

GREATER INDIA SOCIETY

BULLETIN No. 5.

ANCIENT INDIAN CULTURE IN  
AFGHANISTAN

BY

Dr. UPENDRA NATH GHOSHAL, M.A., Ph.D.

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**H N<sup>o</sup>. 17.**

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**CALCUTTA:**

**1928.**

## PREFACE.

A preceding volume of this series opened with the following notable quotation from a recent work of the greatest of living French orientalists, Prof. Sylvain Lévi : 'In the great movement of exchange which constitutes from time immemorial the organic life of the whole of mankind, India has largely given as she has largely received.' No words could more truly describe the results of the contact between India and Afghanistan during the centuries preceding the Muhammadan conquest when Indian culture was still a living force instinct with the spirit of aggressive vigour. Situated at the gateway of the Indian continent whence it commands all the main lines of its inland communication with Western and Eastern Asia, Afghanistan has been the channel through which have flowed the numerous cultural and other influences that have shaped the history of India in the past. On the other hand the Indian influences, especially under the urge of the great movement for cultural expansion associated with Buddhism, have overflowed the western frontiers of India and the signs of their triumph are writ large not only in the existing monuments of Afghanistan, the stūpas, images, cave-shrines, pillars and the like, but were abundantly illustrated in the prevailing forms of religion, language and social manners before they were engulfed by the advancing tide of Islam. Verily the history of Greater India would be lacking in some of its important chapters, if the story of India's cultural contact with its western neighbour were left untold.

The present monograph was undertaken at the request of my friend and colleague, Dr. Kalidas Nag, to whom my best thanks are due. I have also to thank my friends Dr. Prabodh Chandra Bagchi and Dr. Bijan Raj Chatterjee for facilities for the consultation of some important works on my subject. Finally I must not omit to express my profound appreciation of the interest taken in the progress of the Greater India Society by its Honorary President, Mr. Jadunath Sarkar, Vice-Chancellor, Calcutta University.

U. N. GHOSHAL.



## APPENDIX

### *On the History of Archæological Explorations in Afghanistan*

The history of explorations of antiquities in Afghanistan may fittingly commence with the mention of the ill-fated journey of two Englishmen from India to the country of Turkestan in the first quarter of the 19th century. William Moorcroft, a veterinary surgeon who held the post of Superintendent of the East India Company's military stud, was filled with the idea of importing the Turkoman breed of horses for improving the Company's remounts and of opening a profitable trade between British India and Turkestan. With a young companion George Trebeck, the son of an English solicitor practising in Calcutta, he started on his perilous journey in 1819, and after encountering many difficulties and disappointments which might well have shaken a less resolute heart he at length reached Bokhara by way of Lé and Kabul. On their way back both the travellers were seized with an attack of fever to which they eventually succumbed in 1825. Their solitary graves at and near Balkh were the mournful memorials of this unfortunate and ill-advised adventure. The account of their travels was made accessible to the public some time afterwards in 1831 by the labours of the distinguished Orientalist H. H. Wilson. From it we learn how they were the first Europeans to explore the *stūpas* of Afghanistan and visit the colossi at Bamiyan. But meanwhile a young British officer, Lieutenant Alexander Burnes, had been tempted, by the prospect of visiting the places conquered by Alexander and of exploring the Oxus, to undertake a journey across the Panjab and thence through Peshawar to Bokhara. Accompanied by a medical

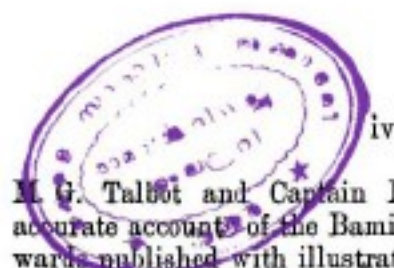
officer Dr. James Gerard he successfully accomplished his mission in 1832 ; it is interesting to note that a young Hindu, Mohun Lal "of Cashmere family" attended the mission of Burnes as his Persian Munshi. In giving an account of his journey Burnes recorded notices of the "topes" the "caves in rocks" and the "towers" in the Jelalabad and Kabul regions and above all he described the "Buts of Bamiyan" which he gravely remarked "existed before the time of Muhammad and when the country was possessed by Kafirs under the dominion of Zohak whose reign was antecedent to Christianity". Almost immediately after this time another intrepid traveller entered the Afghan country and began that systematic exploration of its antiquities which was destined to throw the work of his predecessors into the shade. This was Charles Masson, an American, one of whose chief incentives to archaeological research in that dangerous country was his desire to identify the site of Alexandria under the Caucasus, one of the colonies founded by the mighty Macedonian. The qualities displayed by Masson in the course of his search for antiquities—unbounded capacity for physical endurance, keenness of observation and skill in collecting all interesting information—have deservedly won for him the unstinted admiration of the greatest living authority on the art of Gandhāra school.\* During his stay in Afghanistan from 1834 to 1837, this daring explorer was able to open numbers of *stūpas* in the Jelalabad and Kabul regions and was rewarded with the discovery of wonderful relic caskets, coins and other antiquities. What was of more immediate importance, he acquired at the cost of the East India Company a hoard of over 30,000 coins, Greek, Scythian, Hindu, Sassanide and Muhammadan, which were mostly obtained from an ancient site called Begram about 25 miles to the north-east of Kabul. The results of his explorations were given out to the world in

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\* See Foucher, *Notes sur l'itinéraire de Hsuen Tsang en Afghanistan*, pp. 258-259 *Études Asiatiques* I.

the form of three successive Memoirs contributed to the Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal (1835 and 1836) and were afterwards published by H. H. Wilson in the *Ariana Antiqua* (London, 1841) along with a Memoir from Masson's pen. The numismatic discoveries of Masson at once roused wide-spread interest, and they formed the subject of some learned contributions to the Asiatic Society's Journal from the pen of the illustrious James Prinsep. Interest in the Bactrian and Indo-Greek coins was roused on the Continent at the same time by the arrival of Dr. Honigberger who had formerly been a medical officer in the service of Maharaja Ranjit Singh and had carried out some minor excavations in the Jelalabad region. Shortly after this time there broke out the catastrophe of the First Afghan War which led, by a natural sequel, to Afghanistan becoming a forbidden land for European visitors. Even during the critical years of the war, however, it was possible for an English officer, Lieutenant Vincent Eyre, who was a prisoner in the hands of the Afghans, to examine the Bamiyan Caves. His account, brief and imperfect as it was, appeared subsequently in a work which he wrote under the title *The Military Operations at Kabul with a Journal of imprisonment in Afghanistan*. Not long afterwards a daring French officer, J. P. Ferrier, desirous of seeking his fortune at the court of Lahore, performed an adventurous journey in disguise from Bagdad overland to Lahore, in the course of which he visited certain Buddhist rock-cut caves at a place called Singlak. It was however not till the outbreak of the next Afghan War (1878-80) that it became possible for an English war correspondent Mr. William Simpson, to examine the caves and *stupas* at Jelalabad, of which he wrote some accounts illustrated with sketches in the Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society (1882) and other papers. A fresh opportunity for exploration came with the appointment of the Russo-Afghan Boundary Delimitation Commission by the Government of Lord Dufferin in 1885. The officers attached to this commission, especially Captain the Hon.





M. G. Talbot and Captain Maitland, prepared full and accurate accounts of the Bamiyan Caves which were afterwards published with illustrative sketches in the Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society (1886). At this point the exploration of antiquities practically came to a standstill so much so that the illustrious author of the Greco-Buddhist art of Gandhāra, when bringing out the first volume of his work, in 1905, thought that we should have to wait for a new campaign to increase the sources of our knowledge of the subject (1). But a new era fraught with the richest promises for the future of archaeological research in Afghanistan opened in 1922 when the Afghan Government under the enlightened direction of its present ruler signed a convention with M. Foucher, by which France was granted the privilege of carrying out for 30 years the work of archaeological excavation throughout the kingdom. The result of this momentous step has more than justified itself even within the short interval of time that has since elapsed. Within the last few years Afghanistan has been visited by a number of French scholars M. and Mme. Godard, Hackin, Jouveaux Dubreuil and above all Foucher, the head of the French archaeological delegation, and their journeys have already helped to light up many an obscure corner in the field. A series of Memoirs of the French delegation has been projected, of which the second volume containing a fascinating account of the Buddhist antiquities of Bamiyan with sumptuous illustrations has appeared very recently. The prospect is most promising, and it may confidently be predicted that ere long Afghanistan will be made to yield up the antiquarian treasures which she has jealously guarded within her bosom for so many centuries.

