view in an article on the Naihati Grant of Ballalasena, the 11th year (*Epig-Indica*, 1917, pp. 156-63). Professor Keilhorn's suggestion (*Ind. Ant.*, 1890, p. 7) that the legend of eighty years' reign is due to a misunderstanding and that the Nudiah raid did actually take place in the year 80 of the Lakshmanasena era, may be accepted. The date of the raid would be some time in 1199 A.D. This view is supported by the Janibigha inscription of the year 83 (1202 A.D.) of the same era given in the *Journal of the Bihar and Orissa Research Society* (Vol. IV, Pt. III, 1918, p. 266 and pp. 273-80). The Appendix O in Smith's *Early History of India* already referred to contains valuable information.



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The origin of the Rajputs is a matter of controversy.³⁰ Historical ingenuity has been much exercised in determining with precision the origin of the Rajputs, and the difficulty has been considerably aggravated by

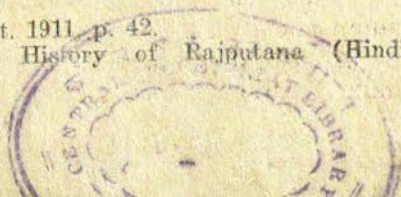
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the lofty pedigrees assigned to them in Brahmanical literature and the bardic chronicles. The Rajputs claim to be the lineal descendants of the Kshatriyas of Vedic times. They trace their pedigree from the sun and the moon, and some of them believe in the theory of *Agnikula*. The word Rajput, in common parlance, in certain states of Rajputana, is used to denote the illegitimate sons of a Kshatriya chief or jagirdar. Rajput is the corrupted form of the Sanskrit word *Rajputra* which means a 'scion of the royal blood.' The word occurs in the Puranas and is used in Bana's *Harsa-charita* in the sense of high born Kshatriya—a fact which goes to show that the word was used in early times and in the seventh and eighth centuries A.D.

Much has been written about the origin of the Rajputs. Some hold them to be the descendants of foreign settlers in India, while others trace their pedigree back to the Kshatriyas of Vedic times. Tod, the famous historian of Rajasthan, started the theory that the Rajputs were the descendants of the Scythians or Sakas who came into India about the sixth century A.D. In support of his theory he points out the following resemblances between the foreign settlers and the Rajputs:—

(1) Horse worship.

³⁰ For the origin of the Rajputs see the following:—
Smith, *Early History of India* (Revised edition).
Tod's *Annals and Antiquities of Rajasthan*, edited by Crooke, Vol. I, pp. 73—97.
Imperial Gazetteer, Vol. II, pp. 308—9.
Vaidya, *History of Mediæval Hindu India*, Vol. II, pp. 1—63.
Journal Anthropol. Inst. 1911, p. 42.
Gaurishankar Ojha, *History of Rajputana* (Hindi), Part I.





- (2) The Asvamedha sacrifice.
- (3) The religion of the martial Rajput and the rites of Hara, the god of battle, are little analogous to those of the meek Hindus, the followers of the pastoral divinity. The Rajput delights in blood; his offerings to the god of battle are sanguinary, blood and wine.
- (4) The bards.
- (5) War-chariots.
- (6) Position of women.
- (7) Omens and auguries.
- (8) Love of strong fermented liquor.
- (9) Worship of arms.
- (10) Initiation to arms.

European scholars have accepted Tod's view of the origin of the Rajputs. Vincent Smith in his *Early History of India* (Revised edition, p. 425), speaking of the foreign immigration of the Sakas and the Yue-chi or Kushans in the second and first centuries B.C., writes:—

"I have no doubt that the ruling families of both the Sakas and the Kushans, when they became Hinduised, were admitted to ranks as Kshatriyas in the Hindu caste system, but the fact can be inferred only from the analogy of what is ascertained to have happened in later ages—it cannot be proved."

Smith dwells at length upon the effects of the Hunish invasions and observes that they "disturbed Hindu institutions and the policy much more deeply than would be supposed from perusal of the Puranas, and other literary works." He goes on to add that the invasions of foreign tribes in the fifth and sixth centuries shook Indian society in Northern India to its foundations and brought about a re-arrangement of both castes and ruling families. This view is supported by Dr. D. R.



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Bhandarkar,³¹ and the editor of Tod's Annals, Mr. William Crooke, who writes in his Introduction (Vol. I. p. xxxi) :—

“Recent investigation has thrown much new light on the origin of the Rajputs. A wide gulf lies between the Vedic Kshatriya and the Rajput of mediæval times which it is now impossible to bridge. Some clans, with the help of an accommodating bard, may be able to trace their lineage to the Kshatriya of Buddhist times, who were recognized as one of the leading elements in Hindu society, and in their own estimation, stood even higher than the Brahmans. But it is now certain that the origin of many clans dates from the Saka or Kushan invasion, which began about the middle of the second century B.C., or more certainly, from that of the white Huns who destroyed the Gupta Empire about 480 A.D. The Gurjara tribe connected with the latter people adopted Hinduism, and their leaders formed the main stock from which the higher Rajput families sprang. When these new claimants to princely honours accepted the faith and institutions of Brahmanism, the attempt would naturally be made to affiliate themselves to the mythical heroes whose exploits are recorded in the Mahabharata and Ramayana. Here arose the body of legend recorded in *The Annals* by which a fabulous origin from the Sun or Moon is ascribed to two great Rajput branches, a genealogy claimed by other princely families, like the Incas of Peru or the Mikado of Japan.”

But in recent times certain Indian scholars have attempted in their researches to point out the error of Tod and other European scholars. Pandit Gaurishankar Ojha, who is fully conversant with Rajput history, but

³¹ Dr. Bhandarkar writes (J. Bom. B.R.A.S., 1903, pp. 413—33) a lengthy article on the Gurjaras and comes to the conclusion that their origin is Seythian rather than Aryan.



who writes with a pronounced pro-Rajput bias, discusses the question at length in his *History of Rajputana* and comes to the conclusion that the Rajputs are the descendants of the ancient Kshatriyas and that Tod was misled by the similarities in the manners and customs of the Rajputs and the foreigners who settled in India. Some of Pandit Ojha's arguments in support of his view are these:—

- (1) There is nothing striking in the similarities of customs and manners of the Sakas and the Rajputs. The worship of the Sun prevailed in India from Vedic times and the practice of Sati existed before the coming of the Sakas as is evidenced by the Mahabharata. The practice of *Asvamedha Yajna* too was not unknown and there is mention of such sacrifices in the epics. The worship of arms and horses is not a new thing. The ruling classes in India have always worshipped them.
- (2) Some scholars are of opinion that it is written in the Puranas that after the last king, Mahananda of the Sisunag dynasty, Sudra kings will exercise sovereignty. This is not a correct reading of the text. There is evidence to prove the existence of Kshatriya rulers even after the Nanda and Mauryan dynasties.
- (3) When Pusyamitra established his power after slaying Brhadratha, the last Maurya emperor, he performed the Asvamedha sacrifice and at one of these sacrifices Patanjali, the commentator of the *Mahabhasya*, was also present. If Pusyamitra had been a Sudra, such a learned Brahmana would not have been present.
- (4) In an inscription of the second century of the Christian era of Raja Kharavela in the



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Udayagiri cave near Cuttack (Orissa) there is mention of the Kshatriyas of Kusamba.

