

# A PEEP INTO THE EARLY HISTORY OF INDIA

From the Foundation of the Maurya Dynasty  
to the Downfall of the Imperial  
Gupta Dynasty.

( 322 B.C.—*circa* 500 A.C. )

BY

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WITH A PREFACE

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It will thus appear that he could by no means have been a patron of Buddhism, and the story of his having persecuted them may therefore be true. An inscription on the Buddhistic Stûpa at Bharaut, between Jabalpur and Allahabad, represents the place to have been situated in the dominions of the Suṅgas. Agnimitra was probably his father's viceroy at Vidisâ in eastern Mâlwa. The Sungas are mentioned as having reigned for 112 years in the Purâṇas. They were followed by the Kâṇvâyanas, the first of whom was Vâsudeva. A duration of forty-five years is assigned to this dynasty.

#### THE YAVANAS OR BACTRIAN GREEKS.

Long before this time, however, the Yavanaś and even the Sakas make their appearance in Indian history. The instances given by Patañjali of the use of the Imperfect to indicate an action well-known to people, but not witnessed by the speaker, and still possible to have been seen by him, are, as is well known, *Arunad Yavanah Saketam: Arunad Yavano Madhamikâm.*<sup>24</sup> This shows that a certain Yavana or Greek prince had besieged Sâketa or Ayôdhyâ and another place called Madhyamikâ when Patañjali wrote this. The late Dr. Goldstücker identified this Yavana Prince with Menander. He may, however, be identified with Apollodotus, since the coins of both were found near the Jumna, and according to the author of the Periplus, were current at Barygaza (Broach) in the first century A. D.<sup>25</sup> But since Strabo represents Menander to have carried his arms as far as the Jumna, his identification with the Yavana prince is more probable. In another place Patañjali, in the instances to the Sûtra, beginning with *Sûdrânâm*, &c., gives *Sakayavanam* as an instance of an aggregate

<sup>24</sup> Under Pâr. III. 2, III.

<sup>25</sup> Ind. Ant. Vol. VIII. p. 143.

Dvandva which signifies that they were Sûdras and lived beyond the confines of Âryāvarta. I have already alluded to a work in Pâli consisting of dialogues between Milinda and Nâgasena, which is called Milinda-Pañho. Milinda has been identified with Menander, and is represented as a Yavana king whose capital was Śâkala in the Panjâb. The Purâṇas, too, in a passage which is greatly confused, assign the sovereignty of India to Śakas and other foreign tribes. But as the only reliable and definite evidence about these foreign kings is furnished by their coins, we shall now proceed to consider them.

Coins of silver and sometimes of copper have been found in Afghanistan and the Panjâb, even as far eastward as Maṭhurâ and the Jumna, which bear bilingual legends besides certain emblems characteristic of them. One of these is on the obverse in Greek characters and language, giving the name of the prince as well as his titles; and the other, which is on the reverse, is in the Kharoshthî characters, to which I have already drawn attention, and which are written from the right to the left, and in the Pâli or Prâkr̥it language. For example, the coins of one of the earlier of these Bactro-Indian princes, Heliocles, contain on the obverse the legend *Basileôs Dikaiou Heliokleous*, which means "of Heliocles, the righteous king," and on the reverse the legend *Mahârâjasa Dhramikasa Heliyakreyasa*, which is the northern Prâkr̥it for the Sanskr̥it "Mahârâjasya Dhârmikasya Heliyakreyasya." Now, this Prâkr̥it legend could have been used only because the coins were intended to be current in provinces inhabited by Hindus. The princes, therefore, whose coins bear such legends must be considered to have held some province in India. The Kharoshthî characters, as stated before, are used in the rock inscriptions of Aśoka in Afghanistan and on the northern

