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New Light on Ancient Gandhāra

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Abstract: History of Gandhāra is a well known subject. But considerable gaps, which could be filled in by correctly interpreting place-names, still exist. Here, for the first time, an attempt is made to interpret place-names, which throw light on various missing chapters of the history of Gandhāra. Similarly the name, Gandhāra, and its etymology is explained in the light of geographical environment in which it was located. It has also been suggested that Buddhism spread at the grass roots levels by the keen interest of some of the local chiefs who used their utmost financial resources to raise stupas and monasteries now witnessed in the galaxy of ruined structures found throughout the length and breadth of Gandhāra.

Keywords: Gandhāra, Bigrām, Lohara, Oḍi/Uḍi, Apraca/Prācha, Hāra, Kapiśa, Dara Pīch, Ki-pin, Jibin, Caspatyros, Pushkalāvati, Astes, Alexander.

History and culture of Gandhāra is not a new subject. A vast number of scholars have indeed thrown valuable light on its various aspects, particularly the art; but some of the fundamental problems still need to be addressed. For instance, Buddhist tradition tells us about the efforts made by the emperors Aśoka (c.273-236 BCE) and Kanishka (c.78-102 CE) to further the cause of Buddhism by building stupas and monasteries. They were certainly fervent patrons of this religion. But did they build the myriads of stupas and monasteries now represented by their ruins almost everywhere in Gandhāra and the side valleys? The answer is no. Who then were the people whose contributions and enthusiasm, not only spread the message of the Buddha (the Enlightened One) but also bedecked the country with sacred monuments which in the course of centuries became great centres of Buddhist lore, spreading the message at the grass roots level? Were they the forefathers of the present day Pukhtūns (or Pashtūns) identified by Sir Olaf Caroe (1992:35) with Paktues of Herodotus (484-430 BCE)? Where was Kaspapuros or Kaspaturos situated in Gandhāra wherefrom the admiral, Scylax of Caryanda, commissioned by the Achaemenian emperor Darius (522-486 BCE), sailed down the river to explore the entire course of the Indus? Referring to Peshāwar Zahīr ad-Din Bābur, the founder of the Mughal empire in India, writes Bigrām in his *Memoirs* (1987:230, 394, 450-51). Three more sites bearing this name are known in Afghanistan (Cunningham 1990:17, 23, 24, 25, 40; Beveridge 1987:230, n.2). What does this name signify? There are several places known as Uḍigrām/Oḍigrām (Uḍi or Oḍi village). Why? Above all, what does the name Gandhāra mean? Does it mean the "Land of fragrance" or something else? Why was this name given to the land now called the valley of Peshāwar. These and similar other questions need to be answered, for, they throw valuable light on the history of the common people of Gandhāra. Although available literature does not help in this regard, a meaningful and correct interpretation of place-names in Gandhāra has a lot to tell us. This is a new approach to the problem and we hope to demonstrate its feasibility in the following pages.

I

Gandhāra, as the name of a territory, first occurs in the *Rigveda* (about 1500-1200 BC), the most important part of the Aryan sacred literature composed in Gandhāra and the Panjāb (the Land of Five Rivers). But the particular land to which this name was given in ancient times was not known till some scholars in the 19th century, taking clue from foreign notices, recognized it as the old name of the Peshāwar valley. Xuanzang, the well known Chinese pilgrim, who visited the Peshāwar valley in the middle of the seventh

century CE, names it *Kien-t'o-lo*, identified by Beal (1969:1, 98) with Gandhāra. This, Xuanzang says, is the borderland of India. Much later (1849) when the British occupied this borderland, they added more territories and named it the North Western Frontier Province. It is interesting to note that its position as the frontier land (in Urdu *Sarhad*) was not changed even in this new name. Its present name, absolutely unrelated with the past, is Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. The particular reason behind it is an ethnical rather than geographical consideration. The Pakhtūns are the largest ethnic block of the land at present. According to Majumdar (1980:14) "Gandhāra denotes the region comprising the modern districts of Peshāwar and Rāwalpindi". But this statement appears to have been based merely upon cognate artistic traditions, for, Gandhāra and Taxila (i.e. Rāwalpindi district) were known as two different countries to the Chinese pilgrims.

II

Gandhāra, also written as Qandhār and Kandhār/ Kandahār (letters *G*, *Q* and *K* being interchangeable) is a Sanskrit composite name comprising Kanda+hāra / Kandh+hāra (Rahman 2009:143). The word hār (hāra) is easily understood and is found in many other place-names such as Nagarahār (City Land), Poṭhohār (Rear Land), Vaṇhār (Forest Land), where it means "land, territory, region". The first part, i.e. Kand or Kandh, is likewise found in many place-names such as Fīrūz Kand, Yārkand, Samarkand, Tāshkand, Abākand, Gandāba, Gandheri. Kand / Kandh is also a composite word comprising Kan (Kaṃ) + dha of which the first part, i.e. Kan or Kaṃ means "water" as evidenced in *Kandol* meaning "water bowl" or "bucket". The word *dol* (Urdu *dolcha*) stands for bucket and is still in use. The second part, i.e. dha, according to Monier-Williams (1970:250) means "sea, water bearing cloud, etc." Thus Kandha stands for "sea (or lake) of water". In view of the above, it is evident that Kandhār, Qandahār, Gandhāra literally means "Lake-land".

Is it a befitting and proper name for the lush green valley of Peshāwar, one may naturally ask? It may however be kept in mind that, inspite of the lapse of centuries, the lower part of this valley where the Kābul debouches into the Indus, is still called Kund, and that Qandhār / Qandahār is often spelt by Balādhuri (1968:434) and Ṭabari (1964:1, 2705) as Qunduhār (see also Le Strange 1977:347). Moreover, historical records show that marshy lands, if not a proper lake, existed as late as the early sixteenth century when Ẓahīr ad-Dīn Bābur hunted rhinoceros in the vicinity of Peshāwar. Another lake, now dried up, must have existed near the present town Swābi, written Suwābi by early British writers on the subject. Swābi is undoubtedly a corrupted form of the Pushto Sur+ābi based upon the Persian original Surkh+ābi meaning "red or brownish water". Surkhāb is the name of a river in Afghānistān and also of a village facing the well-known Ambela Pass which provides access to Buner from the side of Mardān. It is obvious that Swābi stood near a lake or marshy land of which the stagnant water had in the course of time changed its colour.

Even more significant is the evidence of the geological formation of the Peshāwar valley which undoubtedly presents the appearance of having been remote centuries ago the bed of a vast inland sweet water lake, whose banks were formed by the surrounding mountains and whose waters were fed by the rivers (Indus, Swāt and Kābul) now channelling through its former subaqueous bed (*Gaz. Pesh. Dist. 1897-98*:32). From whatever point of view you consider the valley, the *Gazetteer* states, you are led to the conclusion that you are dwelling upon ridges and inequalities which in some remote age bottomed a vast fresh-water sea. Its surface exhibits marked evidences of the mechanical efforts of currents, waves, rains, springs, streams, rivers, which at one time were pent up, but which in process of time have created an outlet through the weakest range of hills near Attock. The valley has in all probability passed through successive changes – at first a large lake; then, as the level decreased, a vast tropical marsh, the resort of numerous wild animals, such as the rhinoceros and tiger and rank with reeds, rushes and conifers. Still later, as the Kābul deepened its channels, its present form gradually arrived, a silted bed of debris filling up the bed of valley basin; and one may reason that

in process of time, as the mouth of the basin gets worn down, its present marshy surface water will altogether recede, leaving a dry plain traversed only by deeply cut water courses and large rivers.

When the Aryans arrived in the Peshāwar valley in about 1500 BCE, part of the valley basin, it seems, had already dried up. But the marshy appearance of the land still predominated. This in their own language (Vedic Sanskrit), they called Gandhāra, that is, "Lake-land". It can be seen that there could have been no better name for a valley of which the single most predominant geographical feature was a vast lake.

With the arrival of the Aryans the Peshāwar valley came to be known as Gandhāra (Shastri 1986:652). This is the first time (about 1500 BCE) that Gandhāra is mentioned in a literary work. The last time it is mentioned by Binākiti (Fakhr ad-Dīn) whose work the *Tārīkh-i Binākiti* is an abridgement of Rashīd ad-Din's *Jāmi' at-Tawārīkh* (Collection of Histories) which was completed in 1310 CE. Binākiti's *History* appeared only seven years after this (Raverty 1977: 1216n).