- (5) The Yadava Kshatriyas ruled over Mathura and the adjoining country before the war of the Mahabharata.

One may or may not agree with these conclusions *in toto*, but it is indubitable that the foreign tribes who settled in India made a fresh re-arrangement of social groups inevitable and as possessors of political power they were connected with the ancient Kshatriyas by their Brahmana advisers.

The theory of *Agnikula* that the four Rajput clans—the Pawar (Pramar), Parihar (Pratihara), Chauhan (Chahumana) and Solanki or Chalukya—sprang from Vasistha's sacrificial fount on Mount Abu in Southern Rajputana, still finds credence among the Rajputs. Dr. Bhandarkar and others have found in this myth a confirmation of their theory of the foreign origin of the Rajputs, and Mr. Crooke, whose opinion is accepted by Mr. Edwards, the editor of Smith's *Early History of India*, thinks that the *Agnikula* myth represents a rite of purgation by fire, the scene of which was in Southern Rajputana, whereby the impurity of the foreigners was removed and they became fitted to enter the caste system. The story of the *Agnikula* is related in the *Prithviraja Rasau*. The *Rasau*, whatever its date, contains many interpolations, and sometimes inextricably combines history with legend so that we cannot accept everything that it says as historical truth. The fictitious character of the story is obvious and it is unnecessary to adduce evidence to prove it. It represents only a Brahmanical effort at finding a lofty origin for the race that stood very high in the social order and whose munificence flowed in an unstinted measure to the priestly class, which reciprocated that generosity with great enthusiasm. It will be absurd to contend that the Rajputs are the pure descendants of the Kshatriyas of the ancient Vedic times. It may be flattering to our pride to think so, but flattery is



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Often far removed from fact. The original Kshatriyas were mixed up with the hordes of immigrants who poured into India in the fifth and sixth centuries of the Christian era. Vincent Smith writes that some of the Rajputs are descended from the indigenous tribes such as the Gonds and Bhars—a fact which is borne out by the distinctions that still exist among them. It is too large an assumption and is scarcely justified by the historical data available to us. There are similar distinctions among the Brahmanas also, but that does not prove that certain Brahmanas are descended from the lower orders in the Hindu social system. To make such a generalisation would be against all canons of historical research.

The various tribes of the foreign settlers became so deeply intermixed with one another in course of time that all marked dissimilarities were obliterated and a certain kind of homogeneity was developed by the adoption of similar social customs and religious rites. The clan individuality vanished and a process of amalgamation set in which made scrupulous differentiation impossible. A high feeling of chivalry and honour, of independence and patriotism, although the latter was parochial in its outlook and intensely localized in its scope, animated all Rajputs, and this sameness had much to do with the fusion of the various clans, which had ethnologically stood apart from one another.

The struggle between Buddhism and its older rival Hinduism had been going on for a long time. The

The Religious
Struggle.

Rajput dynasties found it advantageous to profess the Brahmanical faith, and this fresh accretion of strength enabled Hinduism to engage in a deadly conflict with Buddhism and Jainism. For a long time in the past Buddhism had begun to show marked signs of decline. The old simple creed of Buddha with its lofty and cheerful morality had become clustered by forms and ceremonies to such an extent that the true religion was completely lost sight of and its externals had become all in all for its followers. Superstition and



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corruption had insidiously crept into the church, and the luxurious and comfortable lives led by some of the Buddhist monks had shaken the confidence of the people and undermined its prestige. The invidious distinction between the lay-followers and the regular clergy bears testimony to the decadence that had overtaken the simple faith of Buddha, which was an emphatic protest against all kinds of distinctions. The inferior position to which the lay-followers were relegated was resented by them, for the great bulk of the Hindu society desired to obtain eternal beauty, while living the lives of householders, subject to all the joys and sorrows, penalties and rewards, which are the inevitable lot of those who choose to live in the world. But the principal reason why Hinduism succeeded in overpowering its rival seems to be that it had never completely lost its vitality.³² The vicissitudes, it had passed through, had not abated one whit the enthusiasm and devotion of those who were considered its leaders; and when Hinduism began to fortify itself by enrolling missionaries, its success was assured. The support of the Rajput princes, the zeal and learning of the Brahmanas, their dominion over the mass mind through a complicated and elaborate ritual, the non-observance of which was said to have been attended by serious consequences in this world and the world to come, together with the growing indifference of the upper classes of society towards Buddhism, led to its decline, so that at the commencement of the ninth century when Sankara began to

³² The assumption that Buddhism was extinguished by the persecution of the Brahmanas is untrue. Occasionally kings like Sasanka persecuted the dissenters, but such persecutions were minor factors in the movement which slowly restored India to the Brahmanical faith. The main cause, writes Smith, was the gradual assimilation of Buddhism to Hinduism, which attained to such a point, that often it is nearly impossible to draw a line between the mythology and images of Buddhists and those of the Hindus. Smith, *Early History of India*, p. 339.



preach his Vedantic philosophy, its position became extremely difficult to maintain. A school of missionaries was founded, who were devoted like the disciples of Ignatius Loyola in Europe, to the service of the Brahmanical church, and whose active propaganda effected many conversion from among the Buddhists. The very genius of the Rajput age was against the principles of Buddhism; and in an age of perpetual warfare, when deeds of gallantry and heroism were valued more than acts of piety, the people naturally lent their ears to their Brahmana advisers who stimulated their martial spirit by connecting them with great traditions in the past. The doctrine of *Ahimsa* could not flourish in a community which found its principal delight in war, and, no wonder, if the Rajput, whose life was one long series of romance and adventure, turned for the satisfaction of his religious craving to Hinduism, which certainly appealed powerfully to his mind by reason of its poetry, splendour, and the accumulated wealth of tradition. Thus Hinduism recovered its old ascendancy, and when the Muslims invaded Bihar towards the close of the twelfth century, they destroyed Buddhist monasteries and abodes of worship, so that not a vestige was left of that great faith which once counted its votaries from the Himalayas to Cape Comorin.

The architectural activity of the Hindus during this period was mainly confined to the building of

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temples. The most famous temples of the period in Northern India are those of Bhuvanesvara, built in the seventh century A.D., of Khajuraho in Bundelkhand, and of Puri in Orissa. The Jain temple at Abu was built early in the eleventh century and is one of the most exquisite examples of Indian architecture of the pre-Musalman period. In the Deccan also numerous temples were built, the most famous of which are those built by the rulers of the Hoysala dynasty. The first at Somanathapur was built by Vinaditya Ballala in the eleventh century, the second at Belur by Visnuvardhana Hoysala in the twelfth century and the third at Halebid built



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by another prince of the same dynasty towards the close of the twelfth century. The Pallavas, Chalukyas, and Cholas were also great builders. The Pallavas adorned their capital Kanchi with beautiful temples, some of which belong to the seventh century A.D. The temple of Tanjore, which was built by Raja Raja Chola about 1000 A.D. bears testimony to the skill of the Southern master-builders. The Chalukyas were also great patrons of art. They adorned their capital Badami with magnificent temples and one of them, Vikramaditya II (733—47 A.D.), built the famous temple of Virupaksha at Pattadakal which was probably a recognized seat of learning in the South. The Hindu architecture is an expression of the Hindu religion. To the Hindu, his whole life is an affair of religion. It is his religion which regulates his conduct in everyday life and its influence permeates through the various grades of the Hindu society. Nowhere is the religiousness of the Hindu more clearly manifest than in his architecture and sculpture, for it was through these, as a distinguished Indian scholar points out, that he sought to realize the all-embracing notion of his faith.