frontiers of the Panjâb. The Kharoshthî legend used on the coins, therefore, indicates that in the beginning, the princes who used them must have governed some part of Afghanistan or the Panjâb; and their use was continued even after their possessions extended further eastward. The founder of the Greco-Bactrian monarchy was Diodotus. He was followed by Euthydemus who appears to have been totally unconnected with him. Demetrius, the son of Euthydemus, succeeded him and even in the lifetime of his father carried his arms to India and conquered some territory. Eucratides was his rival and they were at war with each other. But Eucratides in the event succeeded in making himself master of a province in India; and there appear to have been two dynasties or rather factions ruling contemporaneously. To the line of Demetrius belonged Euthydemus II., probably his son, Agathocles and Pantaleon. A prince of the name of Antimachus seems also to have been connected with them.<sup>26</sup> The coins of the first two princes have no Prâkrit legend; those of the next two have it in the Brâhmî or ancient Nâgarî characters, while those of the last have it in the Kharoshthî. Eucratides was succeeded by Helicocles, his son, who probably reigned from 160 B. C. to 150 B. C.<sup>27</sup> There are bilingual legends on the coins of these. There were other princes who followed these, but whose order has not yet been determined, and the dates, too, have not been settled. Their names are these:—Philoxenus, Lysias, Antialcidas, Theophilus, Amyntas, and Archebius. These and the preceding princes ruled over Bactria and Afghanistan to the south of the Paropamisus, but not over the Panjâb. The names of those who held also the Panjâb and in some cases some of the eastern

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<sup>26</sup> Percy Gardner's *Coins of the Greek and Scythic kings, &c.* Introduction.

<sup>27</sup> Lassen Ind. Alterth. Vol. II. pp. 325-26.

provinces as far as the Jumna, are as follows:—Menander, Apollodotus, Zoilus, Dionysius, Strato, Hippostratus Diomedes, Nicias, Telephus, Hermaeus.<sup>28</sup> Of these the name of Menander occurs, as already stated, in the Pâli work known as the Milindapañho. Milinda is the Indianized form of Menander; and the prince is represented as being very powerful. His capital was Śâkala in the Panjâb.

In the coins of some of these princes the middle word is *apađihatasa* corresponding to *Anikétou* in the Greek legend, as in *Mahârâjasa Apađihatasa Philasinasa*. In those of others we have *Jayadharasa* corresponding to *Niképhorou* in the Greek legend, as in *Mahârâjasa Jayadharasa Antialkiasa*. On the coins of Archebius we have *Mahârâjasa Dhramikasa Jayadharasa Arkhebiyasa*, and on those of others, such as Menander, we have *Tradarasa*, corresponding to the Greek *Sôtéros*, as in *Mahârâjasa, Tradarasa, Menamdrasa*. *Tradarasa* is a corruption of some such word as *trâtârasa* for Sanskrit *trâtuk*. On some coins we have *Tejamasa Tâdârasa*, where *tejama* stands for the Greek *Epiphanous*, and means brilliant. Sometimes we have *Mahatasa Jayatasa* after *Mahârâjasa*.

The chronology and the mutual relations of these Greco-Indian kings are by no means clear. Some of the princes reigned in one province contemporaneously with others in other provinces. But it may generally be stated, especially in view of the passage quoted from Patañjali above, and of the tradition alluded to by Kâlidâsa in the *Mâlavikâgnimitra*, that Pushpamitra's sacrificial horse was captured on the banks of the Sindhu or Indus by Yavana cavalry; it may be concluded that these kings were in possession of parts of India from about the beginning of the second century before Christ

to the arrival of the Śakas whom we shall now proceed to consider.

### THE IMPERIAL ŚAKAS.

The Śaka coinage is an imitation of the Greco-Bactrian or Greco-Indian coinage, though there are some emblems peculiar to the Sakas. There are two legends, as in the case of the former, one on the obverse in Greek letters, and the other on the reverse in Kharoshthî character and in the Prâkṛit language. Here, too, the mutual relation between the princes, their order of succession, as well as their dates, are by no means clear. Still, from the bilingual legends on the coins, we have recently determined the order of the princes, and endeavoured to fix the period when they ruled. The following are the names arranged in the order thus determined:—(i.) Vonones, (ii.) Spalirises, (iii.) Azes I., (iv.) Azilises, (v.) Azes II., and (vi.) Maues. There are coins of two others, *viz.*, Spalahores and his son Spalgadames, who, however, did not succeed to supreme power.<sup>29</sup> Now, one thing to be remarked with reference to these princes is that in the legends on their coins, unlike the Greco-Indians, they style themselves *Basileus Basileôn*, corresponding to the Prâkṛit on the reverse *Mahârâjasa Râjarâjasa*. Thus they style themselves “kings of kings,” *i. e.*, emperors. They also appropriate the epithet *Mahatasa*, corresponding to the Greek *Megalou*, which we find on the coins of Greek kings. Now, the title “king of kings” cannot in the beginning at least have been an empty boast. The Śakas must have conquered a very large portion of the country before they found themselves in a position to use this imperial title. And we have evidence of the spread of their power. First of all, the era at