III

The Kailāsh, or "Kāfir" as referred to by Muslim historians in the past, are generally believed to be the descendants of the aboriginal inhabitants of Afghānistān and Gandhāra. In the course of centuries, they suffered at the hands of the more powerful invaders from Central Asia and, being dispossessed of their lands in the fertile plains, they fled to the inaccessible heights of the Hindu Kush mountains. This process may have presumably started with the Aryans who have left behind some indelible and identifiable traces in the lands they occupied during their eastward advance towards South Asia. In the sub-mountainous regions where the "Kafirs" could defend themselves more effectively, they continued to live for a longer period of time than those in the open plains, till the irresistible waves of fresh invaders cleared these regions of them as well. One such place is represented by the ruins of a citadel on the spur of a mountain north of the village Muhammadzai to the west of Kohāṭ. The place is known as Ād-i Samūd. This bears close similarity with 'Ād-o Samūd (correctly Thamūd), the names of two extinct but powerful nations of the past, mentioned in the Holy *Qurān* (Chap. VII). It seems that the original name of this site was Ād and that Samūd was added to it by modern Muslims in imitation of the Holy *Qurān*. Not knowing what the name Ād stood for, they connected it with Samūd to make it meaningful. That the original name was Ād, not 'Ād-o Samūd, is confirmed by the etymological analysis of the name Kohāt, the present district headquarters, of this area. Kohāt comprises Koh+Āṭ, of which the latter part is a corrupted form of Ād. Kohāt thus means "Mountain of Ād". Ād was probably the name of a Kailāsh tribe who in the past held sway over the mountains to the west of Kohāt.

IV

Another place-name which has been totally misunderstood by scholars in the past is Bigrām (Vulgar: Begrām, Bagrām). Three sites bearing this name are known in Afghanistan (Cunningham 1990:40) and one in Pakistan. Of these, Cunningham tells us, one is found near Kābul, another near Jalālābad and the third near the confluence of the Ghorband and Panjshīr rivers. The ruins of the last mentioned, Wilson (1841:11) says, show that they mark the site of a great city. It was discovered in 1833 by Masson who is said to have found more than thirty thousand coins during the four years of his stay in Afghānistān. The fourth Bigrām is mentioned by Bābur whose *Memoirs* (Beveridge 1987:230) clearly show that it was another name for Peshāwar.

With regard to the meaning of this name scholars differ only in the interpretation of the first part, i.e. *Bi*; second part, i.e. *grām* (meaning a village or town) is easily understood as it is still in use. Gopāl Dās in his *Tārīkh-i Peshāwar* (1874:141) records that a Hindu rājā named Bigrām rebuilt the city of Peshāwar and named it after his own name. Cunningham (1990:17) identified "Begrām" with *Kiu-lu-sa-pang* or Karsawana of the Chinese pilgrim Xuanzang. Beal (1969:95, n.48) says that both Begrām and Nagara appear to mean "the city". A.H. Dani (1969:4) prefers the form Bagrām instead of Bigrām and says that "the name consists of two original Sanskrit words *Vara* (best) and *grāma* (village). In the course of time

Varagrām got corrupted into Bagrām". He also refers to Charles Masson who "derives the word from the Turki *bi* or *be* (meaning chief) and the Hindi *grām*".

Bigrām, in our view, is a slightly corrupted form of Bhīlgrām meaning "Bhīl village". Bhīls and Gonds – the two most ancient races of South Asia – still exist in large numbers in Cholistān and Thar Pārkar (in Pakistan) and India. There is a well known city in India known a Bilgrām. The Mughal emperor Humāyūn was overthrown by Farīd Khān, subsequently Sher Shāh Sūri, at this town. Another form of this name is Bhīlwāl, village "of the Bhīls". Two towns bearing this name still exist in Panjāb and one in Kashmīr. Of these the one in the Sargodha district is well known for the production of large quantities of Kinno – a highly juicy citrus fruit.

Another tribe which has left its traces in the place names, such as Lāhor (Swābi district), Lāhori Top (present Lawāri Top), which separates Dīr from Chitrāl, and Lahore, the provincial capital of the Panjāb, is in all probability the famous Lohara tribe, whose chiefs wielded great power and influence in Kashmīr (see Kalhaṇa's *Rājataraṅgiṇī*, Book VII-VIII). There was a Lahor fort in the Niāg Darah in the mountains to the north of Swāt. This however was the latest addition to the series, for we know that it was built by Jahāngīrian Sulṭān Awais who was forced to flee from his capital Manglawar in upper Swāt in about 1538 CE (Muazzam Shah 1977:171). The marriage of King Kṣemagupta of Kashmīr with Didda, the daughter of Siṃharāja of Lohara and the marriage of Simharāja himself with a daughter of Bhīma Śāhi, the mighty ruler of Udabhāṇḍapura (present Hund) demonstrates how powerful the Loharas became after fixing their abode in Punch (Kashmīr). Long before this, they appear to have drifted from Gandhāra into Panjāb and then to Punch, as the trail of their migrations clearly indicates.

V

The first foreign invaders were a branch of the Indo-Europeans who, having irrupted from their homeland somewhere in the vast stretch of land from Russian steppes to Central Asia, split up into several branches, one heading towards Irān and another, via Afghānistān towards India. The particular tribes included in this eastern branch were Puru, Yadu, Turvas, Anu, Druhyu, Alina, Paktha, Bhalāna, Śiva, Vishānin and Bharat (Majumdar 1951:352). Of these only the Paktha has left its trace in the territorial name Paktia – the name of a province to the east of Ghazni in Afghānistān. It is noteworthy that the original Paktha has been softened into Pakt and that *ia* at the end of it is a Greek addition indicating "land". Thus Paktia means "Land of the Pakt/Paktha), just as India means "Land of the river Indus".

Some scholars (Majumdar 1951:1, 247) have suggested that the Pakthas were ancestors of the modern Pukhtūns / Pakhtūns. But modern research has shown that the Pakhtūns were in origin Scythians (Caroe 1992:59-69) who could have reached Afghānistān in the first century BCE at the earliest. Their arrival in the Peshāwar valley towards the end of the fifteenth century CE is very well known (Rahman and Sher 2014:38-51).

Sir Olaf Caroe (1992:35) has attempted to show that the Pakhtūns, of the Peshāwar valley have descended from Paktues mentioned by Herodotus (484-430 BCE). Having fixed Kaspaturos (the city from which Scylax began his voyage down the Indus) as Peshāwar and Paktuike as the country around Peshāwar, he writes, are we to suppose that the similarity of Paktuike and Paktues to modern Pakhtūns is purely fortuitious? Grierson accepted this identification, he further remards, but it is frowned upon by more recent, and very eminent orientalists. The chief of these, he says, are Professors Bailey of Cambridge and Morgenstierne of Oslo.

The above mentioned Professors have argued against the Paktue – Pakhtūn equation on philological grounds. But in our view the highly suggestive archaeological clue – Paktia (Land of the Pakthas) – which holds the key to the resolution of this problem, has been overlooked by all. In fact no valid relationship between the Paktues, reported by Herodotus in the fifth century BCE, could be visualized, for, the two were separated from each other by about two thousand years; while the Pakthas and their homeland Paktia was situated near enough for them to have

extended their sway to Gandhāra (Rahman and Sher 2016:108, 125-129). It is obvious therefore that the Paktues were Pakthas, not Pakhtūns. We have seen above that the Pakthas were a powerful Aryan tribe, who, during the Vedic time, marched as far as the river Rāvi (flowing near Lahore in the Panjab) to take part in the Rigvedic "Battle of the Ten Kings".

VI

Another problematic name is Kaspaturos of Herodotus and Kaspapuros of Hecataeus (500 BCE). Herodotus places Kaspaturos in Paktuike, while Hecataeus (Majumdar 1960: xvi) states that Kaspapuros was in Gandhāra – an interesting clue, Caroe says, to the identity of Gandhāra with Paktuike. Further more, Caroe (1992:32) remarks that Kaspapuros is a scribal error of a common enough kind for Paskapuros and that Paskapuros is Peshāwar. The point is that this was the place from where Scylax began his famous voyage down the Indus (see Rahman 2015:7, 69-72).

Now, the problem is that no such name as Kaspapuros exists anywhere in Gandhāra, nor has any memory of this name survived till today. Taking guidance from Herodotus' statement that, at the time of his departure, Scylax was facing east, in the direction of the rising sun, it has been rightly suggested by Caroe that only the river Kābul, by virtue of its eastward flow, fulfils what is required by this statement, and that, since the upper part of this river as far as it flows in Afghānistān, is not suitable for navigation, Kaspapuros should be looked for some where in the Peshāwar plains. But Sir Olaf's assertion that "although Peshāwar is not on the banks of the river, but all Peshāwaris are conscious of the 'Landai' (lower Kābul) as their own river" and that Kaspapuros should therefore be identified with Peshāwar, does not really click in view of its inadmissible emendation.