The temples, tanks and embankments of the Hindu kings were wonderful works of art. The Arab *savant* Al Biruni, who was very reluctant to admire things Indian, writes regarding them—

“In this they have attained to a very high degree of art, so that our people (the Muslim) when they see them, wonder at them, and are unable to describe them, much less to construct anything like them.”

Even such an iconoclast as Mahmud of Ghazni was moved with admiration when he saw the beautiful temples of the city of Mathura during one of his Indian raids—a fact which is recorded by his official chronicler ‘Utbi’.

The triumph of Brahmanism was followed by an abundant outcrop of religious and secular literature. The religious controversies of the time produced an



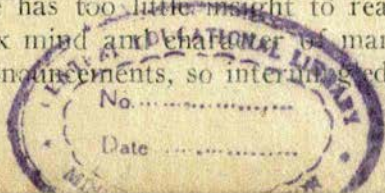
abundance of philosophical literature of which the most important are the commentaries of Sankara on the Bhagavadgita, the Upanisads, and the Brahmasutra. The court of Dhara was adorned by such eminent literary men as Padmagupta, author of the *Narvasahasankacharita*; Dhananjaya, author of the *Dasarupaka*, Dhanika, commentator of the *Dasarupaka*, Halayudha, commentator of *Pingalachhandasutra* and other works, and Amitagati, author of the *Subhasitaratnasandoh*. Among the dramatists of the period are Bhavabhuti, author of the *Malatimadhava*, the *Mahaviracharita* and the *Uttararamacharita*, who flourished in the eighth century A.D., Visakhadatta, author of the *Mudraraksasa* and Bhatta Narayana, author of the *Venisamhara* (800 A.D.), and Rajasekhara, author of the *Karpuramanjari* and other works, who wrote in the early part of the tenth century A.D. Bhavabhuti was a court poet of Yasovarman of Kanauj, but when the latter was defeated by Lalitaditya Muktapida of Kashmir, the poet is said to have been carried to that country by the conquering monarch. Bhavabhuti, though influenced to some extent by Kalidasa, is a poet of no mean order. He is strikingly original and is gifted, in an extraordinary measure, with a brilliant imagination. His works clearly reveal his superb mastery of diction, the richness and elevation of expression and depth of thought. He does not rank as high as Kalidasa as a poet and Professor Keith rightly observes: "Of sweetness and charm of Kalidasa he has as little as the power of suggestion displayed by his predecessor; but he excels in drawing with a few strokes the typical features of a situation or emotion." Visakhadatta presents a contrast to Bhavabhuti. Instead of being prone to inflated language and exaggeration he is forcible, clear and direct. The *Mudraraksasa* has more dramatic vigour than many other well-known Sanskrit dramas and its martial character is unmistakable. The plot of the *Venisamhara* is derived from the Mahabharata. It is an interesting work of considerable originality, but certain portions of it are not entirely free from defects.



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The Kavya literature also deserves a passing mention. Magha's *Sisupalabadha* is a well-known work which draws its material from the Mahabharata, and describes the story of the destruction of Sisupala by Krisna. Another *mahakavya* of importance is the *Naisadhacharita* of Sri Harsa (1150 A.D.) who wrote probably under the patronage of Jayachandra of Kanauj. Sri Harsa presents to us in a versified form the story of Nala and Damayanti, one of the most pathetic scenes depicted by the supreme skill of the poet in the Mahabharata. It is a work of 22 cantos written in the most ornate style loaded with luxuriant imagery and suffers by comparison with the story as it is related in the Mahabharata in its original form. Besides the kavyas proper there were written during this period historical kavyas. Among them the most remarkable are the *Navasahasankacharita* of Padmagupta who was a court poet of the king of Dhara and of whom mention has previously been made, the *Vikramankacharita* of Bilhana written to commemorate the exploits of Vikramaditya VI, the Chalukya ruler of Kalyan. Bilhana excels in description, and his style is lucid and simple and free from monotonous rigmarole and bombastic pedantry. The most remarkable historical work in verse is Kalhana's *Rajatarangini* composed in the middle of the twelfth century A.D. Kalhana was a well-educated native of Kashmir who had taken part in the politics of his country and who was fully conversant with its affairs. He attempts to give his readers a complete history of Kashmir, and, though like all mediæval historiographers he combines fact with fiction, he sincerely endeavours to consult the varied sources of history. He is a poet writing history and therefore tries to describe events in as artistic a manner as possible. But as Professor Keith observes, "he has too little insight to read effectively the complex mind and character of man, which forbid simple pronouncements, so intermingled, are good and bad in





all human hearts.”³³ Though Kalhana lacks the breadth of vision and the insight of a great historian, he is certainly more interesting than the Jain scholar Hemachandra who has left us voluminous works which lack accuracy, sound judgment and literary charm. Among the lyrical poets the most remarkable is Jayadeva, the author of the *Gita Govinda*, who flourished in Bengal in the twelfth century, and of whom mention will be made in another chapter.

Among prose-writers of this period the most famous is Dandin, author of the *Dasakumaracharita* and the fragmentary *Avantisamarikatha*, who flourished in the seventh century, and who excels other writers in sweetness of style. Another writer of eminence is Dhanapala, whose *Tilakamanjari* and *Yasastilaka* are brilliant specimens of mediæval Sanskrit prose. The literary activity of the Hindus did not end here. A great many works on philosophy, literature, and other branches of learning were produced by eminent scholars both in the north and south, which cannot be discussed here for want of space.

The institution of caste existed. The superiority of the Brahmanas was acknowledged and the highest honours were accorded to them by kings as well as the

Social Life. common people. But the Rajputs were no less high in the social scale. Brave

and warlike, the Rajput was like the knight of King Arthur's Round Table ever devoted to the championship of noble causes. Tod has in his masterly way delineated the character of the Rajput in these words: "High courage, patriotism, loyalty, honour, hospitality and simplicity are qualities which must at once be conceded to them: and if we cannot vindicate them from charges to which human nature in every clime is obnoxious; if we are compelled to admit the deterioration of moral dignity from the continual inroads of, and their subsequent collision with, rapacious con-

³³ Classical Sanskrit Literature, p. 68.



querors; we must yet admire the quantum of virtue which even oppression and bad example have failed to banish. The meaner vices of deceit and falsehood, which the delineators of national character attach to the Asiatic without distinction. I deny to be universal with the Rajputs, though some tribes may have been obliged from position to use these shields of the weak against continuous oppression.”³⁴ The Rajput had a high sense of honour and a strict regard for truth. He was generous towards his foes, and even when he was victorious, he seldom had recourse to those arts of barbarity which were the inevitable concomitants of Muslim conquest. He never employed deceit or treachery in war and scrupulously abstained from causing misery to the poor and innocent people. The test of the civilisation of a community is the degree of esteem in which women are held in it. The Rajput honoured his women and though their lot was one of “appalling hardship” from the cradle to the crematorium, they showed wonderful courage and determination in times of difficulty and performed deeds of valour which are unparalleled in the history of the world. Their devotion to their husbands, their courage in moments of crisis—and these were unfortunately many in a Rajput woman’s life—and their fearless example exercised a healthy influence on Rajput society in spite of the seclusion in which they were kept. But their noble birth, their devotion to their husbands, their high sense of honour, and their conspicuous resourcefulness and courage all combined to make their lives highly uncertain and Tod has described with great picturesqueness the fate of the Rajput woman in these words: “To the fair of other lands the fate of the Rajputani must appear one of appalling hardship. In each stage of life death is ready to claim her: by the poppy at its dawn, by the flames in riper years;