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1. See Foucher, *L'Art Greco-bouddhique du Gandhāra* I p. 7.



## ANCIENT INDIAN CULTURE IN AFGHANISTAN

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The kingdom of Afghanistan, constituted as at present, comprises the north-eastern block of the great tableland that separates the valley of the Indus from the valleys of the Euphrates and the Tigris. Its most conspicuous physical feature is the mighty mountain-chain which commencing at its northern and eastern edge spreads forth fan-like for a considerable distance to the south and the west, presenting a kind of natural rampart on those sides. It is watered by three historic rivers, the Kabul in the east, the Helmand in the south-west and the Oxus in the north. Its climate, though subject to singular vicissitudes, is remarkably dry and salubrious. Interspersed with mountains and deserts it boasts of rich and fertile valleys where are grown fruits and cereals in such abundance as to form an important article of export to its neighbouring lands. Nor has nature denied to this favoured region its stock of mineral wealth which has as yet been only imperfectly developed by the enterprise of its inhabitants.

The geographical situation of the country, lying as it does between two great zones of civilisation, the Indian and the West Asiatic, and athwart the natural outlet of the hive of nomadic hordes inhabiting the steppes of Central Asia, has fixed for ages the *role* which it was destined to play on the stage of history. It has been from

the earliest times the meeting-place of races, languages and cultures confronting each other often in armed conflict and sometimes in peaceful intercourse. At the dawn of history it was divided between the Vedic-speaking Indo-Aryans and their Iranian kinsmen. In the following centuries it has been swept in turn by Persian, Hellene, Indian, Scythian, Parthian, Hun and Turk, not to speak of the motley crowd of peoples, Turk, Afghan and Moghul who successively ruled the country under the banner of Islam in subsequent times. One consequence of this extraordinary diversity of ethnic and cultural conditions has been that the country, which besides suffers from a complete lack of geographical unity, has failed till within the last century and a half to develop a united and independent political existence. From the expansion of the Achaemenid rule over Balkh and the Kabul valley under Cyrus (558-530 B. C.) to the accession of the founder of the Durrani dynasty in 1747 A. D., it has been the lot of Afghanistan often to be yoked to the great empires either of the east or the west or else shared between both (1).

We have stated above that Afghanistan has been

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(1) A vivid picture of the immense variety of races inhabiting Afghanistan at the close of the sixteenth century is drawn by Abul Fazl. According to his statement (*Ain-i-Akbari*, Jarett's tr., Vol. II p. 40) the Kabul province alone boasted of eleven languages spoken by as many distinct nationalities. Even at the present time about twenty distinct languages are spoken in the territory ruled by the king of Afghanistan (*Morgenstierne, Report*, p. 6). How strong the traditional connection of the Afghan country with India was thought to be at the end of the 16th century will best appear from an ancient maxim quoted by Abul Fazl (*Ibid* p. 404) to the effect that Kabul and Kandahar were the twin gates of Hindustan.

ordained by a natural destiny to be the meeting-place of races and cultures. It is now necessary to trace the channels along which this stream of contact has flowed for centuries. Nature has marked out two main routes stretching right across the country which have been from time immemorial the means of communication between India and the countries of Western Asia. In the tract just north of the head of the Kabul river a single, though lofty, mountain-ridge, that of the Hindu Kush, flanked by low ground on either side, is all that separates the valley of the Oxus from that of the Indus. This route after crossing the Indus at or near its junction with the Kabul river, ascends the basin of the latter, and after piercing the Hindu Kush, debouches upon the plain of Bactria whence it leads to Persia and the Far-West. The other route after issuing from the lower Indus plain and ascending a mountainous country leads by an easy way across the open plateau from Kandahar to Herat and thence along the southern slopes of Mount Elburz to the lands of Western Asia. Of these two routes the first has played by far the more important part in linking up India with its neighbouring countries. It has been trod not only by most of the mighty invaders of India like Darius, the great Alexander, Selencus and the Kushan king Kadphises I, but also by pious pilgrims like the illustrious Hiuen Tsang. Its course is marked by a succession of cities which have played a historic part in ancient times such as Takṣaśilā, Nagarahāra, Kapiśā, Bamiyan and Balkh. After the memorable journey of the ambassador Chang-kien to the lands of the Yueh-chi (c.126 B. C.) which first

opened to the Chinese the knowledge of the western countries, and specially after the introduction of Buddhism into China in the first century A. D., the route across the Hindu Kush became one of the main highways of communication between India and the great civilised State of Eastern Asia. Of the two main highways leading from China to the west the northern was linked up with the Hindu Kush route by way of the lake Issyk Kul, Samarkand, Sogdiana and across the Oxus, while the southern one was connected with it through Khotan, Yarkand and across the Pamirs. (1)

#### THE PRE-ACHAEMENID PERIOD

Without attempting to trace back to their source in the dim ages of antiquity the many and undoubted links binding together the two closely related branches of the Aryan family of races, the Indo-Aryan and the Iranian, it is possible to indicate their respective connections at the dawn of history with the country that nature had meant to be their common meeting-ground, the region, that

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(1) For descriptions of the above routes with accompanying maps, see *C. H. I.* p. 28; Foucher, *Notes*, pp. 263, 267 and 278; *Ibid.*, *Ancient Geography of Gandhara*; Vincent Smith's Appendix to Watters' *Yuan Chwang*, Vol. II. While on this subject, we may mention an alternative route leading through the extreme north-eastern fringe of the Iranian plateau from North-Western India to China. It ran through the ancient Gandhāra and Udyāna and after piercing the hilly country to the north of the Indus crossed the watershed between the upper valleys of the Indus and the Oxus, and thence with a sharp eastward bend connected with the great southern highway through Khotan to China. See Sir Aurel Stein's map at the end of his *Report of the Third Journey of Exploration in Central Asia*.

is, which corresponds to the modern Afghanistan and Baluchistan. The R̥ig-Veda, the earliest literary monument of the Indo-Aryans, shows that they were already acquainted with the territory now represented by Eastern Afghanistan and Northern Baluchistan. For it mentions the rivers Kubhā (with its tributary the Suvāstu), the Krumu and the Gomati, which have been identified respectively with the Kabul, the Swat, the Kurrum and the Gomal rivers of modern times (1). We have also evidence of the contact between Indo-Aryans of the Indus valley and the tribes farther west in the celebrated though obscure story of the battle of the ten kings (dāśarājña) mentioning how ten allied tribes fought unsuccessfully against Sudās, king of the Bharatas. Of these tribes the Alinas are generally supposed to have occupied the north-east of modern Kafiristan while the Bhalānases and the Pakthas have been connected respectively with the region of the Bolan pass and the ethnic name of Pakhthun applied by the modern Afghans to themselves. Evidence of another kind of contact between the Indo-Aryans of the interior and the North-Western frontier is furnished by the reference in a R̥ig-Veda hymn to the high quality of the wool of Gandhāra. The records of the connection of the Iranians with these regions, though later in date by many centuries, are ampler and fuller. The Avesta, which many scholars hold to belong as a whole to a date preceding the rise of

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(1) The Vedic Sarasvati was formerly identified on etymological grounds with the Avestan Harahvaiti (the classical Arachosia), but the present tendency of Vedic scholars is to restrict its designation to the sacred river of that name in Kurukṣetra.

the Achaemenids, has been held to contain allusions to the Hindu Kush and the land of the seven rivers. More definite references have been found in it to the countries called Baktriane, Areia, Arachosia and Drangiana by the classical writers, corresponding to the modern Balkh, Herat, Kandahar and Seistan regions (1). It would thus appear that the Iranians at the time of their first emergence on the stage of history had already acquired a firm grip over the countries on the Indian borderland which they were destined to rule for centuries.