Taking clue from Albīrūni's statement (1888:1, 298) that Multān was also known as Kaśyapapura in the past, Herzfeld and Foucher (cf. Caroe 1992:32) deduced that Multān may be the Kaspapuros from where Scylax sailed down the Indus to the ocean. But in this case, Caroe has rightly pointed out, Scylax would have been facing south, not the east as required. The Multān hypothesis should therefore be discarded straightaway.

Albīrūni mentions only one Kaśyapapura. But Monier-Williams in his *Sanskrit Dictionary* (1970:281) states that "many subdivisions of Kaśyapa families are known, e.g. Urubilvā-Kaśyapa, Gaya-Kaśyapa, Daśabala-Kaśyapa, Nadi-Kaśyapa, Mahā-Kaśyapa, Hasti-Kaśyapa". He further adds "according to a legend of the *Purāṇas,* Paraśu-rāma, after the destruction of the Kshatriya race and the performance of an Aśvamedha, presented the sovereignty of the earth to Kaśyapa".

Of these subdivisions of the Kaśyapa families, Hasti-Kaśyapa is noteworthy in the present context. The ruler of Pushkalāvati (present Charsada) at the time of Alexander's invasion in 326 BCE was a certain Astes (Majumdar 1960:7). If the full family name of the ruler of Pushkalāvati was Hasti-Kaśyapa (Astes is no doubt Greek pronunciation of Hasti), there is reason to believe that Pushkalāvati too, on the pattern of Multān, was, at some stage of it history known as Hasti-Kaśyapapura, reported by Hecataeus as Kaspapuros. Thus Pushkalāvati, in our view, was the city in question from where Scylax embarked upon his famous voyage.

VII

In the sixth century BCE Gandhāra passed into the hands of the Achaemenian rulers of Irān. According to Arrian (Majumdar 1960:214), the Indians between the rivers Sindhu and Kābul, were, in ancient times, subject to the Assyrians, the Medes and finally to the Persians under Cyrus (558-530 BCE). For the reign of Darius (522-486 BCE) who succeeded Cambyses, son of Cyrus, we have the reliable evidence of his own inscriptions from which we can infer the extent of the Persian empire in India. The Behistūn inscription mentions 'Gadāra' (Gandhāra) as one of the provinces of his dominions, but does not mention India. But the two later inscriptions found at Persepolis (c.518-515 BCE) and Naqsh-i Rustam (c. 565 BCE) mention 'Hi(n)du' or northern Panjāb as a part of his empire. These inscriptions indicate that very probably it was Cyrus who conquered

Gandhāra, which was later on inherited by Darius who pushed his Indian conquests further into India, actually the region called Sindh. It was during his reign that Scylax, setting sail from the city of Kaspapuros, explored the entire course of the Indus.

The Achaemenian art and architecture seem to have impressed the Mauryan dynasty of India (c.323-190 BCE) to reproduce the glories of Persepolis in their palaces, while Kharoshṭhi, an early Indian alphabet, was developed from the official Aramaic, the alphabet of the Persian state. Another benefit India derived from the Achaemenian rule was introduction of money economy (Punch marked coins) which boosted trade and commerce. The network of roads – all converging on Persepolis – facilitated the transfer of merchandize from one place to another. Some of the trade colonies which grew up along these roads, in the course of time, developed into large cities such as Taxila and Pushkalāvati which served not only as trade emporiums but also as centres of education attracting students from far and wide. The Pāli sources inform us that Brāhman youths, Kshatriya princes, and sons of Seṭhis from Rājagṛiha, Kāśi, Kośala and other places went to Taxila for learning Vedas and eighteen sciences and arts. Jotipāla, son of the *Purohita* (chief) of the king of Benāras returned from Taxila with great proficiency in archery or military science, and was later appointed commander-in-chief of Benāras. Likewise Jīvaka, the famous physician of Bimbisāra and Buddha, learnt the science of medicine under a far-famed teacher at Taxila, and on his return was appointed court-physician at Magadha (Prakash 1976:141). The art of giving lustrous polish to sculptures, rock engravings, and the court etiquette adopted by the Mauryans are all Achaemenian in origin. Pāṇini and Kauṭilya – the two luminaries of ancient India – were brought up in the academic atmosphere of Taxila. Similarity Chandragupta Maurya, the first great emperor of India, received his education at Taxila under Kauṭilya (meaning "resident of the village Koṭ"; actual name Chāṇakya).

VIII

The Achaemenian empire was swept away by Alexander, the Macedonian invader, in 331 BCE. The last Achaemenian ruler, Darius Codomannus, suffered a terrible defeat at Gaugamela (the camel pasturage) near Arbela (modern Erbīl) near Mosul, and fled to eastern Irān in order perhaps to raise another army. But luck did not favour him. When he reached Damghān, he was murdered by the ambitious governor of Bactria, Bessus, who wanted to set himself up as *de facto* ruler of eastern Irān (Frye 1976:145).

Having mopped up all pockets of resistance in western Irān, Alexander marched into the Kābul valley and then scaled the Hindu Kush in pursuit of Bessus. At the beginning of 327 BCE he had completed the conquest of eastern Irān beyond the Hindu Kush by overrunning Bactria and the region now known as Bokhāra as far as the Syr Daria (Jaxartes). On coming back to the Kābul valley he reached "Alexanderia-under-the Caucasus" (modern Chārikār), deposed its satrap for misgovernment and proceeded to Nicaea, somewhere near the present Jalālābād and despatched Hephaestion and Perdiccas, two of his generals, at the head of a strong force to the Indus to make preparations for crossing it. The ruler of Taxila and some other chiefs served as guides. As the road went through Pushkalāvati, its ruler, Astes, was told to submit but he refused and bravely laid down his life in defending the city. Hephaestion and Perdiccas thus forced their way to the right bank of the Indus (Majumdar 1960:6-7).

With the major part of the army under his direct control, Alexander took the road to Bajauṛ (Ba+Jauhaṛ meaning "water-pond"). Sir Aurel Stein (1975:41) has suggested that the road went along the bank of the river Kunaṛ (Kund+hār meaning Lake-land), and that it was rough and dangerous but Alexander overcame all the difficulties and fought his way through to Bajauṛ. He then crossed the river Panjkhoṛa (Five Streams) and entered the country (present Tālāsh valley) of the powerful Assakēnoi, and invested Massaga, their capital. Arrian gives a lengthy account of the siege which ended with city's capitulation after a brave defence of four days. The precise location of the city is not known, though the ruins of a large citadel near Ziarat, called Gumbatūna,

in the Tālāsh valley may, in its earliest levels, represented this city (Rahman 1979:279). From Massaga Alexander led his force across the easy saddle of Kāṭgala (perhaps Kāṭh+Qala meaning "Wooden Fort") into the wide open valley which stretches down to the Swāt river and its strategically important crossing now guarded by the Chakdara Fort.

After the capture of Massaga Alexander turned first to Bazira and then to Ora, both strongly fortified places, identified by Stein with Bir-Koṭ (present Barikot) and Udigrām near Swāt capital Saidu Sharīf, respectively. Both were taken. This brought Alexander's operations in the Swāt valley to a triumphant conclusion. Arrian's narrative shows that, after the establishment of Macedonian posts at these places to guard the country, the conqueror turned south to the Peshāwar plains to effect his junction with the division of the army that had preceded him down the Kābul river and was staying at the crossing point named Embolima. At Embolima he came to know that a great number of the people, after fleeing from Bazira and Ora, had gathered at Aornos. Alexander took the best part of his army with him and succeeded in reducing the place after some hard fighting. This site is identified by Stein (1975:129) with Una-Sar on the Pīr-sar spur in the Mahāban range. With great respect to the eminent explorer, it may however be pointed out that, although Una-Sar has some degree of phonetic resemblance with Aornos, it certainly is a Pashto / Pushto word meaning "Peak with a tree on the top", and that Pashto reached Pīr-Sar nearly eighteen centuries after Alexander's visit to this place. Aornos still remains unidentified.

Alexander crossed the river at Embolima of which the precise location is not known. What precisely this name stands for under its Greek veneer, is not clear. It is noteworthy that several place-names having the first syllable "Amb" are still in use. There is an Amb village, for instance, on the right bank of the Indus from which the Nawāb of Amb took his title during the British period. The village Anbār (perhaps Amb+hār), meaning Amb-land), near Hund, is situated upon an ancient site of which the antiquity has not yet been ascertained. Another Anbār is situated in Swāt. The well-known pass which provides access to Buner from the side of Mardan is called Ambela. Bābur in his *Tuzuk* (1987:376) mentions a road which went through Ambahār and Pānī-Mānī to Hashtnagar. The rājā of Taxila at the time of Alexander's invasion in 326 BCE was known as Ambi. The Ambashṭa (Amb+ashṭa), identified with Abastanoi of Arrian, were in the Panjāb in Alexander's time. In view of this evidence, the nucleus territory of the Ambas, if they were really a tribe, was Swābi and the adjacent territories. Thus all crossing points on the Indus between the Amb village and Hund fell in the territory of the Ambas. The Embolima of classical writers therefore refers to the territory, not the specific crossing-point.