³⁴ Tod’s *Annals and Antiquities of Rajasthan*, edited by Crooke, II, p. 744.



while the safety of the interval depending on the uncertainty of war, at no period is her existence worth a twelve months' purchase. The loss of a battle, or the capture of a city, is a signal to avoid captivity and its horrors, which to the Rajputani are worse than death." ³⁵ The custom of "Jauhar" or self-immolation—though its cruelty seems revolting to us—had its origin in that high feeling of honour and chastity, which led Rajput women to sacrifice themselves in the extremity of peril, when the relentless invaders hemmed in their husbands on all sides, and when all chances of deliverance were lost.

But if the virtues of the Rajputs are patent, their faults are equally obvious. Their inconstancy of temper, their liability to emotion or passion, their clan-feeling, their perpetual feuds consequent upon the feudal conditions that prevailed among them, their use of opium, their incapacity to present a united front to the common enemy—all these placed them in a highly disadvantageous position when they were matched against foes of tougher stuff. The practice of infanticide was common amongst them, and female children were seldom suffered to exist even in the most respectable families. Equally baneful was their custom of Sati which resulted from time to time in the deaths of a number of women in royal households which were universally polygamous. The practice became so common that even women of ordinary status burnt themselves to death sometimes of their own free will, but more often under the pressure of parents and kinsmen obsessed by a false notion of family pride. Political subjection afterwards demoralised the Rajputs to such an extent that a great many of them submissively accepted the role of flunkys at the courts of Delhi and Agra. But the wars of the Rajputs did not disturb the ordinary husbandman in the peaceful

³⁵ Tod's *Annals and Antiquities of Rajasthan*, edited by Crooke, II, p. 747.



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pursuit of his occupation. Sieges, battles, massacres—all left him unmoved with the result he became completely indifferent to political revolutions, and readily transferred his allegiance from one king to another.

The Hindu society was stirred by the religious movements of reformers like Ramanujacharya, who preached the cult of *bhakti*, and whose teachings marked a reaction against Sankara's *advaita* philosophy. He preached against Sankara's *Vedanta* and laid stress upon the attributes of a personal god who could be pleased by means of *bhakti* or devotion. He formed a link between the north and south, and succeeded in establishing his spiritual hegemony over a considerable body of Hindus in both parts of the country. Pilgrimages became common, and men moved about visiting sacred places—a fact which imparted a great stimulus to the deep religious fervour which was at this time a remarkable feature of Hindu society. *Svayamvaras* were not frequently held, the last recorded one of importance being that of the daughter of Jayachandra of Kanauj, but *Sati* was common, and in beleaguered fortresses and cities no mercy was shown to the weaker sex, when it fell into the hands of the enemy. Mr. Kennedy describes the Rajput civilisation in these words:

“ . . . But while Brahmans of the highest rank were above politics, the lower classes were keen politicians, enforcing their interests by the threat of their curse and of religious penalties. The kings assumed a kind of semi-divinity, and surrounded themselves with a host of mercenaries or slaves. The nobles followed the example of the kings, built strong forts for themselves in inaccessible places, and supported their power by companies of bravos. The town guilds were strong enough to hold their own but the rural population was reduced to serfdom. Public and private wars and the jealousy with which foreigners were regarded, there was considerable communication



between the different parts of the country. Commerce flourished, poets and pandits went from court to court, flowers from Kashmir and water from the Ganges are said to have been daily offered at the shrine of Somnath, kings and temples were immensely rich. Pilgrimages were a fashion, and the greatest sovereigns proclaimed themselves protectors of the holy places."³⁶

The government of the Rajputs was of a feudal character. The kingdom was divided into estates or fiefs held by jagirdars, who were often of the same family as the prince. The strength and security of the state depended upon their loyalty and devotion. The *khalsa* land of the state was directly under the prince and was administered by him. The nobles or their vassals were divided into several classes and the etiquette of each class was prescribed by immemorial usage which was scrupulously observed. The chief source of income was the revenue from the *khalsa* lands which was further increased by taxes on commerce and trade. The vassals or fief holders of the prince had to render military service when they were called upon to do so. Like the followers of the German leader of whom we read in 'Tacitus' *Annals* they loved and honoured their prince and cheerfully followed him to the field of battle. They were bound to him by ties of personal devotion and service and were ever anxious to prove their fidelity in times of difficulty or danger. No price could purchase them and no temptation could wean them away from their chief. These feudal barons, if we may so call them, had to make payments to their chief resembling very much the feudal incidents of mediæval Europe. The Knight's fee and scutage were not unknown; feudal obligations were mutually recognised and we often find that greedy rulers had

³⁶ Imp. Gaz., Vol. II, p. 315.



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recourse to scutage to obtain money. Such government was bound to be inefficient. It fostered individualism and prevented the coalition of political forces in the state for a common end. The king was the apex of the system, and as long as he was strong and powerful, affairs were properly managed, but a weak man was soon reduced to the position of a political nullity. The internal peace of the state often depended upon the absence of external danger. When there was no fear of a foreign foe, the feudal vassals became restless and feuds broke out between the various clans with great violence as is shown by the feuds of the clans of Chondawat and Saktawat in the 17th century in the time of Jahangir.

What India lacked was political unity and social solidarity. Her leaders counted by hundreds; her

India's Lack of energy was frittered away in petty
Unity. squabbles between the various states.

She may correctly be described during this period as merely a geographical expression—a lamentable feature, which made her helpless, when she was engaged in a death-grapple with the foreigners, who invaded her fair and fertile lands from time to time in ever-increasing numbers. Her decadent political system was easily overthrown by Muslim conquerors who laid the foundations of their empire in the twelfth century A.D. The story of this conquest will be described in the chapters that follow.

THE KINGDOMS OF THE DECCAN

The Satakarni kings who belonged to the Andhra dynasty ruled for 450 years, roughly from 230 B.C. to

The Chalukyas. 266 A.D. One of these kings defeated
the last Kanva Emperor of Magadha

in 27 B.C. Ambition led to wars with the satraps of Gujarat and Malwa in which victory rested alternately with the Satakarnis and the satraps.