<sup>29</sup>. See the paper written by Mr. Devadatta B. Bhandarkar and published in J. B. B. R., A S, (pp. 16-25) (1910).

present called Śālivāhana Śaka was up to about the thirteenth century known by the name of 'the era of the Śaka king of kings' and 'the era of the coronation of the Śaka king.' Now, such an era, bearing the name of the Śaka king that has lasted to the present day, cannot have come to be generally used, unless the Śaka kings had been very powerful, and their dominions extended over a very large portion of the country and lasted for a long time. And we have positive evidence of the extent of their power. Taxila in the Panjâb, and Mathurâ and the surrounding provinces were ruled over by princes who use the title of Kshatrapa or Mahâkshatrapa. So also a very long dynasty of Kshatrapas or Mahâkshatrapas ruled over the part of the country extending from the coast of Kâṭhiawâḍ to Ujjayinî in Mâlhwâ. Even the Maratha Country was for some time under the sovereignty of a Kshatrapa, who afterwards became a Mahâkshatrapa. Evidence has been found to consider these Kshatrapas as belonging to the Śaka race, and the very title Kshatrapa, which is evidently the same as the Persian *Khshathrapa*, ordinarily Satrap, shows that these princes were originally of a foreign origin. The coins of the early princes of the Western or Kâṭhiawâḍ-Mâlhwâ Kshatrapas bear on the obverse some Greek characters, and also a few Kharoshṭhî letters, together with a Brâhmî legend on the reverse. And this also points to their connection with the north. These princes give dates on their coins and use them in their inscriptions which have now been considered by all antiquarians to refer to the Śaka era. It is by no means unreasonable therefore to consider these and the Northern Kshatrapas to have been in the beginning at least Viceroys of the Śaka kings, and the Śaka era to have been founded by the most powerful of these kings.

If these considerations have any weight, the Śaka kings, whose names have been given above, founded their power in the latter part of the first century of the Christian era. This goes against the opinion of all scholars and antiquarians who have hitherto written on the subject and who refer the foundation of the Śaka power to about the beginning of the first century before Christ.<sup>30</sup>

### NORTHERN KSHATRAPAS.

The names of Northern Kshatrapas found on coins and in inscriptions are Zeionises, Kharamostis; Liaka and Patika who bore the surname Kusulaka and governed the North-Western Panjâb at Taxila; and Râjuvula and his son Śodâsa who held power at Mathurâ.<sup>31</sup> The names of Liaka and Patika are found in a copperplate inscription in which the foundation of a monastery and the placing of a relic of Śâkyamuni are recorded.<sup>32</sup> Inscriptions have been discovered at Mathurâ and Morâ in Rajputana,<sup>33</sup> which are dated in the reign of Śodâsa. There was also found a Lion pillar at Mathurâ on which there is an inscription in which the names of the mother of Śodâsa, his father Râjuvula, and other relatives are given, as well as those of the allied Kshatrapas, *viz.*, Patika of Takshaśilâ and Miyika.<sup>34</sup> The names of two

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<sup>30</sup> See D. R. Bhandarkar's paper referred to before, for the whole argument. Many circumstances have been brought forward, all of which point to the conclusion which we have arrived at, and thus render it highly probable. The objection against it, based on the style of the coins, has also been considered.

<sup>31</sup> Numismatic Chronicle for 1890, pp. 125-129; Percy Gardner's *Coins of Greek and Scythic Kings of India*.

<sup>32</sup> *Ep. Ind.* Vol. IV., p. 54 ff.

<sup>33</sup> Cunningham's *Arch. Rep.* Vol. III., p. 30, and Vol. XX., p. 49, and *Ep. Ind.* Vol. II., p. 199.