Of the several crossing-points Hund has throughout been the most popular on account of the vast expanse of the river (about three miles) which flowed in several channels separated by spacious islands, called *Belas*, making it comparatively easier to cross and transport heavy siege equipment and provisions. Alexander's usual foresight would not have failed him in selecting the best place for this purpose. It was at Hund therefore that Alexander effected the passage. This is also to some extent reflected in Abu al-Fida's statement that Waihand (Hund) was founded by Alexander (see Cunningham 1990:48). In view of the role played by Hund in history, the crossing-point has now been marked by a commemorative column and a museum.

At Taxila Alexander enjoyed the hospitality of the rājā Ambi for some time and then marching ahead crossed the river Jhelam (Hydaspes) to find that Porus – the redoubtable ruler of the Chaj Doāb (Land between the rivers Jhelam and Chināb (Acesines) – was ready to give battle. For the good luck of Alexander, the rains overnight rendered the ground slippery so that the chariots of Porus kept sticking in the slush and could not operate properly. The failure of the chariot squad in delivering a powerful punch to the front lines of the enemy force, drastically weakened the position of Porus who consequently suffered defeat. Impressed however by the chivalry, Alexander reinstated him in his kingdom and moved on. After some hard fighting on the way, he

reached Beās (Hyphasis) in east Panjāb where his troops mutinied and refused to move any further. This brought Alexander's progress to a grinding halt and forced him to retreat. On the way back he lost most of his men in the Gedrosian desert (Balūchistān) and reached Babylon (in modern Irāq) much distressed as the news kept pouring in about the extirpation of his garrisons and satraps posted in Gandhāra and other strategic points. The truth of what was told to him by Kalanos – an Indian sage he met at Taxila, who demonstrated to him how futile it was to operate in parts too far away from the centre to be easily controlled – must have painfully dawned upon him, before he expired in 323 BCE.

IX

In the *melee* that followed Alexander's death two very important developments took place: (1) the partitioning of the empire and (2) the rise of Chandragupta Maurya.

Perdiccas who succeeded Alexander wanted to maintain unity of the empire under his own rule, so also did Antigonos, "the one – eyed" who desired to restore the empire as suited him. The situation changed to a great extent when Seleucus triumphantly entered Babylon in 312 BCE. The year of his entry marks the beginning of the Seleucid era of reckoning. In 305 BCE Seleucus made a bold attempt to restore Greek rule in Gandhāra and Panjāb. With this objective in view, he reached the Indus but there was no rājā Ambi to receive him. Instead, there was a young man, the chivalrous Chandragupta, who appears to have inflicted a crushing defeat on him. Greek historians do not give details of this battle and merely record the result saying that Seleucus ceded to Chandragupta territories then known as Aria, Arachosia and Paropamisadae (the capitals of which were respectively the cities now known as Herāt, Kandahār and Kābul and probably also part of Gedrosia (Balūchistān) (Majumdar 1980:60), in return for 500 elephants. It is obvious that Seleucus fared badly in the battle and that there was nothing for the Greek writers to boast about, hence their silence.

Chandragupta (324-300 BCE) stands head and shoulders above the ancient monarchs of India. He created the largest empire India had yet seen. It is unfortunate that no authentic record of his early life is available to make a correct assessment of the circumstances in which he rose to greatness. If however the accounts of his humble family background found in the Brahmanic, Jain and Greek sources are true, it can be safely assumed that, in view of his unparalleled achievements, he was a military genius. From humble beginning to the pinnacle of glory was a long distance which he covered with astonishing success, obviously meeting on the way the Greek garrisons in the Panjāb left behind by Alexander, and the powerful Nandās who ruled the rest of northern India. Both were effectively dealt with.

Chandragupta had the dynastic title Maurya. Where from he took it, opinions differ. But the subject is highly significant and needs to be probed in some details. The earliest Brahmanical source, the *Purāṇas,* merely say that the Nandās were uprooted by the Brāhman Kauṭilya. But a commentator on the *Vishṇu Purāṇa* tells us that the title Maurya is derived from Murā, the name of Chandragupta's mother who was the wife of King Nandā. This however is neither grammatically nor historically true. Similarly a commentator on the drama *Mudrārākshasa* says that Chandragupta was the son of Maurya and his wife Murā who was a Śūdra. These are merely wild guesses, for, Maurya can only be derived from the masculine Mura which is the name of a gotra in the Gaṇpāṭha of Pāṇini.

The Buddhist tradition however gives an entirely different version. The *Mahāvaṁsa* and the *Mahāparinirvāṇasūtra* tell us that neither was Chandragupta himself base-born, nor his family background humble. He was rather the scion of the Kshatriya clan called Moriya, the ruler of Pipphalivana which probably lay at some distance to the west of Kuśinagara. Whatever the credibility of the Buddhist tradition, the original homeland of the Mauryas, it seems more probable, was lower Swāt where a lofty mountain (in the vicinity of modern Thānā), still bears the name Mora, also pronounced as Mura. It was from the lower Swāt valley therefore that Chandragupta made the beginning of his rise to power. Thus Kauṭilya did

not have to go to the distant Pāṭaliputra (present Patna), the Nandā capital, to bring Chandragupta – a young boy in whose forehead he read the signs of future greatness – to train him at Taxila. Kauṭilya was a resident of Taxila, and Chandragupta in lower Swāt, was, one may say, his next door neighbour. The Mauryas like many other smaller clans must have gone through a period of severe hardships during Alexander's depredations in the Swāt valley, and it is not unlikely that feelings of revenge may have ignited the imagination of the young man, that Chandragupta must have been at that time, to motivate his like-minded friends to get together and rise against the tyrannical foreign rule.

How did he manage it at the initial stage is not known for certain, though his course of action may not have been different from that of others who rose to greatness under similar circumstances. One such example is Ya'qūb b. Laith, a coppersmith (Ṣaffār in Arabic), who, utterly dissatisfied with his profession, took to highway robbery. As time passed other fortune-seekers joined him adding thereby to his military strength. This little army first challenged the governor of Sīstān and then conquered the whole territory between Sīstān and Kābul and thus laid the foundation of a powerful Ṣaffārid monarchy (870 CE).

The Pāli work *Mahāvaṁsaṭikā* tells us how Chāṇakya (Kauṭilya) and Chandragupta set out for collecting recruits from different places until they were made into a large army. Chāṇakya's *Arthaśāstra* (a work dealing with statecraft) throws light on the composition of such an army: robbers and bandits, highlanders, organised gangs of brigands, foresters, and warrior clans provide the most suitable recruits.

Presumably, the army was initially recruited from Gandhāra and the neighbouring hill valleys. With this army Chandragupta wiped off the Nandā kingdom and inflicted a crushing defeat on Seleucus as mentioned above.

Chandragupta's grandson Aśoka (c. 273-236 BCE) was a great patron of Buddhism. A unique feature of his history is that he has himself left a record of it in a permanent form in inscriptions engraved on natural rocks as well as monolithic columns specially constructed for this purpose, which stand to this day. Two sets of fourteen Rock Edicts in Kharoshṭhi writing are found at Mānsehrā and Shāhbāzgaṛhi in Gandhāra (present Khyber Pakhtunkhwa). According to the Buddhist work *Mahāvaṁsa* the third Buddhist Council met in the time of Aśoka at his capital Pāṭaliputra and deputed missionaries to different countries. The monk Majjantikā was despatched to Kashmīr and Gandhāra for the purpose of propagation. Faxian (400 CE) records a curious tradition regarding Aśoka's opening up of some stupas having the relics of the Buddha's body, and distributing them among 84,000 stupas of his own construction. This exaggerated account is not borne out by the existing remains. The walls of the halls at the rock-cut caves at Barābar and Nāgārjuni hills are still shining like mirrors. So also is the polish of Aśoka's columns – a legacy of the Achaemenian period.

X

Some three centuries elapsed between the fall of the Mauryan empire shortly after the death of Aśoka and the establishment of the Kushan empire sometime in the first century CE. During that period Gandhāra witnessed the rise and fall of the Bactrian Greeks, the Sakas, and the Indo-Parthians – all had their origin in Central Asia.