The history of this period is hopelessly meagre, but we are told that a foreign tribe, called the Pallavas,



entered the Deccan, ousted the Satakarnis, and established their sway over the whole country, stretching far to the south of the Godavari. The native Rastrakutas struggled in vain against them. But they were finally dislodged by the Chalukyas,³⁷ a family of Rajput origin, who entered the Deccan in the sixth century of the Christian era. They occupied their capital Vatapi (Badami) and in course of time mastered the whole country. The most remarkable of the line was Pulakesin II, who ascended the throne in 611 A.D.³⁸ He embarked upon a career of ceaseless conquests and waged wars against the rulers of Gujarat, Rajputana, Malwa and Konkan. The Pallavas of Vengi and Kanchipura did not tamely submit to Pulakesin's power; they struggled on, but they were defeated, and their territory was annexed to the Chalukya empire. A few years later Pulakesin's brother, Visnuvardhana, who was appointed viceroy of the conquered region, withheld allegiance, and founded a separate kingdom known in history as the kingdom of Eastern Chalukyas which was finally incorporated into the Chola Empire towards the latter part of the eleventh century. Harsa of Kanauj, who could not bear to see the existence of a rival power, proceeded in person against him, but suffered a defeat at his hands in 620 A.D.³⁹

³⁷ There is good reason to believe that the Chalukyas migrated from Rajputana to the Deccan. They are connected with the Gurjar tribes. *Bombay Gazetteer*, 1896, I, Pt. I, pp. 127, 138, 463, note 2, 467.

See the dynastic lists given in *Ep. Ind.*, VIII, App. II.

³⁸ *Bombay Gazetteer*, I, Pt. II, p. 183.

This is the date accepted by Dr. Bhandarkar.

Smith gives 608 A.D. as the date of his accession.

³⁹ This achievement was considered by his successors as the most important and that alone is mentioned in their copper-plate grants in the description of Pulakesin II. Pulakesin had become the lord of the three countries called Maharastrakas containing ninety-nine thousand villages. The kings of Kalinga and Kosala trembled at his approach and surrendered to him.



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The southern powers, the Cholas and Pandyas, frightened by the military prowess of Pulakesin, entered into friendly alliances with him and thus purchased immunity from his attacks. The Chinese pilgrim, Hiuen Tsiang, who visited the Deccan in 639 A.D., was impressed by the power and greatness of Pulakesin whom he describes in these words:

"He is of the race of Kshatriyas. His name is Pulakesin. His ideas are large and profound and he extends widely his sympathy and benefactions . . . the state maintains a body of brave champions to the number of several hundreds. Whenever there is a march, these warriors march in front to the sound of the drum. Besides, they intoxicate many fierce elephants . . . no enemy can dare stand before them in battle. The king, proud in the possession of these men and elephants, treats with contempt the neighbouring kingdoms." ⁴⁰

So great was the power of Pulakesin, but it was not destined to last long. The perpetual wars that he waged against his rival powers involved a heavy strain upon the military and financial resources of the empire, and when the Pallavas under Narasimhavarman fell upon Pulakesin, they inflicted a crushing defeat upon him. The Chalukya power suffered an eclipse, and the Pallavas became the dominant power in Southern India. But this disgrace rankled in the minds of the Chalukyas, and Pulakesin's son, Vikramaditya I, declared war upon the Pallavas and avenged the death of his father by seizing their capital Kanchi. ⁴¹ The struggle went on with varying success, until, at last, in the middle of the eighth century Dantidurga, a chief-

⁴⁰ Indian Antiquary, VII, pp. 290-91.

⁴¹ Ind. Ant., VI, pp. 86, 89, 92.

J. B. B. R. A. S., III, p. 203.

Ind. Ant., IX, pp. 127, 130-31.



clan of the Rastrakuta emerged to the front by overpowering the Chalukyas and supplanted their power.⁴²

With the fall of the main branch of the Chalukyas, the sovereignty of the Deccan passed into the hands of the Rastrakutas. The Rastrakuta kings waged wars with the powers of the south and tried to extend the boundaries of their kingdom. Dantidurga, the founder of their greatness was succeeded by Krisna I, who brought under his control all the territory formerly held by the Chalukyas, and commemorated his brilliant reign by erecting a monolithic temple at Ellura, now in the Nizam's dominions, which is a fine specimen of rock-cut architecture. His successors, Govinda II and Govinda III, further enlarged their dominions by extensive conquests, and in the time of Amoghavarsa, who came to the throne probably in the year 815 A.D., the wars with the Eastern Chalukya kingdom became more frequent. The Rastrakutas prided themselves on their military power, and their kingdom during the reign of Amoghavarsa included all the territories comprised in the empire of Pulakesin II. Amoghavarsa professed the Jain faith, which under royal patronage soon acquired considerable influence, and aroused the jealousy of its rival, Hinduism.⁴³ The conflicts between the two faiths intensified the struggle between the Rastrakutas and the other powerful kingdoms of the south that still adhered to the Brahmanical religion.⁴⁴ Krisna III

⁴² In a copper-plate grant of Dantidurga he is described as having become paramount sovereign after defeating the Vallabha. J. B. B. R. A. S., II, p. 375.

Krishna Raja must have reigned between 753 and 755 A.D.

⁴³ In the Navasari grant Amoghavarsa is spoken of as Vallabha and is styled Raja, or king of kings, and also Vira Narayana.

⁴⁴ In an appendix at the end of a Jain work entitled *Uttarapurana* by Gunabhadra, Amoghavarsa is represented to have been a devoted worshipper of a holy Jain saint named Jinasena,



defeated the Chola king about 915 A.D. and took possession of Kanchi or Conjivaram and Tanjore.

These unending wars implied a heavy strain upon the financial and military resources of the dynasty, which had begun to show signs of decadence. While the Rastrakutas had exhausted their energies in wars, the Chalukyas had slowly gathered strength, and in 973 A.D. a representative of the Chalukya dynasty, Tailapa II, overpowered and dethroned the last Rastrakuta Monarch, Kakkala or Kakka II, and laid the foundations of a new dynasty known as the Chalukyas of Kalyani. He tried to cement his newly gained power by resting his claims upon his relationship to the famous Chalukya family, which had been ousted by the Rastrakutas in the eighth century A.D.

The Rastrakuta kings were capable and energetic rulers, who not only increased the extent of their kingdom, but also lent their support to the encouragement of those civilized arts which tend to soften the severity of an entirely military government. Jainism had made progress in their dominion through their patronage,⁴⁵ but there was no religious persecution for the king had accepted the principle of religious toleration—a practice in which India stands unique in the history of the world. Royal patronage was freely extended to men of letters, and many a bard and poet sang the praises of his royal benefactors and added to the literature of the country. Architecture was not neglected and some beautiful

who was the preceptor of the author and who wrote the first part of the work. The Sanskrit verses in which the allusion to Amoghavarsa occurs are reproduced in a footnote in the *Early History of the Deccan* by Bhandarkar in the *Bombay Gazetteer*, I, Pt. II, p. 200.

There is ample documentary evidence to prove that this king was a great patron of the Digambara Jains.

⁴⁵ Jainism had certainly made great progress. The form of Jainism which prevailed in the country was that professed by the Digambara sect. A good many Digambara works were composed during the period.

temples were erected in honour of Hindu deities. The rock-cut temple at Ellura and the life-like paintings and frescoes in the Ajanta caves bear eloquent testimony to the architectural progress made under these kings. The Rastrakuta kings, unlike the Gurjars of Bhinmala, maintain friendly relations with the Arabs. This intercourse led to the development of commerce, and many an Arab merchant visited India and paid homage to the Rastrakuta monarchs, whose fame had extended far and wide.

Tailapa II was an able and energetic ruler. His success over the Rastrakutas undoubtedly stimulated his ambition, and in a short time he brought under his sway all the territory over which the Chalukyas had ruled.

The later Chalukyas of Kalyani.