<sup>34</sup> *Jour. R. A. S.* 1894, p. 533 ff.



other Kshatrapas, Hagâna and Hagâmasha,<sup>35</sup> have been discovered. The coins of Zeionises and Kharamostis, and some of Râjuvula, bear on the obverse a Greek legend and on the reverse one in Kharoshthî characters, thus showing their close connection with their Śaka masters. Some of Râjuvula and those of Śoḍâsa, Hagâna and Hagâmasha have a Brâhmî legend only. Râjuvula uses high-sounding imperial titles on some of his coins, whence it would appear that he made himself independent of his overlord. The date of his son Śoḍâsa is 72,<sup>36</sup> equivalent, according to our view, to 150 A. D. It would thus appear that the Satraps who governed Mathurâ and the eastern portion of the Śaka empire declared themselves independent some time before 150 A. D., while those who governed north-western Panjâb at Taxila, and consequently were nearer to their sovereign lords, acknowledged their authority till 78 Saka or 150 A. D., as is evident from Patika's mention of Moga, who has been identified with the Saka Emperor Maues, in the Taxila copperplate inscription referred to before.

#### KSHATRAPAS OF KÂṬHIÂWÂḌ-MÂLWÂ.

Silver coins of the Kshatrapas of KâṭhiâwâḌ or Surâshṭra and Mâlhwâ have been found in large numbers in those provinces. The latest find was in the rock-cells and temples to the south of the Uparkot, a fortress of Junâgaḍh in KâṭhiâwâḌ, which consisted of twelve hundred coins of different kings.<sup>37</sup> On the obverse there is a bust of the reigning prince very often with the date, and on the reverse there is in the centre an emblem which has the appearance of a Stûpa with a wavy line below

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.* p. 549, and Cunningham's *Coins of Anc. Ind.*, p. 87.

<sup>36</sup> *Ep. Ind.*, Vol. VII., p. 199, and Vol. IV., p. 55, n. 2.

<sup>37</sup> *Jour. B. B. R. A. S.*, Vol. XX., p. 201.

and the sun and the crescent of the moon at the top. Round this central emblem is the legend giving the name of the prince with that of his father and the title Kshatrapa or Mahâkshatrapa, in Brâhmî or old Devanâgarî character and in mixed Sanskrit and Pṛâkṛit. The first prince of this dynasty was Chashṭana, son of Ghsamotika. There are Greek letters on the obverse of his coins which have but recently been read and found to contain the name of the prince. The legend on the reverse is *Rājño Mahâkshatrapasa Ghsamotikaputrasa Chashṭanasa*. The coins of this prince do not bear dates; but Chashtana is mentioned by Ptolemy as Tiastenes, a prince reigning at Ozênê or Ujjayinî. And from this and other circumstances his date has been determined to be about 132 A. D. The name Chashṭana and Ghsamotika are evidently foreign and not Indian. Chashṭana had a large number of successors, some of whom are called Kshatrapas only and others Mahâkshatrapas. There are others again who were Kshatrapas in the early part of their career and Mahâkshatrapas in the later. The former was evidently an inferior title and showed that the bearer of it was a dependent prince while a Mahâkshatrapa held supreme power. There are inscriptions also in which the names of some of these princes are mentioned. In one at Junâgadh dated 72, Rudradâman's minister Suvisâkha, a Pahlava, son of Kulaipa, is represented to have re-constructed the dam that had broken away of the lake Sudarâna. In it Rudradâman is spoken of as having been at war with Śâtakarṇi, the lord of the Dekkan, and subjected to his sway a good many provinces to the north of Surâshṭra. There is another inscription bearing the date 103 found at Guṇḍâ, in the Jâmnagar State, in which Rudrabhûti is represented as having dug a tank and constructed it in the reign of the Kshatrapa Rudra-

simha, son of Mahâkshatrâpa Rudradâman, grandson of Kshatrâpa Jayadâman, and great grandson of Mahâkshatrâpa Chashtâna.<sup>38</sup> A third found at Jasdan in Kâthiawâd and dated 127, while Rudrasena was ruling, records the construction of a Sattrâ or a feeding-house for travellers by one whose name appears to be Mânâsasagara, and who was the son of Prañâthaka and grandson of Khara.<sup>39</sup> The genealogy of Rudrasena that is given is, that he was [the son] of Rudrasimha, grandson of Rudradâman, grandson of the son of Jayadâman, and great grandson of the son of Chashtâna. Another inscription at Junâgadh of the grandson of Jayadâman represents some sort of gift in connection with those who had become Kevalis, *i. e.*, perfect individuals, according to Jainas. And the last that I have to notice is that found at Mulwâsar in Okhâmandala which refers itself to the reign of Rudrasena and bears the date 122.<sup>40</sup>