We have seen above how Seleucus laid the foundation of the Seleucid monarchy. Under his successor Antiochus 1 (280-261 BCE), the first signs of weakness in the Seleucid empire appeared, and it is generally considered that Persia became almost independent. The reign of his successor Antiochus II (261-246 BCE), was marked by series of territorial losses: Bactria beginning to break away and Parthia with Hyrcania seceding about 249-248 BCE. Shortly afterwards the Seleucid governor of Bactria, Diodotus, gradually made himself independent. On his death Diodotus II openly assumed a royal title. He was overthrown by Euthydemos. During his reign the Seleucid monarch Antiochus the Great made a determined effort in 206 BCE to assert his authority over the lost territories, but in vain. Euthydemos was succeeded by his son Demetrius. Strabo (64 BCE – 19 CE) says that among the Greek kings who conquered India, Menander and Demetrius,

whom he calls "king of the Indians", played an important role. The decline of the Mauryan power in the Kābul valley and Gandhāra provided a good opportunity to Demetrius to conquer territories south of the Hindu Kush. According to Justin, Demetrius was overthrown by Eucratides who conquered further territories in India. But he was assassinated by his own son about 145 BCE.

Eucratides' usurpation of power in Bactria when Demetrius was away on an Indian expedition, divided the Greeks into two camps whose internecine fights weakened the Greek power in Bactria. Forty Greek kings, some may have been contemporary with each other are known to have issued coins. Many of these wielded power merely in Gandhāra and the territories further east with Taxila as the capital city. These are dubbed as Indo-Greeks by the modern writers. The most important of these was Menander who is mentioned in the Buddhist work *Milindapañha* (the Questions of Menander) written in Sanskrit somewhere in Gandhāra. It relates a conversation alleged to have taken place between king Milinda (Menander) and the Buddhist sage Nāgasena on the nature of the soul, the Eightfold path and liberation from the wheel of births (see also Schmiedchen 2017). Menander is also mentioned in a Buddhist reliquary inscription found in Bajauṛ. Apparently, he was originally an army commander of Demetrius and succeeded to the Bactrian power in northern India which, as general, he had himself created.

Continuous political strife prevalent among the Greeks not only set themselves against each other but also undermined the establishment of a lasting Greek civilization in Gandhāra. Despite this, they deserve the credit for issuing some of the finest coinage ever struck. Similarly, numerous decorative features in Gandhāra art were undoubtedly based upon their Greek originals.

XI

The Greeks ruled Gandhāra for about a century (approx. 185-90 BCE) until the country fell apart into a group of petty states which could not stand up against the advancing Sakas (Scythians). Strabo and Justin mention the names of the Scythian tribes such as Asii, Pasiani, Tokhari and Sakarauli who swept away the Greek rule in Bactria (Whitehead 1914:171) and spread in the vast stretch of land from the Oxus river to Sīstān (actually Sakastān or Saka-land). There is no doubt that the western part of northern India was conquered by these Scythian tribes who had their base in Sīstān. In the course of time they adopted the Iranian culture and merged into the local population. It was probably at this time that some of the Saka tribes entered the *pusht* (back) of the Koh Sulimān and came to be known as *Pushtāna* for the simple reason that they had occupied the "back" of the great mountain. It was a blanket term which covered all the tribes who settled in the *pusht* whatever their original tribal designations.

Other tribes who did not make the *pusht* their home have kept their ancient tribal names till today. These include the Tauri, Neuri, Budini, Geloni and Dāwaṛ. The Tauri (present Toru) now occupy a large tract of land along the Durand Line above Thal in the tribal territory of Pakistan. Their original home was a "great mountainous promontory" near the Black Sea (Herodotus 1973:304). They were either Scythians or their neighbours and their chief attended the conference of Scythian chiefs convened to work out a strategy to deal with the highly critical situation created by the invasion of the Scythian territory by the Achaemenian emperor Darius (522-486 BCE). Mentioning a curious custom prevalent among the Tauris, Herodotus (p. 305) goes on to say: "Any one of them who takes a prisoner in war, cuts off his head and carries it home, where he sets it up high over the house on a long pole, generally above the chimney. The heads are supposed to act as guardians of the whole house over which they hang. War and plunder are the sources of this people's livelihood".

With regard to the Neuri, Herodotus remarks that they shared the customs of Scythia. A generation before the campaign of Darius they were forced to quit their country by snakes, which appeared all over the place in great numbers, while still more invaded them from the uninhabited region to the north, until life became so unendurable that they had to move out and take up their quarters with the Budini. When did they

arrive in Nūristān (correctly Neuristān: Neuriland), their present abode in Afghānistān, is not known. There is no doubt however that Nūristān as the name of a spacious side valley (darra) of the Hindu Kush, has so far been misunderstood and incorrectly interpreted as the "Land of Nūr" (Nūr being an Arabic word for "light"). No *Nūr* or effulgence emanated from this *darra* in the past, nor does it today. As a matter of fact Nūristān came to be known as such only after the Neuri occupation of this land.

Another place-name similarly misunderstood is Budni – the name of the southern most branch of the Kābul flowing near the city of Peshāwar. According to A.H. Dani (1969:9) Budni literally means "old". But the Hindi word for "old" is Budhi (feminine), not Budni. This actually is the name of a Scythian tribe which, having been expelled from Nangrahār in Afghānistān fled to Peshāwar (Darweza 1960:107-09) and settled on the banks of this river which came to be known as such because it flowed through the territory of the Budni tribe.

Nangrahār was not the original home of the Budnis or Budinis as Herodotus (1973:306) writes this name. The Budini leaders also took part in the conference of the Scythian chiefs mentioned above. According to Herodotus the Budinis were a numerous and powerful nation. They had blue-grey eyes and red hair. There was a town in their territory, he further informs us, called Gelonus, all built of wood. The Gelonis (present Gilāni or Jīlāni) were originally Greeks, who, driven out of their seaports along the coast, settled among the Budinis (probably in the Caspian region). How and when did they arrive in Nangrahār is not known. But it is certain that they were expelled by Sulṭān Behrām of Pīch. A section of the Budnis or Budīnis seems to have migrated to lower Sindh where they settled down permanently and raised their families. With the lapse of time the site developed into a city and is now known as Badīn. Another place-name having obvious connection with the Budīnis is the shrine of Shaikh Budīn in the Pezu Gap through which passes the Bannu – D.I. Khān highway.

Another place-name so far incorrectly interpreted is Zamīn Dāwar, the name of a district in Afghānistān. The *Tārīkh-i Sīstān* (p.407) mentions a fort called Qala'-i Dāwari. Ibn Khallikān's reference (1968: IV, 302) to Darāri Turks, although differently interpreted by Cunningham (1967:59) and Elliot (1867: II, 413), is, in our view, an obvious scribal error for Dāwari Turks. The letter *r* in Dāwar actually represents its retroflex form ṛ, which does not exist in Arabic writing in which this name was first reported. The actual form of this name is therefore Zamīn Dāwaṛ (Dāwaṛ Land). The Dāwaṛs now occupy the banks of the river Tochi to the west of Bannu in Pakistan. All Muslim historians refer to them as Turks.

XII

After this brief but important diversion, we now turn to an outline of the political changes in Gandhāra. Of the Scythian kings, Maues was the first to move upwards from Sindh and reach as far as Taxila, the centre of the Greek power in India. The Greek rule however lingered on and ended only with the reign of Strato II who, along with his son survived in east Panjāb until the very first years of the Christian era (Osmund 1995:45). Under Apollodotus the Greeks temporarily succeeded in recovering the territorial losses in the Panjāb, but luck did not favour them for long and they were finally expelled from this region around 55 BCE by another Scythian prince, Azes I, who dethroned Hippostratus, the last Greek king to rule in west Panjāb including Taxila and Pushkalāvati (Ibid: 45). Thus the kingdom founded by Diodotus about 250 BCE, after passing through various phases of its history over a period of 195 years finally succumbed to the Scythian invaders. In east Panjāb however it held on till 10-20 CE, when the Scythian governor Rajuvula put an end to it. It has been suggested that the well known era of 57 BCE, generally known as the Vikram era, owed its origin to the Scythian king Azes I (Ibid).

According to Cunningham, there were three distinct dynasties of the Sakas or Indo-Scythian rulers whose names have been preserved on their coins: one proceeding from Vonones and his lieutenants Spalahores and Spalagadames, holding to the west of the Indus; a second from Maues or Moa, and Azes, in the Panjāb; and a

third in Sindh and western Central India to which the great satrap Nahapana belonged. The coins of the three prominent kings, Maues, Azes and Azilises are found chiefly in the Panjāb and rarely in Afghānistān (Whitehead 1914:1, 91).

In one type of his coins the name of Azes is found on the Greek side (obverse), but is absent from the Kharoshṭhi side (reverse) where we find a long inscription reading (trans.) "Aspavarma, son of Indravarma, the victorious general". Aśpavarma apparently was an Indian general and subordinate ruler of the suzerain monarch, Azes. It is interesting to note that the same name also occurs on some of the coins of Gondophares, the Indo-Parthian ruler who uprooted the Scythians.