He was engaged in a never-ending conflict with Munja, the Parmar Raja of Dhara, who defeated him as many as six times. This humiliation ever rankled in his mind, and Tailapa got the desired opportunity of revenge when Munja attacked him for the seventh time.⁴⁶ He was defeated, deprived of his liberty, and finally put to death probably in 995 A.D. by Tailapa, who celebrated his triumph by parading him in the guise of a beggar from door to door.

But Tailapa had to encounter a formidable rival in Raja Raja Chola who had come to the throne in 985 A.D. After Tailapa's death, the Chola potentate harried the Vengi territory at the head of a large army and inflicted untold misery upon the population. But these wrongs were avenged shortly afterwards by Somesvara I (1040—69 A.D.), surnamed "Ahavamalla", the wrestler in battle in 1052 A.D. when he defeated the reigning

⁴⁶ Munja was the uncle of the celebrated Bhoja of Dhara. Munja was taken prisoner by Tailapa. He was at first treated with consideration, but when he tried to escape, he was subjected to indignities and made to beg from door to door and finally beheaded. This event is alluded to in one of Tailapa's inscriptions. J. R. A. S., IV, p. 12, and Ind. Ant. XXI, p. 168.



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Chola King at Koppam on the Tungabhadra.⁴⁷ Somesvara added fresh laurels to his brow by delivering successful attacks upon Dhara and Kanchi, and the ruler of Chedi. But soon afterwards he ended his life by suicide in 1068-69 A.D.,⁴⁸ and was succeeded by his younger son. Vikramaditya VI in 1076 A.D. after the deposition of his elder brother. He reigned for 50 years and under him the country enjoyed an unbroken respite from war. His contemporary, the Chola King Kulottunga I (1070—1118 A.D.), was a peace-loving man; he adopted a policy of live and let live. A long interval of peace made the development of art and literature possible under royal patronage. The court poet, Bilhana, sang the praises of his hero. Vikramaditya, and the famous jurist, the author of the *Mitakshara*, an important branch of Hindu law, flourished during his reign.

But this glory was not destined to last long, and after the death of Vikramaka the power of the Chalukyas began rapidly to decline. The Cholas suffered a similar set-back and both kingdoms felt the weight of the new Ballala dynasty, which was founded by Bijjala or Bijjana of the Kalachuri race, who held the office of Minister of War under Tailapa. With the help of some of the semi-independent chiefs, he conceived the design of usurping the throne of his master and kept him in his grip until 1157 A.D. Tailapa fled to Annigeri in the

⁴⁷ A record of 1070-71 A.D. gives an account of this in these words:

"The Chola at last yielded his head to Somesvara in battle and thus losing his life broke the succession of his family."

⁴⁸ Aiyangar, *South India and her Muhammadan Invaders*, p. 231.

K. V. S. Iyer, *Historical Sketches of the Deccan*, I, p. 261. Bilhana, *Vikramacharita*, IV, pp. 46-68.

He drowned himself in the Tungabhadra. This mode of death is called *Jalasamadhi*. It was a voluntary death. Ibn Batuta who visited India in the 14th century also refers to this kind of death. I.B., Paris ed. III, p. 141.



Dharwar District from where he went further south and established himself at Banavasi.

This act of usurpation of Bijjala coincided with the beginning of the revival of Śiva worship led by Vasava, a celebrated reformer, who fanatically denounced the inequalities of caste and pleaded for equality among the devotees of Śiva. Tradition says that Bijjala's persecution of two men of the Lingayat sect whom he blinded caused a revolution in which the religious reformer as well as his great opponent lost their lives. The Lingayat sect⁴⁹ flourished, gathered a large following among the merchant classes, and considerably weakened the hold of Buddhism and Jainism which received an effective check. The ruin of these two dynasties enabled the Chalukyas to grasp the sceptre again, but it slipped away from their feeble hands; and the whole of the Deccan came to be divided between the Yadavas with their capital at Devagiri, the Kakatiyas who ruled at Warangal, and the Hoysala Ballalas who ruled at Dvarsamudra, and whose sway extended as far north as the Krishna.⁵⁰ These three powers contended among themselves for supremacy in the Deccan with the result that by disabling themselves they prepared the way for the success of the Muslims. Rama Chandra Yadava, the last powerful ruler of the Yadava dynasty, was overthrown, by

⁴⁹ Mr. Edward Rice in his *History of Kanarese Literature*, *Heritage of India Series*, pp. 37-41, gives an account of the rise of the Lingayat sect. The Lingayats are the exclusive worshippers of Śiva. They are strictly vegetarians in diet, and on this account all other castes except Brahmanas eat food cooked by them. The philosophical position of the Lingayats is similar to the monistic and quasi-monistic systems of the Brahmanas.

⁵⁰ Somesvara IV Chalukya ruled till 1189 A.D. and his rule was confined to the southern and south-western part of his dominions. His chiefs and feudatories, the Sindas, made common cause against him and compelled him to retire to his north-west frontier, after which nothing more was heard of him. A struggle for power followed, in which the three powers emerged as heirs to the vast Chalukya empire.



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Kafur, the famous general of Alauddin Khilji in 1310 A.D., and the Kakatiya ruler Pratap Rudra Deva II was defeated by him, and compelled to pay tribute to Delhi. Vira Ballala III struggled long against the Muslims, but he was at last overpowered and compelled like his rivals to render allegiance to the Delhi Sultan and to purchase his freedom by the payment of a tribute.

In the earliest times there were three important kingdoms in the Far South, namely, the Pandya, the Chola and the Chera or Kerala. The

The Far South.

Pandya kingdom covered the area now occupied by the Madura and Tinnevely districts with portions of Trichinopoly and Travancore State. The Chola kingdom extended over Madras and several other British districts on the east as well as the territory now included in the Mysore State. The limits of the principality of Chera or Kerala cannot be defined with precision, but scholars are of opinion that it included approximately the Malabar districts and the greater part of the Cochin and Travancore states. It would be wearisome to describe in detail the history of these kingdoms, and all that can be attempted here is to give a general sketch of the relations of the various southern powers towards one another and their ultimate fate. The three kingdoms of the Far South enjoyed a position of power and influence during the centuries before the Christian era and had trade relations with Ancient Rome and Egypt. But in the second century A.D. a new power came into prominence and that was of the Pallavas who established a large kingdom for themselves and waged wars against their neighbours. The Pallavas, who seem to have been in the habit of making plundering incursions into the territories of their neighbours, gradually increased their power in South India, overshadowed the ancient kingdoms and came into conflict with the Chalukyas. The Chalukya king, Pulakesin II, inflicted a crushing defeat upon the Pallava ruler, Mahendravarman I, and annexed the Vengi province to his dominions. Exasperated at the loss of



an important part of the territory, the Pallavas organized their forces, and paid the Chalukya king in his own coin next year. These dynastic feuds were inherited by the Rastrakutas, when they supplanted the Chalukyas in the Deccan in the middle of the eighth century A.D. Before the continued attacks of a youthful and vigorous dynasty, which had just emerged on the stage of history, the Pallavas found it difficult to defend themselves. Internal disorder together with the rebellion of the Southern Gangas accelerated the decline of the Pallavas; and the supremacy of the South passed into the hands of the Cholas, and Raja Raja Chola, who assumed sovereign authority in 985 A.D., extended his conquests far and wide.⁵¹ By the end of 1005 A.D., he defeated all his rivals and built for himself a magnificent empire. But the incessant strain of war proved too great even for the giant limbs of this mighty potentate of the South, and in 1011 A.D. he sheathed his sword with pleasure and devoted himself to the task of organizing the administration. His son Rajendra Chola (1018—1042 A.D.) was, in accordance with the Chola custom, associated with him in the administration of the affairs of the kingdom. He turned out a chip of the old block and vigorously carried on the warlike policy of his father. His arms penetrated as far as the territory now occupied by the provinces of Prome and Pegu in modern Burma, and Bengal, whose ruler Mahipala was defeated and brought into subjection. Orissa was overrun and the Andaman and Nicobar islands were also conquered. The Gangas of Mysore, who had been a thorn in the side of the Pallavas, were also subdued; and this astute ruler consummated his policy of aggrandisement by forming a matrimonial alliance with the Chalukya ruler of Kalyani, who was a formidable rival. The offspring