The most important change that occurred among the Indo-Aryans in the period immediately following the R̥g-Veda was the fixation of the centre of Indo-Aryan culture in the tract between the sacred Sarasvati and Driṣadvati. It was there that took place those complex developments of the sacrificial ritual that gave this age its characteristic stamp. When the main stream of Vedic culture was thus diverted eastwards, the regions of the North-West and specially those beyond the frontier could not but sink in the general estimation of the Indo-Aryans. To the natural repulsion of a settled and civilised people for rude pastoral folk was added the spirit of exclusiveness derived from the new sentiment of ritualistic purity and rigid adherence to religious routine. We already catch an echo of this spirit of antipathy in a hymn of the Atharva Veda (V. 22) where fever is invited to go over to the Gandhāris, the Mujavants, the Aṅgas and the Magadhas who represent

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(1) For references see the article by Prof. A. V. Williams Jackson, *The Persian Dominions in Northern India down to the time of Alexander's Invasion* (C.H.I., Ch. XIV).

no doubt from the poet's point of view the peoples living on the extreme westerly as well as easterly fringe of Vedic civilisation. In the well-known contrast drawn in the Aitareya Brāhmaṇa (VIII.14) between the kings called self-rulers (svarāt) of the Nīcyas and the Apīcyas in the western quarter and the rulers of other quarters known severally as overlord (samrāt), paramount ruler (bhoja), sovereign (virāt) and king (rājan), may be detected the priestly author's sense of the difference that separated the loosely organised states of the north-western peoples and the more firmly knit monarchies of various grades in the interior. A text of Yāska's Nirukta II.2.8. which is repeated practically *verbatim* in Patañjali's Mahābhāṣya (1.1.1) mentions an instance of dialectic difference between the Kambojas and the Aryas. This shows that at the date of the first-named work (c. 500 B.C.) and afterwards the Kambojas who spoke the same language as the Indo-Aryans were not regarded as belonging to the same stock. Mention may be made, finally, of the ban imposed by the Brahmanical ritualistic works like Apastamba Śrautasūtra (XXII. 6. 18) and Baudhāyana Śrautasūtra (XXII.13 or 14) against visiting the lands of the Gandhāris, the Pāraskaras, the Kalingas, the Sauvīras and others.

#### THE ACHAEMENID CONQUEST

A new chapter opened in the history of the countries on the Indian North-Western frontier and further beyond with the eastward expansion of the empire of the Achaemenids. For the first time the outlying Iranian tribes lying on the fringe of Iranian civilisation along with their Indian



neighbours were united under a mighty Iranian empire stretching far away to the shores of the western sea. The conquests achieved by Cyrus (c.558-530 B.C.) and the greatest of his successors Darius the son of Hystaspes (c.522-486 B.C.) resulted in the addition of Bactria, Gandhāra, and "India" (generally identified with the Indus valley extending from Kalabagh to the sea) to the Achaemenid empire. The dominions won by the sword of the Persian were consolidated by the genius of Darius into a well-knit imperial system based on the division into satrapies and the levy of fixed tribute. By virtue of this system the conquerors were able to turn to their full advantage the material resources of India as well as the huge reserves of her man-power. An extraordinarily heavy tribute amounting to one-third of the bullion revenue of the Asiatic provinces was imposed upon "India" which constituted the richest and the most populous province of the Persian empire. Indian troops, both cavalry and infantry, were counted in the army of many nations which Xerxes led against Greece---the first and the only instance of an Indian expeditionary force sent to Europe on a large scale in ancient times. Indians fought shoulder to shoulder with Bactrians and Sogdians in the battle which the last representative of the House of Achaemenes fought against the Macedonian invader in 330 B. C. For the rest, the Persian system of administration left some traces of its influence upon the Indian borderland down to much later times. Examples of this kind are the Kharoṣṭhī script which remained in vogue in North-Western India down at least to the fifth century A. D. and was derived

from the Aramaic alphabet officially used by the Achaemenids in their provinces, the titles of *Kṣatrapa* and *Mahākṣatrapa* derived from the Old Persian *Kṣatrapāvan*, a few loan-words connected with writing like *dīpi* and *nipīṣṭa* of Asoka's Shahbazgarhi inscription, and a standard of coinage based on the unit of the Persian *siglos*.

Let us try to pick up in the present place the traces of Indian culture that may be discovered in the easternmost provinces of the empire of the Achaemenids. Of the satrapies of Darius bordering immediately upon the Indian frontier Ga(n)dāra i.e. Gandhāra, was, as we have seen, well-known to the Indo-Aryans from the time of the Ṛig-Veda. An early historical tradition which goes back to a date preceding the rise of Buddhism mentions the Gandhāras and the Kambojas in a stock list of sixteen great States or Mahājanapadas. A Gandhāra village produced the greatest of Sanskrit grammarians whose date is usually assigned to 350 B.C. A number of scenes in the Buddhist Jātakas are laid in the Gandhāra kingdom. The great city of Takṣaśilā is especially celebrated in these stories as an important centre to which students crowded from the distant parts of India to complete their education. An early reference to the fame of Takṣaśilā is found in the Pali Vinaya Piṭaka which tells the story of Jivaka who proceeded from Magadha to learn medicine from a "world-renowned physician" of Takṣaśilā and afterwards rose to be the physician of king Ajātaśatru and the Buddhist fraternity.

The land of Gandhāra, however, was, after all, the threshold for entry into India from the North-West. The

evidence of cultural or other contact of the lands further afield with the centres of Indian civilisation in the interior, is, on the other hand, remarkably scanty. Apart from Gandhāra the Persian satrapies immediately bordering on the Indian frontier comprised Thatagu with which were associated the Dadikai and the Aparytai, Saka with which were connected the Kaspioi, and Maka. Of these names the Dadikai are generally identified with the Dards who are well-known to the Mahābhārata and other Sanskrit works under the name of Daradas. The title Kaspioi has been emended by Dr. F. W. Thomas into Kapisai. Kāpīśī is certainly known to Pāṇini who derives therefrom (IV. 2. 99) the derivative *kāpīśāyana* meaning according to the Kāśikā commentary the grapes and the grape-wine of Kāpīśī. The latter is also referred to by Kauṭilya under the same designation in his Arthaśāstra (II. 25.). The Śakas are mentioned thus early in the Gaṇapāṭha under the *gaṇas*—Kamboja and Śaṇḍika (Pāṇ. III 1.35 and IV 3.92) and doubtfully under the *gaṇas* Garga and Prajñā (Pāṇ. IV 1.105 and V. 4.38). The territorial names Thatagu and Maka are unknown to Indian literature. On the other hand the name Kamboja which has not been definitely traced in the Persian inscriptions is known to Pāṇini (IV. 1.175) as the designation both of a kingdom and of a Kṣatriya tribe. In the Arthaśāstra of Kauṭilya (XI) the *saṃghas* consisting of the Kṣatriya *śreṇīs* etc. of the Kambojas, the Surāṣṭras and the like are distinguished from another type of *saṃghas* like the Licchavis and the Mallas who used the title of king. Evidently the Kambojas, while still ranking as Kṣatriyas,

had lost their monarchic constitution in the interval between Pāṇini and the author of the Arthaśāstra. In the time of Asoka the Kambojas along with the Gandhāras and Yonas were certainly regarded as border peoples included within the Maurya sphere of influence. (6)

#### THE EXPEDITION OF ALEXANDER OF MACEDON.

It is not necessary to describe here at any length the marvellous campaign of Alexander in the most easterly provinces of the Achaemenid empire which followed closely upon his crushing victory over the ill-fated Darius III at the memorable field of Arbela. Suffice it to say that the victor secured his hold over his new conquests by his continuance of the Persian system of satrapies and his introduction of the Hellenic system of colonisation. Among the more prominent of such colonies may be mentioned Alexandria under the Caucasus (represented by the modern Charikar to the north of Kabul) and Nicaea (situated somewhere between Charikar and the Kabul river). The narratives of Alexander's campaign written by later authors on the basis of reports of his officers throw a welcome light upon the condition of Indian culture in the highlands beyond the Indus at this time. From them we learn about the existence of an Indian chief called Sisykottos (Śaśigupta) who was perhaps ruler of a small principality in the Hindukush and of Indian tribes called

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(6) For references to the Bāhlikas (or Bāhīs) in the Indian literature of this period, see Pāṇ. V. 3.117 and Kātyāyana's Vārttika to *Ibid.*, IV. 2.99.