It is certain that the Scythian kingdoms in Gedrosia, Sindh and the Panjāb were independent of Parthia, though Sīstān and the neighbouring kingdom Arachosia, seem to have acknowledged its overlordship until perhaps the end of the first century BCE when Gondophares brought these territories under his control. Gondophares established an empire stretching from Sīstān to beyond the Indus including Gandhāra. The term Indo-Parthian shows that Gondophares, although Parthian in origin, was not a vassal of the Arsacids – the royal Parthians. The fame and power of Gondophares may be judged from the fact that his name is mentioned in a Christian tradition connected with the Saint, Thomas. More conspicuous however was his success against the Sakas in India. The discovery of a record of his reign at Takht-i Bahi near Mardān coupled with the tradition of a Parthian named Phraates ruling in Taxila in 43-44 CE, point to the Parthian occupation of Gandhāra (Majumdar 1980:129).

On his coins Gondophares mentions, besides others, the name of his *stratega* (military governor) Aśpavarman, son of Indravarman. On the coins of Indravarman, he is mentioned as the son of Vijayamitra, probably the same chief whose name occurs in the Shīnkoṭ (Bajauṛ) casket inscription. Aśpavarma is no doubt the governor of that name who is associated on some coins with Azes. It is clear that Aśpavarma first ruled over a district in north western Pakistan as a viceroy of the Saka king Azes and then transferred his allegiance to the Parthian conqueror Gondophares. Towards the end of his reign (48 CE) Gondophares seems to have ousted Hermaeus, the last Greek king of the Kābul valley, inspite of the help the latter received from his Kushan ally, Kujula Kadphises.

Sir Olaf Caroe, and before him Herzfeld, believed that Gondophares belonged to the Parthian feudal house of Suren, the mightiest of all the Arsacid feudatory chiefs, who dominated in Sīstān. Its might was tested on the battle field of Carrhae (53 BCE) when the Parthian cavalry led by Suren charged down on the Roman infantry under Crassus who was coming to invade Parthia in the hope of securing rich plunder, and cut it into pieces. The Carrhae, Caroe (1958:72) remarks, was one of the world's decisive battles.

XIII

In the first half of the first century CE the Kushāns, the royal branch of the great Yue-chi tribe, enter history with their king Kujula Kadphises who crossed the Hindu Kush, occupied the Kābul valley and extended his sway to the river Indus, seizing on the way countries from the last princes of Parthian origin, the successors of Gondophares. Kujula was succeeded by his son Wima Takto as mentioned in the Rabātak inscription which contains a complete genealogical table of the early Kushāns from Kujula to Kanishka. D.W. MacDowall (2002:164) has expressed serious doubts regarding the precise reading of this name, for, the first half of the line in which it occurs is almost illegible. No coins bearing the name Wima Takto have come to light so far. Joe Cribb believes that the Soter Megas series of coins of a nameless king was actually issued by Wima Takto. D.W. MacDowall (op.cit.) has however serious reservations regarding this identification. Another son of Kujula, Sadashkano, is mentioned in the Kharoshṭhi inscription of Senavarma, king of Odi (Bailey 1980:21-29).

Wima Takto was succeeded by Wima Kadphises. He was the first, according to Chinese evidence, to extend his rule over Tien-tchou or India proper identified by most scholars with the Panjāb. Wima established a gold coinage of Roman weight standard (124 gains or 8.035 grammes). He also issued an extensive copper coinage. The

gold currency of Wima was continued not only by his Kushan successors but also by the Guptas when the supremacy of northern India passed to them. The evidence of his coins show that Wima was a devotee of Maheśvara (Śiva) unlike Kujula who was inclined to Buddhism.

Wima was succeed by his son Kanishka, the greatest among the Kushān rulers, whose empire stretched from Bihār in the east to Khurāsān in the west, and from Konkan in the south to Khotān in the north. After Aśoka he was the greatest patron of Buddhism. Xuanzang and Albīrūni have recorded legends that refer to the grand monastery and stupa at his capital Peshāwar. Archaeological research has shown that the stupa was built just outside the present Ganj Gate at a place now called Shah-ji-ki-Dheri, with a superstructure of carved wood rising in thirteen stories to a height of some 400 feet, and surmounted by an iron pinnacle. It was visited by Sung-yun, a Chinese pilgrim at the beginning of the sixth century (518 CE) by which time it had thrice been destroyed by fire and as often rebuilt by pious kings. The ruins of this stupa, in the centre of which was found the famous Kanishka relic casket now on display in the Peshawar Museum, were brought to light by Spooner in 1909.

To the west of the stupa was the grand monastery which continued to flourish as a place of Buddhist education as late as the ninth century CE when it was visited by Vira Deva, an eminent Buddhist scholar. Xuanzang (629 CE) mentions several Buddhist saint – scholars such as Nārāyaṇadeva, Āsaṅga Bodhisattva, Vāsubandhu Bodhisattva, Dharmatrāta, Manorhita, Pārśva the noble who had been associated with this monastery in the past. Of these Āsaṅga and Vāsubandhu were brothers and belonged to Peshāwar. In 1875 Lt. Crompton and then Hargreaves tried to locate the remnants of this magnificent monastery but in vain. The place is now occupied by modern houses.

It is a strange reflection that Kanishka, the most fervent patron of Buddhism preferred to depict upon his coinage so varied a range of deities as to suggest a tolerant syncretism. It seems this eclectic experience continued to guide him throughout his life rather than firm commitment to any religion. The Kushāns were a warrior race and depended upon the force of their arms than on any ideology. Whatever the case may be there is no doubt that it was due to his enthusiastic patronage, whether it was concerned with convening a grand conference, or building the tallest stupa in the Buddhist world or constructing a grand monastery which became the rendezvous of great philosophers, that Gandhāra became the home of a great civilization especially as regards arts. It was under the Kushāns that the channels of trade between the Roman world and further Asia were opened up, Hinayāna (Lesser Vehicle) developed into Mahāyāna (Greater Vehicle) and Buddha image appeared for the first time. It was a period of great literary activity as suggested by the works of Aśvaghosha, Nāgārjuna and others. The eastern boundary of the empire was pushed far into the Ganges valley and a new capital, Mathurā, created for the control of the eastern provinces. Kanishka was the founder of an era in the sense that his regnal reckoning was continued by his successors.

Thus Kanishka's reign is associated with the years 2-23, of Vāsishka with 24-28, of Huvishka with 28-60, of Kanishka, son of Vajheshka with 41, and Vāsudeva with 67-98. Some scholars have suggested that Kanishka era is no other than the Śaka-Kāla of 78 CE.

Whatever we may think of Kanishka's real faith, the actual promoters of Buddhism in Gandhāra at the grassroots level were the feudal houses of the Apracas and the Oḍis and others whose names have not come to light as yet. The Apracas and Oḍis have left behind inscriptions which throw light upon the role they played in the construction of religious monuments. The chiefs of these feudal houses were known under the title *Rājā* generally translated as "king", but unlike the traditional kings who enjoyed absolute powers, these Rājās were subordinate to other sovereigns.

The construction of stupas and chaityas (burial mounds and shrines) was looked upon as an act of great merit. In the *Mahāparinirvāṇasūtra* we find directions for the construction of stupas and chaityas. The same sūtra enjoins the common man to worship at the stupas with garlands and unguents. In Gandhāra the stupas and shrines

were in general built of stones picked up from river beds or quarried afresh. This involved huge sums of money and labour which only the Rājās could afford. The first of these, Vijaya-mitra, an Apraca king, who established the relics of the Śakyamuni, was associated with the reign of the Indo-Greek king Menander (mid 2nd century BCE). Several reliquary inscriptions of the descendants of Vijaya-mitra are now available. A number of these are dated in the Azes' era and belong to the first century CE. Aspavarma, a descendant of Vijayamitra is associated with the Scythian king Azes as well as with the Indo-Parthian Gondophares as noted above. It is unfortunate that except for one which comes from Shīnkoṭ (Bajauṛ), the actual find spots of the rest are not known. All are written in Gandhāri Prakrit language and Kharoshṭhi script typical of late first century BCE. It has been suggested that the Apracas ruled in Bajauṛ and possibly Charsada as well.

If Apraca is the same as Prācha, a tribe thinly scattered in the Peshāwar valley, Hazāra and the Panjāb, the place called Sāwal Dher which marks the site of an ancient city of which the ruins have, through illegal diggings, yielded Buddhist sculptures, Kushān copper coins and stumps of a substantially built citadel wall showing diaper masonry, may presumably be the capital of the Apraca rājās, for, the Sāwals, after whose name this site is known, are a major branch of the Prāchas.