⁵¹ The history of the Cholas has been described at great length by Mr. Krishnaswami Aiyangar in his 'Ancient India,' a work of considerable research on South Indian history.



of this marriage was Kulottunga I (1070—1118 A.D.) who united in his person the power of the Cholas and the Chalukyas.

After the death of Rajendra, the Chola kingdom fell upon evil times; and the neighbouring powers who had suffered much at the hands of its rulers now arrayed their forces against it. The Chola ruler was defeated in the battle of Koppam in 1052 or 1053 A.D. by the Chalukya army, and this defeat led to the delimitation of the Chalukya and Chola frontiers. The Pandyas, the Cheras, and the Gangas withheld their allegiance, and the confusion into which the kingdom had fallen is illustrated by the fact that several rulers occupied the throne in quick succession only to be removed from power, either by military force or by assassination. In 1070 A.D. Somesvara II and his younger brother Vikramaditya contended for succession to the Chalukya throne, while Vira Rajendra Chola had a powerful rival in Rajendra Chola of the Eastern Chalukya dynasty. Out of this civil war Vikramaditya emerged triumphant; he seized the Chalukya throne and restored his brother-in-law Adhi-Rajendra Chola to his patrimony. But as the saying goes, one can do anything with bayonets except sit upon them. Adhi-Rajendra who depended entirely upon Chalukya support failed to win the confidence of his subjects, and was shortly afterwards assassinated. He left no male heir, and, therefore, the crown lapsed to Rajendra Chalukya who is better known as Kulottunga I (1070—1118 A.D.).

Kulottunga I, who was a capable and statesmanlike ruler, once more evolved order out of chaos, and established complete tranquility throughout his wide dominions. He achieved great conquests, but he is distinguished from his predecessors by the care which he bestowed upon the organisation of the administration on a sound and efficient basis. Towards the close of his reign the Hoysala prince Bitti Deva, otherwise known as Visnuvardhana (1100—1141 A.D.), drove out the Chola governors from the Ganga territory, and,



before his death, established his sway over the country now covered by the Mysore State.

The Pandyas, meanwhile, developed their power and the Chola empire had to bear the blows of the Hoysalas, the Kakatiyas and the Pandyas. The last powerful ruler of the Pandya dynasty was Sundaram Pandya,⁵² who died in 1293 A.D. after having conquered the whole Tamil country and Ceylon. The great Venetian traveller Marco Polo, who visited South India in the 13th Century, speaks of the great wealth and power of the Pandya king. But in 1310 A.D. Kafur's raids, backed by religious fanaticism destroyed the political system of the South and plunged the whole country into a state of utter confusion. The Chola and Pandya kingdoms rapidly declined in power and were paralysed, as it were, under the weight of Muslim arms. The Deccan was not united again until the rise of the Vijayanagar kingdom in 1336 A.D.

⁵² Marco Polo found him ruling at Madura.



CHAPTER II

THE ADVENT OF THE MUSLIMS

THE earliest Muslim invaders of Hindustan were not the Turks but the Arabs, who issued out from their

desert homes after the death of the great Prophet to spread their doctrine

throughout the world, which was, according to them, "the key of heaven and hell." Wherever they went, their intrepidity and vigour, roused to the highest pitch by their proud feeling of a common nationality and their zeal for the faith, enabled the Arabs to make themselves masters of Syria, Palestine, Egypt and Persia within the short space of twenty years.¹ The conquest of Persia made them think of their expansion eastward and when they learnt of the fabulous wealth and idolatry of India from the merchants who sailed from Shiraz and Hurmuz and landed on the Indian coast, they discounted the difficulties and obstacles which nature placed in their way, and determined to lead an expedition to India, which at once received the sanction of religious enthusiasm and political ambition. The first recorded expedition was sent from Uman to pillage the coasts of India in the year 636-37

¹ Dollinger asks the question 'Was it genuine religious enthusiasm, the new strength of a faith for the first time blossoming forth in all its purity, that gave the victory in every battle to the arms of the Arabs and in so incredibly short a time founded the greatest empire the world had ever seen?' Arnold who discusses the whole thing at length says this was not the case. He says the number of those who ardently felt for the faith was far too small, while the number of those who had come into the fold of Islam only through pressure from without or by the hope of material gain was very much greater. The expansion of the Arabs, observes the same writer, was due not so much to the religious spirit as to their desire to obtain the lands and goods of their neighbours who were richer and more-fortunate than themselves. Arnold, *Preaching of Islam*, pp. 45—101.



A.D. during the Khilafat of Umar. Plunder and not conquest was the objective of these early raids, but the task was considered so difficult and dangerous that the Khalifa disapproved of such distant campaigns and prohibited all further attempts in this direction. He had a great repugnance to naval expeditions, which is said to have been caused by the description of the sea furnished to him by one of his lieutenants, as "a great pool which some senseless people furrow, looking like worms upon logs of wood²." The sons of the desert were not destined to win their laurels on the high seas, and owing to the prohibitions and penalties of the Khalifa, all maritime enterprise was sternly repressed. But Omar's successors relaxed the prohibition, and expeditions were planned and undertaken so that every year the Muslims marched from their homes in search of fresh fields and pastures new. In 643-44 A.D. Abdulla bin Amar bin Rabi invaded Kirman and marched towards Sistan or Siwistan and besieged the ruler of the place in his capital and compelled him to sue for peace. Peace having been patched up, the victorious general proceeded towards Mekran, where he was opposed by the combined forces of the rulers of Sindh and Mekran, but the latter sustained a defeat in a night encounter. Abdulla wished to follow up his victory and to win further success on the other side of the Indus; but the cautious policy of the Khalifa stood in his way and forbade all further progress.