Aspasioi and Assakenoi (Assakas) who occupied the rough and inhospitable hilly country watered by the rivers Kunar, Panjkora and Swat of our own times. The Greek records inform us at the same time of a number of Indian place-names belonging to the tract of country west of the Indus. Such are the rivers Souastos and Gouraios identified respectively with the Suvāstu and the Gaurī, and the town Peukelaotis which is a Greek transliteration of the Prakrit form of the Sanskrit Puṣkarāvati. The continued existence of Indian place-names in this region is attested for the second century after Christ by the geographer Ptolemy who mentions the district of Souastene below the sources of the Souastos and that of Goryaia below the Lambatai. Both the Suvāstu and the Gaurī, it may be mentioned, occur in juxtaposition in a long list of river-names in the Mahābhārata (VI 9.333).

#### A CENTURY OF HINDU IMPERIALISM

The premature death of Alexander sounded the death-knell of Macedonian rule in the Punjab and Sind which were annexed by Chandragupta Maurya to his newly founded empire. The subsequent attempt of Seleucus the lord of Western Asia to emulate the exploits of the great Macedonian ended only in his surrender of the provinces of Paropanisadai, Areia and Arachosia to his Indian rival. From this political contact of the highlands beyond the Indus with a great Hindu empire of the interior there resulted a substantial accession of Indian cultural influences into the country. The city of Takṣaśīlā which occupied a most important strategic position on the high-

way from North-Western India to the western lands was selected by the Mauryas as the head-quarters of one of their viceroyalties which extended no doubt to the frontier of the Hindu Kush. When Asoka in the thirteenth year of this coronation appointed his new officers called Dharma-mahāmātras who "did not exist for a long time previously," he sent them among other places to the territories of the Yavanas, the Kambojas and the Gandhāras in the upper valley of the Indus and its western tributaries. The result of this missionary zeal was summed up by himself when he claimed to have achieved the conquest through Dharma not only in the adjoining independent states, but "likewise here also in the king's dominions among the Yavanas, and Kambojas" and the rest. The evidence of the Ceylonese chronicles which supplements that of the Asokan inscriptions shows that the thera Majjhantika arrived with a band of monks to preach Buddhism in Kashmir and Gandhāra which thenceforth, according to the pious optimism of the chronicler, shone with yellow robes and prized above all "the three things." Whether the missionary efforts of the great Maurya and the worthy members of the Saṃgha were further extended to the line of the Hindu Kush, and if so, with what success, it is impossible to say, for we have only the uncorroborated testimony of Hiuen Tsang in the seventh century A.D. to the effect that Asoka built stūpas at Kapiśā.

#### THE RULE OF THE BACTRIAN AND THE INDO-GREEK KINGS

The removal of the strong arm of Asoka was the signal for disintegration of the mighty empire of the

Mauryas. While the descendants of the great Maurya, as is generally supposed, divided between themselves the provinces of northern India, the provinces on the North-Western frontier appear to have been torn from their grasp not long afterwards. By 206 B. C. when hardly a quarter of a century had elapsed from the death of Asoka the tract to the south of the Hindu Kush was in possession of Sophagasenas (Subhagasena) "king of the Indians", who followed the traditional policy of the Mauryas by concluding a treaty with the court of Syria which was renewed in the year above-mentioned. The weakening of the military defences on the North-western frontier let loose, as it has often done since, a swarm of invaders on the rich plains of northern India. Between the years 206 and 190 B. C. Euthydemus, the Greek king of Bactria, and his more famous son Demetrios styled "king of the Indians" conquered the Kabul valley along with Arachosia and the Panjab. Not long afterwards a rival called Eukratides obtained possession not only of Bactria but also of Kāpiśi and Gandhāra. From that time till the extinction of Greek dominion in this region these two rival houses divided between themselves the rule of the tract of country extending from the Oxus to the Eastern Panjab.

Let us try to discover the traces, if any, of Indian cultural influences in the countries ruled by the Bactrian and Indo-Greek kings during the period of their sovereignty. The numismatic evidence which is practically the only available source for the history of these kings shows the continuance of Indian culture as far north



as the Hindu Kush. It is indeed significant that while the early kings of Bactria issued coins of a purely Greek type, their successors from the time of Demetrios onwards found it necessary frequently to issue bilingual types of coins which bear the Greek legend on the obverse and its translation in the Indian Prakrit and the Kharoṣṭhī script on the reverse. Two of the Indo-Greek kings Pantaleon and Agathokles issued coins of the distinctive Indian square shape and bearing the Prakrit legend in the equally distinctive Indian Brāhmī character : it is worthy of note that the rule of these kings has been judged from the *provenance* of their coins to have extended over Paropanisadai and Arachosā. A type of copper coins issued by Eukratides which bear on the obverse the legend *Basilcus Megalou Eukratidou* in the Greek script has on the reverse the legend *kārisiye nagaradevatā* in the Khāroṣṭhī script. This shows that the city of Kapiśā, famous both in the preceding and in subsequent times, was a place of Prakrit speech at this time.

#### THE RULE OF THE INDO-SCYTHIANS AND THE INDO-PARTHIANS

It was about the year 135 B.C. that the Sakas, driven from their homes on the northern bank of the Oxus by pressure of the Yueh-chi, overran the Greek kingdom of Bactria. Expelled from their new settlements by their relentless pursuers they flung themselves upon the Empire of Parthia, and it was not till the reign of the great Parthian sovereign Mithridates II (123-88 B.C.) that they were finally worsted in the struggle. Thus by a fortunate accident the Greek kingdoms of the upper

Kabul valley obtained a new lease of life extending over almost a century. The first Indo-Scythian king known to history is the 'king of kings' Maues (Moga) who conquered the famous cities of Puṣkarāvati and Takṣaśīlā from Greek princes and thus drove a wedge between the Greek kingdoms of the upper Kabul valley and those of the eastern Punjab. Shortly after this time the dynasty of the Parthian Vonones came into possession of the provinces of Arachosia (Kandahar) and Drangiana (Seistan). From the Scythian and the Parthian kings the sceptre of north-western India passed into the hands of the famous dynasty of the Kushans. About 50 A.D. Kadphises I chief of the Kushans who had united the other clans of the Yueh-chi under his rule crossed the Hindu Kush and conquered the districts of Kabul and Kandahar then ruled apparently by the Parthians. His able son and successor Kadphises II further extended the limits of his dominions by the conquest of Gandhāra and the Indus basin together with the Gangetic valley as far east as Benares. In the reign of Kanishka the Kushan empire reached its highest extent comprising in addition Kashmir and the territories of Kashgar, Yarkand and Khotan in Eastern Turkestan.

With the period of the Scytho-Parthian and especially Kushan rule commenced the great age of expansion of Indian Buddhism not only in the highlands to the west of the Indus but also in Central and Eastern Asia. The Indian borderlands were now fulfilling more than ever the *role* that destiny had assigned them of uniting different streams of culture both of the East and of

the West. A remarkable instance of this cultural blend is the strange medley of deities Indian, Zoroastrian and Hellenic, figured side by side on the coin-types of Kanishka and Havishka. Another and a more famous instance is the rise of the school of art aptly designated as the Graeco-Buddhist school which expressed the ideas of Buddhism in forms of Hellenistic art. Nevertheless the Indian cultural element proved from the first to be one of the strongest of the competing forces, and it struck so deep a root in the soil that it afterwards grew and flourished with a wonderful vitality while its rivals one by one dropped from the scene. What concerns us for our present purpose is to notice the part which foreigners played in the outward diffusion of Buddhism. Already before the beginning of the Christian era Buddhism had been carried to the valley of the Oxus, for a Chinese ambassador is recorded to have sent home certain Buddhist texts in 2 B. C. from the country of the Yueh-chi. According to a less authentic tradition the first two Indian missionaries to reach China, Kāśyapa Mātāṅga and Dharmaratna, were working in the Yueh-chi country (perhaps corresponding at that time to modern Afghanistan) before their arrival in North-Western China in 68 A. D. The most eminent king of the Yueh-chi or Kushan dynasty, Kanishka, fell under the spell of Buddhism, and he distinguished himself as much by his patronage of Vasumitra and Aśvaghōṣa as by his construction of *stūpas* and *vihāras*. The inscriptions on relic caskets and earthen jars that have been recovered from the ruins of Buddhist *stūpas* in the

Afghan country have preserved the names of pious donors of Buddhist foundations. Among such names are included those of the Greek Theodoros (described as a meridarch or district officer), Horamurta (mentioned as the satrap of Vespasi), an unnamed son of the satrap of Kāpiśī who was the son of the satrap Granafaka, Rāhula (described as a monk from Vanāyu) and Vagra Marega, son of Kamaguli. It appears from this list that not only humble monks and laymen but men of high official standing belonging to non-Indian races accepted the teachings of Buddhism (1).