The Oḍis emerged as a powerful feudal house during the early Kushān period. Seṇavarma, son of Ayidasena, their king, has left behind a gold tablet bearing fourteen lines in Kharoshṭhi script which mentions the construction of a magnificent stupa. The inscription also tells us that the body-relics of the Buddha were brought and deposited in the stupa by Vāsusena, another king of the Oḍis from the same Ishmaho family to which Seṇavarma himself belonged. It refers to a certain Sadashkaṇo, son of the great king, king of kings Kuyula Kataphśa (Kujula Kadphises).

The actual find spot of the inscription is not known but during my visit in 1992 to Tīrāt village (actually Tīrath meaning "place of pilgrimage") which marks the site of a great Buddhist establishment from which was collected a stone block containing the footprints of the Buddha now exhibited in the Swāt Museum, I was told that a "gold book" was found there by an antiquity dealer and sold away. This probably was the site where Seṇavarma built his stupa.

The Oḍis have left behind their traces in several place-names. There is an Oḍigrām (Oḍi village) in Bajauṛ, another in Dīr and a third in Swāt. In the town called Pīr Sabāk, opposite Nowshera, there is an Oḍi street (in Pashtu Oḍiyāno Mohalla); the range of hills opposite Attock fort at the right bank of the river Indus, was known as Oḍi Ghar (Oḍi mountain) before this name was changed into Cherāt hills by the Geological Survey of India during the British period. On the summit of this mountain General Court, as reported by Cunningham (1990:49-52), saw the vestiges of a fort of which the foundation was attributed to Rājā Hoḍi. This Rājā is also mentioned in the folklore as a powerful ruler who came from the north and had several fights with Rājā Risālu of Siālkot. The last of the Hoḍi Rājās is said to have been defeated by Sulṭān Maḥmūd of Ghazna.

The folklore does not mention the precise name of this Rājā but we know from the Ghaznavid historical records that the Rājā's name was Jayapāla who ruled over a vast kingdom extending from the Kābul valley to the Panjāb, from his capital Udabhāṇḍapura (present Hund some 15 miles above Attock). Jayapāla Shāhi suffered a disastrous defeat at the hands of Maḥmūd in 1001 CE near Peshāwar and was made a prisoner. After his release he reached Hund and burnt himself to death. His son Ānandapāla shifted the capital to Nandana (near Bāghānwālā in the Salt Range). It is not known for certain but it is quite likely that Jayapāla was a distant descendant of Seṇavarma of the gold tablet mentioned above. While Seṇavarma was an enthusiastic Buddhist, Jayapāla was a fervent Śaiva. At what time this change occurred in the lengthy history of the Oḍis is not known.

Jayapāla was succeeded by his son Ānandapāla who shifted the capital to Nandana. Ānandapāla's son Trilocanapāla was killed in 1021 CE and Bhīmapāla the last ruler of this line – "men of noble sentiment and noble bearing" (Sachau 1992:ii,

13) – in 1026 CE. The rest of the Śāhis fled to Kashmīr where they continued to play important role in the political affairs of that country for sometime. Albīrūni (1958:348-51) refers to these rulers as *ash-Shahiyya al-Hindiyya* (literally the Indian Śāhis) translated by Sachau (1992:ii, 13) as "Hindu Shāhi". As Sachau's translation smacks of religious bias, it should better be dropped in favour of Oḍi Shahi.

The Kushān power declined shortly after the reign of Vāsudeva (c. 45-176 CE). The Saka satraps owing allegiance to Kanishka I began to rule large parts of western and central India practically like independent monarchs. The Kushān empire in fact had already passed its prime and may have split into two kingdoms – a Bactrian and an Indian – or even into more, all engaged in a war of attrition.

The decline of the Kushān empire coincided with the rise of a great power in Irān, the Sāsānian dynasty. Shāpūr, son of Ardashīr, son of Pāpak, son of Sāsān (the founder) ascended the throne in about 239 or 241 CE. His long inscription on the walls of the fire temple at Naqsh-i Rustam not only record his victorious campaigns against the Romans but also in the north in Transcaucasia. According to this inscription the Sāsānian empire included Makuran, Paradān, India and Kushanshāhr right upto Paskibur and upto Kash, Soghd and Shash. This passage has been discussed by various scholars including Ghirshman (1961:292) and Frye (1976:243). The victorious army of Shāpūr, Ghirshman remarks, seized Peshāwar, the winter capital of the Kushān king, occupied the Indus valley, and pushing north crossed the Hindu Kush, conquered Bactria, crossed over the Oxus and entered Samarkand and Tashkand. All the territories to the north of the Hindu Kush were annexed. The Sāsānian princes who ruled these territories are generally termed as Kushāno-Sāsānian.

Sometime in the fifth century CE the Kushāno-Sāsānian rule appears to have been swept away by a powerful Kushān prince named Kidāra. The Chinese text *Wei-Shu* (Chap. C, ii, fol. 15) has the details:

"Due to the frequent troubles from the Jouan-jouans, who were living to the north of Luchien-shih, the capital of the Yue-chis, the latter tribe migrated to the west and established themselves in Polo (perhaps Balkh). Then their king Ki-to-lo (Kidāra), who was brave, raised an army and led it to the south of the Great Mountain and attacked the north of India. He occupied Kan-to-lo (Gandhāra) and five other adjacent kingdoms. Later on this king Ki-to-lo was pursued by the Hiung-nus (Huns). He then left his son in Polousha (Peshāwar) and went to fight with the invading army. His son and successors were thus established in Peshāwar and were henceforth known as the little Yue-chis". The *Wei-Shu* does not tell us the precise date of this event. According to Cunningham (1894:280), the occupation of Gandhāra by Kidāra took place about 425 CE because, firstly, the Brāhmi inscriptions upon his coins do not appear to be earlier than the fifth century CE and, secondly, because his silver coins seem to be of the same age as Bahrām V who reigned from 420 to 440 CE.

XIV

The Huns or Ephthalites finally succeeded in forcing the Hindu Kush barrier and reach Peshāwar where they established themselves two full generations before the visit of Sung-yun in 520 CE, or say, 470 CE, if 25 years is good enough time for one generation. The Chinese pilgrim calls the reigning king a Ye-tha, that is an Ephthalite. The name of the first Ye-tha king of Gandhāra, as reported by Sung-yun was read by Beal as Lae-lih and by Chavannes and Pelliot as Tigin. Taking clue from the latter reading Biswas (1973:54-55) equates Tigin with Tunjīna mentioned by Kalhaṇa (Bk II, v, 97) and presumes that Tunjīna was the father of Toramāṇa and grandfather of Mihirakula – the two famous Ephthalite rulers whose copper coins are found in large number in the Panjāb, Gandhāra and Kashmīr.

The name Toramāṇa, according to Karabacek (Bühler 1983/1892:239) is derived from the Turkish original Tūramān or Toremān meaning a "rebel or an insurgent". Besides coins and the *Rājataraṅgiṇi*, this name is found in three inscriptional records coming from Kura in the Salt Range (Bühler 1983/1892:238), Eran in the Sāgar district (Fleet 1970: no.36, 158-161) and

Gwalior (Fleet 1970: no.37, 161-64). Much has been made of the slight difference in the royal titles given to Toramāṇa in these inscriptions. In the Erān inscription he is called *Mahārājādhirāja Śri Toramāṇa,* the Kura inscription has *Mahārājādhirāja Toramāṇa Sāha Jauvlah*. This difference has suggested to some writers that there were more than one Toramāṇas. But the fact is that these records were not commissioned by the ruling Hun monarchs, nor did they give the engravers a uniform formula to be followed. It is obvious that the local chiefs who were responsible for producing these records merely followed the local patterns as current at that time in the widely distant lands. Thus there is no need to read too much in the slightly different patterns; Toramāṇa was one and the same person.

Toramāṇa was succeeded by his son Mihirakula about 515 CE in the rule of the territories conquered by him from Kābul to Mālwa (central India). However, after extensive campaigns Mihirakula was defeated by Bāladitya of Magadha and Yaśodharman, and forced to retire to Gandhāra and Kashmīr about 530 CE. From here he appears to have endeavoured to recover his lost dominions in the direction of the lower Indus valley. What happened to him after this, is not known. This much is however certain that the charisma these dashing horsemen from central Asia had created under the chivalrous advance of Toramāṇa and Mihirakula into the central parts of India, was finally shattered by the humiliating defeat of Mihirakula. Nevertheless its impact remained alive in the minds of the Indian chiefs who, even long after this event, considered their success against a Hun feudal lord a matter of great pride.