The following is a complete list of the Kshatrâpa princes with the dates occurring on the coins and in the inscriptions:—

I. <i>Mahâkshatrâpas.</i>	II. <i>Kshatrâpas.</i>
1. Chashtâna	1. Chashtâna.
2. Rudradâman son of Jayadâman, 72.	2. Jayadâman, son of Chashtâna.
3. Dâmaghsada son of Rudradâman	3. Dâmaghsada son of Rudradâman.
	4. Rudrasimha son of Rudradâman, 102, 110, 112.

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38 Bhowanagar Coll. of Incr., p. 22.

39 *Ib.* p. 22 facs. and Jour. B. B. R. A. S., Vol. III, p. 234.

40 Bhowanagar Coll. of Incr. p. 7 and p. 23; see also Jour. R. A. S., April 1899, ff. 380 ff.

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| <p>4. Rudrasimha son of Rudradâman, 101, 103, 105, 106, 108, 109, 110, 113, 114, 115, 116, 118.</p> <p>5. Jîvadâman son of Dâmaghsada, 119, 120.</p> <p>6. Rudrasena son of Rudrasimha, 122, 125, 130, 131, 133, 134, 135, 136, 138, 139, 140, 142, 144.</p> <p>7. Saṁghadâman son of Rudrasimha, 144, 149.</p> <p>8. Dâmasena son of Rudrasimha, 145, 150, 151, 152, 153, 154, 155, 156, 157, 158.</p> <p>9. Dâmajadaśrî son of Rudrasena.</p> <p>10. Yaśodâman son of Dâmasena, 160, 161.</p> <p>11. Vijayasena son of Dâmasena, 161, 163, 164, 165, 166, 167, 168, 170, 171, 172.</p> <p>12. Dâmajadaśrî son of Dâmasena, 172, 173, 174, 175, 176, 177.</p> <p>13. Rudrasena son of Vîradâman, 177, 178, 180, 182, 183, 185, 186, 187, 188, 189, 190, 191, 194, 197.</p> | <p>5. Satyadâman son Dâmaghsada.</p> <p>6. Rudrasena son of Rudrasimha, 121.</p> <p>7. Prithvîsena son of Rudrasena, 144.</p> <p>8. Dâmjadaśrî son of Rudrasena, 154, 155.</p> <p>9. Vîradâman son of Dâmasena, 158, 159, 160.</p> <p>10. Yaśodâman son of Dâmasena, 160.</p> <p>11. Vijayasena son of Dâmasena, 160.</p> <p>12. Visvasimha son of Rudrasena, 197, 198, 199, 200.</p> |
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14. Viśvasimha<sup>o</sup> son of Rudrasena, 200.
15. Bhartridâman son of Rudrasena, 203, 204, 205, 206, 207, 209, 210, 211, 212, 213, 214, 215, 217, 220?
16. Svâmi-Rudrasena son of Svâmi-Mahâkshatrapa Rudradâman, 270, 271, 272, 273, 288, 290, 292, 293, 294, 296, 298, 300.
17. Svâmi-Simhasena sister's son of Svâmi-Rudrasena, 304.
18. Svâmi-(Rudra?) sena son of Svâmi-Simhasena.
19. Svâmi-Rudrasimha son of Svâmi-Mahâkshatrapa Satyasena, 310.
13. Bhartridâman son of Rudrasena, 200, 201, 202, 204.
14. Visvasena son of Bhartridâman, 215, 216, 217, 218, 219, 220, 221, 222, 223, 224, 225, 226.
15. Rudrasimha son Svâmi Jîvadâman, 226, 227, 228, 229, 230, 231, 232, 234, 238.
16. Yasodâman son of Rudrasimha, 238, 239, 240, 241, 242, 243, 244, 245, 249, 252, 253, 254.

Though the Kshatrapas occupied a subordinate position, they issued coins in their name, and from that it would appear that they were put in charge of a separate province. Probably the Mahâkshatrapas reigned at the capital, whether it was Ujjayinî as in Chashtana's time, or any other town, and the Kshatrapas in Kâthiâwâḍ.