This outward diffusion of Buddhism was accompanied by a corresponding propagation of Indian languages written in the current Indian scripts of the time. We know how the sands of Central Asia have yielded to the labours of modern explorers both Sanskrit manuscripts written in the Gupta script and its local derivatives as well as Indian Prakrit documents written in Kharoṣṭhī. Neither the climate nor the historical development of Afghanistan has been so favourable to the preservation of the ancient records. But it may be observed that birch-bark manuscripts were found along with other relics inside the stūpas of the upper Kabul valley by their first Western explorer. The inscriptions of the early

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(1) On Kanishka's buildings see Watters, *Yuan Chwang* Vol. 1, pp. 122, 124, 147; *Rājatarāṅgi* I 168-171, etc. For the references in Kharoṣṭhī inscriptions, see the inscriptions Nos. 36, 37, 65-84, 93 in N. G. Majumdar's list of Kharoṣṭhī inscriptions (J. A. S. B. 1924). A general account of the role of the Iranians in the diffusion of cultures in Central and Eastern Asia occurs in Pelliot, *Les Influences iraniennes en Asie Centrale et en Extrême-Orient*, 1912.

centuries of the Christian era which have been before mentioned are written in an Indian Prakrit which is fundamentally the same as the language of the Kharoṣṭhī documents of the Khotan region. The conjoint evidence of the well-known Kharoṣṭhī manuscript of the Dharma-pada and of a canonical citation in a Kharoṣṭhī inscription from the Kurram valley has been held to prove the existence of a Buddhist canonical literature, perhaps of the Sarvāstivādin school, written in the Prakrit of the Kharoṣṭhī inscriptions. (1)

One striking consequence of this cultural development was that the north-western frontier of India tended to be pushed further beyond the Indus which was the old boundary. In the time of the Achaemenid emperors, as we have seen, the satrapy of "India" was reckoned as distinct from that of Gandhāra corresponding to the region of Peshawar and the territory immediately to its east. At a later period Strabo (64 B. C.-19 A. D.) and Arrian (2nd century A. D.) who drew their accounts from Alexander's companions and from Megasthenes described the Indus as the western boundary of India. But in the second century A. D. we find Ptolemy beginning his general description of "India within the Ganges" with the statement that it was "bounded on the west by the Paropanisadai and Arachosia and Gedrosia along their eastern sides." Ptolemy accordingly prefaced his list of territories and cities within this region with the

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(1) See the abstract of Prof. Sten Konow's paper, *Sprachliche und literarische Einzelheiten in die Kharoṣṭhī inschriften.*, Z. D. M. G. (1926) VI 1, pp. lxx-lxxi

mention of Lambatai (or Lambagai) that is, the people of Lampāka (2). It is interesting to notice that precisely the same boundary is indicated for India in the west by Hiuen Tsang in the second quarter of the seventh century. For we are told in connection with the pilgrim's account of his journey, "From Ki-pin the pilgrim continued his journey going east above 600 li through a very mountainous region; then crossing a black range he entered the north of India and arrived in the Lan-po country". (3) Even in the ninth century Nagarahāra could be described from the point of view of a native of that country as the ornament of Uttarāpatha. (4)

#### THE BUDDHIST MONUMENTS OF AFGHANISTAN

The most majestic memorials of this expansion of Indian culture in the tableland to the west of the Indus are undoubtedly the Buddhist monuments of Afghanistan. These monuments at the present time may be traced principally along the track of the great highway that connected north-western India along the Kabul valley and across the Hindu Kush with Western and Central Asia. In the plain of Jelalabad (the old Nagarahāra) the ruins of *stūpas* and monasteries are scattered in such extraordinary profusion that according to an eminent scholar and explorer a century of exploration has not taken away the

(2) See MacCrindle, *Ancient India as described by Ptolemy*, pp. 33, 104.

(3) Watters, *Yuen Chwang*, Vol. I p. 180.

(4) See the Ghosrāwān inscription of the time of Devapāla I. A. Vol XVII. pp. 307-312.

need for beginning the task afresh. At Hadda, five miles south of Jelalabad, which is the site of the famous shrine of Buddha's skull-bone, there exist numbers of ruined monuments containing exceptionally fine sculptures of the Gandhāra school. In the Kohistan of Kabul which lay off the main track of early times the remains of a Buddhist city have been traced on the site of three vast amphitheatres now called the Seb Topān, the Kamari and Shevaki. In the charming valley of Kapiśā have been definitely located the ruins of the famous monastery built by the Chinese hostages of the Emperor Kanishka, while other monasteries and *stūpas* mentioned by Hiuen Tsang have been tentatively identified with existing ruins. At Bamiyan nestled beneath the 'snowy mountains' of the Hindu Kush, or more correctly enclosed between the Hindu Kush and the Koh-i-Baba, there still exist in defiance of the ravages of time and of man the rock-cut grottos and shrines with their far-famed colossal images of Buddha which have extorted the interest, if not the admiration, of successive visitors from the time of Hiuen Tsang. Some idea of the extent of these caves may be formed from the fact that Abul Fazl writing at the end of the seventeenth century estimated their number at twelve thousand. Some of these caves were meant for the residence of monks, others with a niche at their inner end were no doubt sanctuaries in which the images of Buddhas and Bodhisatvas were enshrined, and there were besides niches containing those images. The colossal images consist of two standing figures and three seated figures of the Buddha. Early



observers usually have noticed only the first two images and one of the last which they quaintly described as the figures of a man, a woman, and a child. Both the figures first mentioned are coated with stucco which was originally gilt so much so that Hiuen Tsang held the lesser of them to be made of bronze. The paintings which originally decorated the niches of these statues as well as the facade of the grottos have disappeared for the most part. But some precious fragments from the niches of the colossal Buddhas that have fortunately survived the wreck of time have very recently been made available to us in coloured reproductions by the energy and enterprize of the French archaeological delegation in Afghanistan. These paintings, as we now see, represent figures of genii accompanied by their wives with plates of offerings in their hands, of Buddhas and Bodhisattvas, of pious donors and the like. One group is of especial interest as representing the Iranian lunar deity mounted upon a chariot drawn by horses. The Bamiyan paintings are of high importance as forming the connecting link between the art of Ajanta and the Buddhist pictorial art of Central Asia. Among other antiquities of Bamiyan mention may be made of the curious piece of natural formation supposed by the Moslem inhabitants to represent a dragon (Azhdaha) killed by the Caliph Ali, which many scholars identified, wrongly as it now appears, with a famous Parinirvāṇa image of Buddha seen by Hiuen Tsang in the same locality. Beyond Bamiyan on the ancient site of Balkh and in the region of Afghan Turkestan ruins of *stūpas*

and other antiquities have recently been brought to light by the labours of the distinguished archaeologist M. Foucher. (1)

Notwithstanding the extent and variety of the Buddhist religious edifices of Afghanistan, they may be broadly divided under two principal heads, the *stūpa* and the *vihāra*, the latter term meaning the residence of the monks as well as the shrine of the gods. The form of the *stūpa* ranges, as elsewhere, from the primitive model of a dome raised upon a circular basement to more elaborate and complex types in which the base is