The arms of Islam achieved splendid success everywhere. Egypt, Syria, Carthage, Africa,—all were reached within a few years, and in 710 A.D., at the battle of Guadelete the Gothic kingdom was destroyed by the Moors, who established their own power in the country and introduced the elements of Arabian culture among the semi-civilised European races. Persia had

² This was written to the Khalifa during the Egyptian expedition by Amru bin Asi, whereupon Umar forbade all navigation amongst the Musalmans and severely punished the infringement of this order. Elliot, History of India, I, p. 416:



already been overrun as far as the river Oxus, and attempts had been made to annex the lands beyond that river to the Caliphate. These eastern conquests greatly increased the power and prestige of the Khilafat which attained to its pinnacle of fame under the Omayyads. Under Hajjaj, the Governor of Iraq, who practically ruled over the entire country formerly comprised in the kingdom of Persia, and who was an imperialist to the core, the spirit of conquest found its fullest scope, and Bokhara, Khojand, Samarqand and Farghana were conquered by Muslim arms. Qutaiba was sent to Kashgar, where a treaty was concluded with the native Chinese. An army was also sent against the King of Kabul and another to chastise the pirates of Debal³ in Sindh, who had plundered eight vessels full of valuable presents sent by the ruler of Ceylon for the Khalifa and Hajjaj. But this punitive expedition against Debal, which the Khalifa had sanctioned at the special request of Hajjaj, failed, and the Arab general who captained it was defeated and put to death by the Sindhians. Struck with shame and humiliation at this disastrous failure, Hajjaj who was a man of high-strung nature vowed vengeance upon the Sindhians, and planned a fresh expedition, better organised and equipped than the previous one. It was entrusted to Muhammad bin Qasim, who was pointed out by the astrologers as the luckiest man to be placed in charge of it.

The story of Muhammad bin Qasim's invasion of Sindh is one of the romances of history. His blooming youth, his dash and heroism, his noble deportment throughout the expedition and his tragic fall have invested his career with the halo of martyrdom.

Muhammad bin Qasim's invasion of Sindh, 712 A.D.

³ Thatta is almost synonymous with Debal. It was a seaport situated about 24 miles to the south-west of the modern town of Thatta. Mr. Abbott discusses the whole question at length in his interesting monograph on Sindh (pp. 43—55). Also see Major Raverty's translation of the *Tabqat-i-Nasiri*, I, p. 295 (note 2).



Buoyed up with great expectations that were formed of him an account of his youthful and warlike spirit, this gallant prince started on his Indian expedition, well-accounted, with 6,000 picked Syrian and Iraqi warriors sent by Hajjaj, with an equal number of armed camel-riders and a baggage train of 3,000 Bactrian camels. Necessaries as well as luxuries were amply supplied by the Khalifa, who had appointed Muhammad bin Qasim more on the score of his kinship with him than mere personal merit. When Muhammad reached Mekran, he was joined by the governor, Muhammad Harun, who supplied reinforcements and five catapults which were sent to Debal with the necessary equipments. Besides these Arab troops, Muhammad bin Qasim enlisted under his banner a large number of the discontented Jats and Meds, who had old accounts to settle with the intolerant Hindu government, which had inflicted great humiliations upon them. They had been forbidden to ride in saddles, wear fine clothes, to uncover the head, and this condemnation to the position of mere hewers of wood and drawers of water had embittered animosities to such an extent, that they readily threw in their lot with the foreigner. Though Muhammad bin Qasim treated them with scant respect as soon as he had gained a foothold in the country, this division of national sympathies was of incalculable help to him in acquiring knowledge of the country with which his men were but imperfectly acquainted.

Muhammad reached Debal in the spring of 712 A.D. There he was reinforced by a large supply of men, arms, and warlike machines. Forthwith Muhammad's men set themselves to the task of digging entrenchments defended by spearmen, each body of warriors under its own banners, and the *manjuiq* called the "bride" was placed with 500 men to work it. There was a large temple at Debal on the top of which floated a red flag which was pulled down by the Muslims to the complete horror of the idolaters. A hard fight ensued in which the Hindus were defeated by the



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Muslims. The city was given up to plunder and a terrible scene of carnage followed, which lasted for three days. The governor of the town fled away without offering any resistance and left the field clear for the victorious general, who laid out a Muslim quarter, built a mosque and entrusted the defence of the city to a garrison of 4,000 men. According to Firishta all males of the age of 17 and upwards were killed when they refused to embrace Islam. A large booty fell into the hands of the victors of which the legal one-fifth together with 75 maids was sent to Hajjaj and the rest was divided among the troops.⁴

Having taken Debal by storm, Muhammad bin Qasim proceeded to Nirun,⁵ the inhabitants of which purchased their freedom by furnishing supplies and making a complete surrender. He then ordered a bridge of boats to be constructed in order to cross the Indus. This unexpected move took Dahir by surprise, and with his men he fell back upon Rawar where he set his forces in order to fight against the enemy. Here the Arabs encountered an imposing array of war-elephants and a powerful army, thirsting to give battle to the Muslims under the command of Dahir and his Thakurs (chiefs). Al-Biladuri⁶ writes that a dreadful conflict ensued such as had never been heard of and the author of the *Chachnama*⁷ gives a graphic account of the valiant fight which was put forth by Dahir and his Rajput allies. Al-Biladuri also writes: "A dreadful conflict ensued, such as had never been heard of. Dahir dismounted and fought valiantly,

⁴ Briggs, IV, p. 405.

⁵ Nirun was situated on the high road from Thatta to Haidrabad, a little below Jarak, Elliot, I, pp. 396—401.

⁶ Al-Biladuri, Elliot, I, p. 121.

⁷ Chachnama, Elliot, I, p. 170.

Several authors are of opinion that Muhammad took the village of Rawar by assault. The *Chachnama* gives a detailed account of the capture of the fort and the immolation of the royal ladies. Elliot, I, pp. 122, 172.



But he was killed towards the evening, when the idolators fled, and the Musalmans glutted themselves with massacre. According to Al-Madaini, the slayer of Dahir was a man of the tribe of Kalab, who composed some verses upon the occasion."⁸ A naphtha arrow struck Dahir's howdah and set it ablaze. At this inopportune moment Dahir's elephant rushed into water to quench his thirst, and when he retreated, he was surrounded on all sides by the Arabs who showered arrows upon him. Dahir fell upon the ground, but he at once raised himself up and had a scuffle with an Arab, who "struck him with a sword on the very centre of his head and cleft it to his neck." Driven to desperation by the death of their valiant king and leader, the Hindus assailed the Muslims with relentless fury, but they were defeated, and the faithful "glutted themselves with massacre." Dahir's wife, Rani Bai,⁹

⁸ Elliot, I, p. 170.

⁹ There is some confusion in regard to the name of this lady. The author of the *Chachnama* calls her Rani Bai. (Main in some texts) and makes the somewhat astounding statement that she was Dahir's sister whom he had made his wife. In another place he calls Dahir's queen Ladi and makes her fight valiantly in defence of her honour at Brahmanabad. Al-Biladuri says Muhammad took the village of Rawar by assault in which city there was a wife of Dahir who, afraid of being captured, burnt herself along with her handmaids and all that she possessed. The *Chachnama* is in agreement with Al-Biladuri. It says that after Dahir's death the Rani went into the fort of Rawar with her relations and dependents, and when the latter had removed to Brahmanabad—a place of greater safety owing to the loyalty of the inhabitants—the Rani fought with the Arabs like a true heroine and burnt herself on seeing that there was no chance of success. The capture of Brahmanabad occurred after the assault of Rawar and it is at the former place that Ladi showed her conspicuous bravery. The fort was taken and she was taken prisoner with her two maiden daughters. Probably both ladies were Dahir's wives:

Sir Wolsely Haig calls both ladies Dahir's wives. Elliot, I, pp. 122, 181.

Cambridge History of India, Vol. III, p. 5.