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(1) For descriptions of the Buddhist antiquities of Afghanistan illustrated with plates see H. H. Hayden, *Notes on some Monuments in Afghanistan*, Mem. A. S. B. Vol. II (1911); Oskar von Niedermayer and Ernst Diez, *Afghanistan* (1924). For locations of the older sites illustrated with a general map of Afghanistan and separate maps of Bamiyan and Kapiśā, see Foucher, *Notes sur l'itinéraire de Hiouen-Tsang en Afghanistan* (*Études Asiatiques* I, pp. 257-284). All older publications on Bamiyan antiquities are now superseded by the publication of the work of M. and Mme. Godard and J. Hackin, *Les Antiquités bouddhiques de Bāmiyān*, Paris 1928 (with 48 illustrations). For recent explorations of the Buddhist antiquities at Balkh and at Hulsak in Afghan Turkestan, see Foucher's reports in B. E. F. E.-O., July-December 1924, and J. A., July-September 1924. A short account based chiefly upon a brief report of M. and Mme. Godard in connexion with a recent exhibition of antiquities from Afghanistan and China at the Musée Guimet appeared in the *Modern Review*, February 1927, under the title *Buddhist Remains in Afghanistan*. Among older authorities on the archaeology of Afghanistan the most important is H. H. Wilson, *Ariana Antiqua* (London 1841) containing a memoir from the pen of Charles Masson, and numerous illustrations. The commonly accepted identification of the Azhdaha of Bamiyan with the Parinirvāṇa image of Buddha is rejected by Pelliot (see the additional note by Paul Pelliot in Godard and Hackin, op. cit. p. 63). For Abul Fazl's account of the Bamiyan caves, see Ain-i-Akhbari (Jarett's trans., Vol. II p. 409).

multiplied into two or more parts for the purpose of producing the effect of superior elevation. In many, if not most, of the existing *stūpas* of the Afghan country the drum is adorned with a belt of ornamental moulding consisting of a succession of arches resting upon pilasters or else of a series of pilasters alone. Many of the *stūpas*, when opened by their first Western explorer, yielded relic caskets which were made either of gold or of silver and often encrusted with gems. Besides the *stūpas* detached pillars of the type existing at Sanchi and Sarnath are found among the Buddhist sites of Afghanistan. Among the group of *stūpas* in the south-east of Kabul, e. g., there still exist two pillars, one of which (called the *Minār Chakrī* or the Wheel Minar) may have originally been surmounted by the figure of a wheel, like the famous lion pillar at Sarnath. The Buddhist *vihāras* are usually carved in the scarps of rocks at the foot of which stand the *stūpas*. By far the most famous of them is the group of cave-shrines at Bamiyan mentioned above, but other groups of such caves exist also in the plain of Jelalabad and the Kabul region (1).

#### THE IRRUPTION OF THE EPHTHALITES (WHITE HUNS)

##### AND ITS CONSEQUENCES.

The wonderful expansion of Buddhism in the Indian borderlands which has been described in the foregoing

1. For the above, see principally Masson's Memoir in Wilson, *op. cit.* The *Minār Chakrī* is beautifully illustrated by Niedermayer and Diez (Pl. 52). The various forms of *stūpa* in vogue in the Gandhāra school are described by Foucher, *L'Art Gréco-Bouddhique*, I. pp. 65-80.

paragraphs produced results of incalculable advantage to those tracts. At the time of Fa-hien's visit Udyāna, Gandhāra and Nagarāhāra were in a flourishing condition and boasted of numbers of rich Buddhist convents. In the eyes of Buddhist pilgrims from outside, these territories ranked as a second holy land almost comparable to Magadha, as they contained the four great shrines ornamented with gold and silver commemorating four acts of sacrifice on the part of the Bodhisattva. No wonder, then, that in a Buddhist work formerly attributed to Aśvaghoṣa Gandhāra could be explained without impropriety as a synonym for good conduct by a little bit of fanciful etymology (1). But a great catastrophe overtook these regions in the latter part of the fifth and the first half of the sixth centuries. The Ephthalites or White Huns, a fiercenomadic horde from Central Asia, migrated westwards and southwards in search of new homes and hurled themselves against Persia and India. The Ephthalite chief Toramāpa who led his host into India (c. 490 A. D.) made himself the paramount sovereign of Central India. He bequeathed his throne to his infamous son Mihiragula whose memory has been branded in the Kashmir chronicle as the reputed slayer of three *koṭis* of men (*trikoṭihā*) (2). A vivid picture of these barbarians at the height of their power is drawn by Song-yun a Chinese ambassador of the

1. See the *Sūtrāśāstrakāra*. Fr. tr. by Huber, p. 8. Prof. Lüders has since found the correct name of the work to be the *Kalpanā-maṅḍitikā*, and that of its author to be Kumāralāta: See the Introduction to his work, *Das Kalpanāmaṅḍitikā des Kumāralāta*. For the Brahmanical censure of Gandhāra and Vāhika (the Panjab), see *Mahābhārata*, VIII 40 f.

2. *Rājatarangīnī*, I 310.

great Wu dynasty who visited their head-quarters at Bamiyan between 518 and 522 A. D. According to his account more than forty countries offered homage to the Ephthalites whose capital was adorned with many temples and pagodas ornamented with gold. They had, however, no faith in Buddha and used to kill living beings. The same lack of faith prevailed in Shen-mi (Kafiristan) (3). The destructive fury of the White Huns was felt specially in the unhappy land of Gandhāra. In the latter part of the fifth century Gandhāra was still a noted centre of learning, for it produced two of the greatest scholars of Mahāyāna Buddhism, namely, Asaṅga and his brother Vasubandhu. At Udyāna even at the time of Song-yun's visit the law of the Buddha was honoured as before, and there was a great number of temples and *stūpas*; the reigning king constantly strove after perfection according to the Buddhist ideas and gave himself up to constant abstinence. But Mihiragula devastated the Buddhist shrines of Gandhāra with a ruthlessness which gave the death-blow to its far-famed school of art.

#### THE RULE OF THE WESTERN TURKS AND ITS CONSEQUENCES.

In the middle of the 6th century another revolution took place in the shifting politics of Central Asia. The Turks called T'ou-kiu by the Chinese were originally bondsmen of a neighbouring tribe called the Joan-Joan in a distant corner of Mongolia. But in the beginning of the 6th century they threw off the yoke of their hated masters and emerged into political importance. In course of time

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3. See Chavannes, *Voyage de Song-yun dans l'Udyāna et le Gandhāra*, B. E. F. E.-O., 1903.

they split up into two sections namely the Northern and the Western Turks. Between 563 and 567 A. D. the Western Turks joined hands with the famous Sassanide king of Persia Khusru Anushirvan to destroy the empire of the White Huns. For a short time the Persians held Balkh and the adjoining territories, but by the end of the 6th century the Western Turks gained the mastery and obtained possession of all the dominions of the Huns to the south of the Hindu Kush. At the time of Hiu-en-Tsang's visit in 630 A. D. the country of Tu-ho-lo (Tokhāra), extending according to the pilgrim from the Karakoram to Persia and from the celebrated defile of the Iron Gates to the Hindu Kush, was divided into twenty-seven states all subject to the Turks. A Turkish king reigned even in the country round the modern Hupian (or Opian) to the south of the Hindu Kush (1).

The rule of the Western Turks which helped to bring the four great civilisations of the time, the Byzantine, the Persian, the Indian and the Chinese, into mutual contact was attended with the happiest results for the diffusion of cultures. It was through their dominions that Zoroastrianism as well as Nesterian Christianity passed into China from the West. Buddhism specially found in the Turkish war-lords a warm champion of its cause. In 626 Shi-hu-kagan, the supreme chief of the Turks, gave a warm welcome to the Indian Buddhist monk Prabhākaramitra and his companions on their way to China. Four years afterwards he extended the same welcome to the illustrious Hiu-en-Tsang to whom he gave subsequently the safe

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1. Watters. *Yuan Ching*, Vol. II p. 266.

conduct for his journey to India (1). Wu-kung who visited Kashmir and Gandhāra between 759 and 764 A. D. was shown two temples in Kashmir and two other temples in Gandhāra which were said to have been built by a Turkish king, his queen and his son (2).

It is possible to glean a general account of the state of Indian culture in the highlands to the west of the Indus at this period from the vivid account of Hiuen-Tsang supplemented by notices of other Chinese writers in the same and following centuries. Buddhism, it appears, was known in all these regions and in some parts it flourished exceedingly. In the Kunduz country the majority of the people were Buddhists. The country of Balkh contained above one hundred monasteries with more than 3000 monks. Its glory was the great Nava-vihāra or Nava-saṅghārāma reputed to possess the washing basin, a tooth and a broom of Buddha and enjoying a unique reputation as the greatest centre of Buddhist learning to the north of the Hindu Kush. It contained besides two *stūpas* which pious credulity assigned to the time of Kāśyapa Buddha. An interesting side-light is thrown upon the Indian connections of Balkh by the pilgrim's statement that its capital was known as little Rājagṛiha no doubt after the famous ancient capita! of Magadha bearing that name. In the Gaz country to the south of Balkh there were more than ten monasteries with three hundred brethren of the Sarvāstivādin school. The district of Bamiyan contained

1. See Chavannes, *Documents sur les Turcs occidentaux*, pp. 198, 300-301.

2. See Chavannes-Lévi, *Les Itinéraires d'U-kung*, J. A. 1895.



some tens of Buddhist monasteries with several thousands of brethren of the Lokottaravādin school. The two rock-cut images of the Buddha together with an equally colossal Parinirvāṇa Buddha were already in existence and excited the interest of the Chinese pilgrim. The king of Bamiyan, we are further told, held a quinquennial assembly (was it inspired by the memorable example of the contemporary Hindu emperor Harṣavardhana ?) at which he was wont to give away all his possessions to the monks, his officials afterwards redeeming the valuables from them. Kapiśā, renowned for its horses and its saffron, boasted of above one hundred monasteries tenanted by six thousand brethren, chiefly Mahāyānists; the king, who exercised authority over Lampāka, Nagarahāra and Gandhāra as well, was reputed to be a Kṣatriya and was a zealous Buddhist. Lampāka had above ten monasteries with monks chiefly Mahāyānists. Mahāyāna Buddhism also flourished in the country of Jāguḍa noted for its saffron and asafoetida, where the king was a true believer in Buddha. The Turkish king of the country round Hupian was a zealous follower of Buddhism (1).

In the above, it will be noticed, Mahāyāna Buddhism is described as flourishing in certain parts of the country

1. See Watters, *Yuan-chiung* Vol. 1, pp. 102-130, 181-198; Vol. II, pp. 264-270. Lampāka is well known to Sanskrit literature (See e. g. Mahābh. VII 122. Mārkaṇḍeyapurāṇa LVII 40. Hemachandra's *Abhidhānācintāmaṇi* IV 26). In the catalogue of Yākṣas in the *Mahāmāyūrī*, a Yākṣa called Kalahapriya is said to be the tutelary divinity of Lampāka. Jāguḍa occurs in Mbh. III. 21, 24-26 in a list of peoples to the west of the Indus. For Chinese notices of its products see Berthold Laufer, *Sino-India*, Index s. v. Jāguḍa.

immediately bordering on the North-Western frontier. The prevalence of the Mahāyāna cults in these regions is attested by other documents of a somewhat later period. The *Mitrasampūta-Sūtra* (a Sanskrit work translated into Chinese by Narendrayaśas between 589 and 618 A. D.) contains a list of places sanctified by the presence of Bodhisattvas. Among these are included Gandhāra where dwells Ta-li-sha-me-ju-lo (Darsanajñamūla) muni, and Ki-pin (Kashmir or Kapiśā) where dwells Kong-(kong)-mo-ni-kiu (Kumkuma) muni. The *Hevajra-Tantra* which belongs to a somewhat later date mentions a list of Bodhisattva *pīthas* and *upapīthas* among which is included Lampāka (1). In keeping with this point may be mentioned the fact that a Śramaṇa of Lan-po (Lampāka) is recorded as translating a Sanskrit work on magical incantations (*dhāraṇīs*) into Chinese (2).

The picture of the state of Buddhism that is presented to us in the foregoing paragraphs implies a close contact between the countries beyond the Indus and the great centres of Buddhism in Eastern India. Direct testimony to this effect is furnished by the biographical accounts of about 50 missionaries from the pen of the celebrated I-tsing. We thus learn how a native of the K'ang country (Samarkand) entered India in the 7th century in the train of a Chinese ambassador and performed a pilgrimage to Mahābodhi. The people of Tokharistan built at an unknown place in eastern India

(1) See the quotations in the English tr. of Sylvain Lévi's article on *Kharoṣṭhā and Kharoṣṭhī* in I. A. 1906 pp. 4, 20-21.

(2) See Watters, *Yuan-chowng*, Vol. I p. 182.

a temple for the accommodation of pilgrims from their own country. In I-tsing's time it was distinguished for its wealth and the excellent regulation of its affairs. A temple of the country of Kapiśā also existed at Mahābodhi where pilgrims from the North were accommodated on their visit to the holy place (1).

The invaluable evidence of Hiuen Tsang is also important as showing how non-Buddhistic Indian faiths found their way at this period into the highlands of Afghanistan. An early evidence of the prevalence of the Śaiva cult in Gandhāra is provided by a Kharoṣṭhī inscription (2) of the reign of Mahārāja Guṣaṣa (Kadphises II) recording a gift of money at a temple of Śiva constructed by Moika, son of Urumuja. The hold of Śaivism over the foreign settlers is likewise proved by certain coin-types of Kadphises II and Vāsudeva figuring the god Śiva on the reverse. Mihiragula himself seems to have combined with his fanatical zeal against Buddhism a pious regard for Śaivism which displayed itself in the construction of Śivite edifices at Śrīnagara, the capital of Kashmir (3). No wonder, then, that Hiuen Tsang found at Kapiśā some tens of "deva temples" and "above one thousand professed sectarians, Digambaras,

(1) See *Les Religieux éminents qui allèrent chercher la loi dans les pays d'occident, par I-tsing*. Trad. Chavannes. I-tsing was born in 634, performed his travels from 671 to 695 and died in 713 A. D. It may be observed in this connection that Hiuen-Tsang mentions a "saffron tope" built at Mahābodhi by certain merchants of the Jāguda country (Watters, *Yuan Chwang*, Vol. II p. 125).

(2) No. 47 in Majumdar's list, *op. cit.*

(3) See Rājatarāngiṇī 1.306. One type of coins of Mihiragula has the figure of a bull with a corresponding legend on the reverse (Vincent Smith's *Catalogue*, p. 226).

Pāśupatas and "those who wear wreaths of skulls as head-ornaments". Numbers of "deva-temples" also existed in his time at Lampāka, Nagarahāra, Jāguḍa and even in the distant Andarāb (1) It may be mentioned in this connection that the Pāśupatas otherwise called Māheśvaras were a well-known Śivite sect of ancient times one of whose main strongholds in Hiuen Tsang's time was Benares. The wearers of skulls no doubt have to be identified with a more reprehensible sect of the same persuasion known to Indian literature under the names of Kāpālika and Kālamukha (2)

#### THE ONSLAUGHT OF ISLAM AND ITS CONSEQUENCES— THE FIRST PHASE.

About the middle of the seventh century while Hiuen Tsang was still sojourneying among the lands and people of India came the first shock of contact between the arms of Islam and the highlands immediately to the west of the Indus. The swift and dramatic advance of the Saracen power in the half century following the flight of the Prophet to Medina is one of the enigmas of history. In an incredibly short time Syria, Egypt, Mesopotamia and above all Persia succumbed to the irresistible march of the invaders. At this critical time the Western Turks who had dominated the country to the south of the Oxus were overthrown by an invasion of the Chinese. But the new conquerors were deprived not long afterwards of their control over the western lands by a crushing

(1) See Watters, *Yuan Chwang*, Vol. 1 pp. 123, 181, 183, Vol. II pp. 265, 269.

(2) See Sir R. G. Bhandarkar, *Vaiṣṇavism*, pp. 127-128.

defeat that they suffered at the hands of the Tibetans. The Arabs were not slow to take advantage of the prevailing confusion. Already in the time of the Caliph Othman (644-656 A. D.) an Arab force had invaded the territory of Afghanistan from the south and had occupied Ghazni, Kabul and other places. Not long afterwards (663-664 A. D.) another Arab army invaded Balkh from the north and destroyed the famous Navavihāra monastery, while a fresh expedition under Qutaiba bin Muslim resulted in the conversion of Balkh to the faith of Islam. At the time of its destruction the Navavihāra monastery contained according to the accounts of later Arab writers three hundred cells grouped round a central pagoda, while its hereditary priest called the *Barmek* was in possession of an estate amounting to seven hundred and forty square miles. After the catastrophic overthrow of Buddhism the Barmek accepted the religion of his conquerors and his sons afterwards rose to the highest offices under the famous Harun-ar-Rashid. The eighth century opened with still greater disasters for the cause of Indian culture in its outposts to the west of the Indus. While an Arab general Qutaiba carried the victorious arms of Islam into Transoxiana, the famous general Muhammad bin Qasim led his army across Balochistan and conquered the lower Indus valley as far north as Multan. The doom of the Indian or Indianised peoples caught as they were between the two great blocks of Moslem territory was from that time practically sealed. In the time of the Caliph al-Mansur (744-775 A.D.), or possibly that of his successor, the princes of Bamiyan bearing the title of *Šāher* accepted the teaching

of Islam. Finally an Arab invasion in the time of Ma'mun the last of the great Caliphs of the house of Abbas (813-833 A. D.) resulted in the conversion of Kabul.

After such deep wounds inflicted by the triumphant sword of Islam it would seem that the influences of Indian culture were all but obliterated in the tracts beyond the Indus. Yet, strangely enough, such was not the case. Wu-kung who arrived at Ki-pin (Kapiśā) in the train of a Chinese embassy and reached Gandhāra in 753 A. D. mentions two Buddhist monasteries at Udyāna called Sukhāvati and Padmāvati. He also recorded that there was not the slightest difference between what he said and what was said by Hiuen Tsang (1). The Chinese Buddhist literature has preserved the name of a Śramaṇa of Kubhā (Kabul) called Prajñā who translated certain Buddhist texts into Chinese between 785 and 810 A. D. (2). Mention may be made, lastly, of a Pāla inscription of the ninth century which commemorates the achievements of Viradeva a distinguished Buddhist monk belonging to a Brāhmaṇa family of Nagarahāra who made a pilgrimage to Mahābodhi and was afterwards appointed head of the Nālandā monastery by Devapāla the reigning king of Bengal (3)

#### RENEWED AGGRESSION OF ISLAM AND FINAL COLLAPSE OF INDIAN CULTURE IN AFGHANISTAN

By the middle of the ninth century the great empire of the Abbaside Caliphs of Bagdad had tottered to its fall.

(1) See Chavannes-Lévi, *Itinéraire d' Ou-Kong*, J. A. 1895.

(2) See Buniyo Nanjio's Catalogue, No. 156.

(3) See the Ghosrūwān inscription of the time of Devapāla, I. A. Vol. XVII pp. 307-312.

Out of its ruins arose new dynasties mainly of Turkish and Persian stocks to some of which destiny assigned the task of sweeping away the last remnants of Indian rule in the highlands of Afghanistan. Yakub the son of Lais who founded the Soffaride dynasty of Persia completed the annexation of Balkh, Bamiyan and Kabul to the dominion of Islam (870-871 A. D.). Kabul at this time was ruled by a king called Kabul Shah by the invaders, who is described as a Turk by race and a Buddhist by religion and who doubtless belonged to the so-called dynasty of Turkish Shāhiyas. It was about this time that Lalliya the minister of the last Turkish Shāhiya deposed his master and founded the illustrious line of kings known to history as the Hindu Shāhiyas of Ohind. Few of the Indian mediæval dynasties have deserved so well of the student of history, and none certainly has been able to draw the respect of friend and foe alike in as much measure as this unfortunate dynasty. Of its illustrious founder we are told that he maintained his position between the Daradas and the Turuṣkas as between the lion and the boar, that his capital was a refuge of other kings and that his glory far outshone that of other northern rulers. His kingdom was fairly extensive as it comprised Gandhāra and Udyāna with a considerable part of the Panjab (1). In the reign of one of his unknown successors a Chinese Buddhist pilgrim called Ki-ye with a company of three hundred monks reached Gandhāra by way of the Gilgit valley from Kansu in north-west China; he is recorded to have visited, in the tract to the west of Kashmir and on the way to

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(1) See Rājatarāṅgiṇī, V. 152-155 with Stein's note.

Gandhāra, the mountain where the Bodhisattva threw himself to feed a hungry tigress(2). The last kings of this dynasty engaged in a valiant contest with the Turkish Sultans of Ghazni for preserving their own independence. Yet of one of them Ānandpāl, son of Jaipāl, anecdotes are preserved showing his patronage of grammatical learning and his chivalry towards his great antagonist, Sultan Mahmud (3). The issue of the wars between the Hindu Shāhiyas and the Ghaznavide Sultans was disastrous for the cause of the Indians. In succession Lampāka, Nagarahāra and at last Udabhāṇḍapura, the capital, were annexed by the invaders. The last stand was made by Trilochanpāl, the son of Ānandpāl against Mahmud in the plain of the Taushi river to the south of Kashmir. But once more victory declared itself in favour of the Moslems. With this last battle the Hindu Shāhiyas disappeared from the pages of history. So utter was their overthrow that it produced a profound impression upon on-lookers even in that period of shaking thrones and tottering dynasties. We catch an echo of the universal wail of grief that rose at this catastrophe in the brief but pathetic lament of Kalhaṇa in the Rāja-

(2) See the account of *Él. Chavannes* in *B. E. F. E.-O.* 1904. The correct date of *Ki-ye's* departure for India from China is 960 A. D. *Ibid.*

(3) See *Alberuni's India*, *Sachau's tr.*, Vol. I. p. 135 ; Vol. II. pp. 13-14. The full measure of *Anandpāl's* chivalry will appear from the well-attested fact that Mahmud, after defeating his father *Jaipāl* and taking him captive, sold him as a slave for 80 dinars. (See *J. R. A. S.* 1927, pp. 493-495 for corroborative evidence of this fact).



taragṅī (1), "Of the Shāhiya kings one now asks whether with its kings, its ministers and its court, it ever existed". And the great scholar Alberuni, himself a *protege* of Mahmud, seized the occasion to pay his tribute of generous homage to the memory of the illustrious House. "The Hindu Shāhiya dynasty", he wrote (2) "is now extinct and of the whole house there is no longer the slightest remnant in existence. We must say that in all their grandeur they never slackened in the ardent desire for doing that which is good and right, and that they were men of noble sentiments and noble bearing." What havoc the raids of Mahmud made in the lands which he plundered is described by Alberuni in another part of his work. "Mahmud," we are told (3), "utterly ruined the prosperity of the country and performed those wonderful exploits by which the Hindus became like atoms of dust scattered in all directions and like a tale of old in the mouth of the people . . . This is the reason why Hindu sciences have retired far away from those parts of the country conquered by us and have fled to places which our hands cannot yet reach, to Kashmir, Benares and other places."

With the collapse of the last of the Hindu Shāhiyas at the hands of Sultan Mahmud, the curtain dropped upon Indian cultural domination in Afghanistan. Yet the long stretch of centuries through which Hindu cultural influences ruled the Afghan country could not but leave deep traces of their existence such as the subsequent nine

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(1) VII 69.

(2) *Op. cit.* vol. II p. 13.

(3) *Ibid.* Vol. I p. 22.

centuries of Moslem rule have failed altogether to efface. Of this the most striking example is the group of indigenous Indian languages still in vogue in the kingdom. The Pāshāi, the most important of such languages, is at present confined to the narrow tract of country north of the Kabul river. But there is reason to believe that it formerly extended over the whole of the upper and middle Kabul valley. The Kaffir languages prevailing in north-eastern Afghanistan have more affinities with the Indian than with the Iranian languages, and they have been latterly so much influenced by contact with the north-western Indian frontier tribes that they may now be regarded as essentially Indian.\*



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\* See Morgenstern, *Report on a Linguistic Mission to Afghanistan*, 1926, s. v. Pāshāi and the Kaffir languages.

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91, Upper Circular Road,  
CALCUTTA.



Printed by Sajanikanta Das  
At the PRABASI PRESS  
91, Upper Circular Road, Calcutta.

CALCUTTA:  
1928.