Kalhaṇa has recorded the names of several rulers who succeeded Mihirakula, but it is impossible to put them in a precise chronological order. Of these only Narendrāditya, who had the second name Khinkhila is known not only from the *Rājataraṅgiṇi* (BK1, vv. 347-349), but also from two inscriptional records of which one comes from Hund (Nasim Khan 1998-99:77) and the other from Gardez, some 70 miles to the south of Kābul, which mentions merely Khiṃgala (see Kuwayama 1999:69).

In the Buddhist tradition the Huns are remembered as notorious persecutors of Buddhism, who greatly contributed to its decline. Supporting this view Sir John Marshall found very clear evidence at Taxila where topmost levels of different sites yielded Ephthalite coins. Even if they were not quite as bad as held by the Buddhists, the main principle of Buddhism–non–violence – did not suit the temperament of the warrior horsemen whose lust for territory took them from Gandhāra to central India. Right from the beginning, or at least from the time of Mihirakula, as his coins and also Kalhaṇa's account show, the Huns accepted Hinduism as their religion, thus taking the first step towards initiating the process of Indianization. Smith (1958:191) believed that the Huns were the ancestral stock of some of the Rājpūt clans.

Sung-yun, as noted above, calls the reigning king of Gandhāra a Ye-tha of which the Chinese full form is Ye-tha-i-li-to. The classical writers report it as Ephthalite or Hephthalite, i.e. belonging to Ephthal or Hephthal. Its Persian form is Haftāl and Arabic Haiṭāl of which the plural is Hayāṭilah. Simocatta (in Biswas 1973:16) wrote the same name as Abdele. Obviously Ephthal/ Hephthal, Haftāl, Haiṭāl are different forms of one and same name. It is interesting to note that Aḥmad Shāh, the founder of the present state of Afghānistān, was a scion of the Abdāli tribe. It was sometime after his enthronement that Aḥmad Shāh Abdāli took the title *Durr-i Daurān* (Pearl of the Age) on the advice of his *Pīr* (mentor) Ṣābir Shāh, contracted into Durrāni.

The Iranian – Ephthalite relations were never enviable. But they took a new turn when Fīrūz, the elder son of Yazdgird (438-59 CE), having been superceded by his younger brother Hormazd, took refuge with the Ephthalites who helped him in recovering his throne. This help was of course not free of cost: Fīrūz had to cede Tūrān and its dependencies to the Ephthalite ruler Ikhshanwar or Khushnevāz in return for this service. The cost was high and Fīrūz did not like it at heart. Having consolidated his position at home, he thought of recovering the lost territories and made two attempts for this purpose. In the first attempt he lost the battle and fell into the enemy hands; in

the second (484 CE), he put everything at stake and, taking all his sons with him except Kubād, the youngest, perished in a fierce clash against the Ephthalites. Persia now lost even the provinces of Merv and Herāt and was forced to pay annual tribute. For about half a century after the death of Fīrūz, the Ephthalite ruler not only exacted a heavy annual tribute in cash but also intervened in the domestic affairs of Irān.

Kubād who succeeded Fīrūz was deposed by the nobility in favour of Balāsh and, following the example of his father, he fled to the Ephthalites in the hope of getting help from them. But help was not readily available. It took the Ephthalite ruler four years to bring back Kubād and install him on the Sāsānian throne. There was no let up in the annual tribute.

Under Khusro (531-79 CE), the successor of Kubād, the monarchy emerged successful from the long drawn struggle between the aristocracy and people. All classes including the priests recognized the authority of the prince. Khusro felt sufficiently strong to refuse paying tribute to the Ephthalites. Twenty years later (about 558) Khusro formed an alliance with the Western Turks and finally smashed the Ephthalite power. The eastern frontier of Irān was fixed on the Oxus. The rest of the Ephthalite territories in the east were taken over by the Turks.

Shortly after Xuanzang's visit to Balkh in 629 CE, the mighty empire of the western Turks collapsed. The Qarlūqs, a nomad tribe, rebelled against the Turk chief T'ung Shih-hu and put him to death (Chavannes 1900:25-26, 53). The Khanate was split into two groups of which the names are known only in Chinese transcription: the Nu-Shih-pi tribes to the west and south west of Issyk Kol, and the Tu-lu tribes north-east of that lake. The Nu-Shih-pi and Tu-lu wore themselves out in obscure battles. A Tu-lu Khān, himself named Tu-lu attempted at one stage to reunite the two groups and attack the Chinese military colonies in the Hami area. But the Chinese general Kuo Hiao-K'o defeated them about 642 CE. Moreover, the Chinese supported the Nu-Shih-pi hordes against the Tu-lu and the harassed Khān fled to Bactria where he disappeared (Ibid: 27-32, 56-58).

What happed to Tu-lu after his disappearance is not known. But Albīrūni's information, although based upon hearsay, regarding the sudden appearance of a Turk, named Barhatigīn in the vicinity of Kābul, may appear to be meaningful in the context of the rise of the Turk Śāhi dynasty. But, owing to the absence of a tangible piece of evidence in this regard, the identification of Tu-lu or one of his descendants, with Barhatigīn would remain merely a surmise. No written evidence exists, Kuwayama (1999:57) aptly remarks, for the Western Turks having crossed the Hindu Kush to the south anytime between 558 (the year of the Turks' first appearance in Tokhāristān) and 628-29 (the time of Xuanzang's visit to these countries). The *Da Tang Xiu ji* (vol.12), he further remarks, terms the king of Fulishisatangna a Turkish. This certainly suggests that the Turkish tribes had lived in Kābul since before 629. Where was this country precisely situated, Xuanzang does not explicitly state, though his narration suggests that it was located somewhere between Kapiśa and Zābulistān. It seems therefore likely that the country mentioned by Arab writes as Kābulistān, designating all the territory in between Ghazni and Kābul, was perhaps known to Xuanzang as Fulishisatangna, even though it shows no visible similarity with the former. The capital city of the Kābul Shāh, first invaded by Ibn Samurah was known to Ya'qūbi as Jurwās and to Istakhri as Ṭābān (Le Strange 1977:349). The name Kābul is only occasionally mentioned by Muslim chroniclers, though its use goes back to the time of the Classical Writers.

The presence of Turks as the ruling power in the areas called Zābulistān and al-Rukhkhaj (Arachosia) in the century preceding the rise of the Hindu Śāhis (Oḍi Śāhis) is well attested by the accounts of Arab chroniclers as well as by Chinese notices. Here we give just a few examples. Aḥnaf b. Qais, a commander of Ibn 'Āmar, the governor of Baṣrah in 649-59 CE, was despatched by the latter to fight the Hayāṭila (Turks) in Kūhistān, who were actually Turks (Balādhuri 1968:394) near modern Herāt. Another commander of Ibn 'Āmar, fighting on the Hind frontier, was killed by the Turks in Qīqān (modern Quetta and Pīshīn valley (Ibid: 421). In Qīqān again Muhallab, the famous ancestor of the Muhallabi chiefs of Khurāsān,

encountered eighteen Turkish horsemen in the year 664 CE (Ibid: 421). The poet Yazīd b. Rib'i was blamed for distracting the attention of 'Abbād b. Ziyād, the governor of Sīstān in 678 CE, and thus preventing him from fighting with the Turks (Ṭabari 1964: ii, 190). During the parallel caliphate of Ibn Zubair (682-92 CE) 'Abd al-'Aziz, the governor of Sīstān, had to fight a difficult battle with the ruler of Zābulistān, Rutbīl, whose armies consisted of Turks (*Tārīkh-i Sīstān*: 105-06). Against the Rutbīl again, 'Ubaid Allāh, the new governor of Sīstān, marched in 697 CE, but the Turkish armies of the former kept retreating for a while (Ṭabari 1964: ii, 1036-37). In the year 699 CE, when Ḥajjāj, the Umayyid governor of Baṣrah, despatched Ibn Ash'ath to avenge a former defeat, the Rutbīl was known as the king of the Turks. The Rutbīl is also said to have bodyguards enlisted from the local Turks, at-Turk al-Dāwari (Bosworth 1963:36). The *Tang-Shu* records a mixed population of the T'u Chüeh (Turk) and the people of Ki-pin in Zābulistān (Chavannes 1900:160). Hye Ch'ao (726 CE) mentions a Turk ruler of Gandhāra whose father acknowledged the suzerainty of the king of Kapiśa – a Kṣattreya by caste. Wu K'ong (751-90 CE) also refers to a Turk (Tegīn) as the ruler of Gandhāra.

XV

The ruler of Kapīśa at the time of Xuanzang's visit (629 CE) was a Kṣattreya who ruled over some ten neighbouring countries which he had brought into subjection. Under what names these counties were known Xuanzang has nothing to say, neither does he expatiate on the meaning of the name Kapīśa. This name is first mentioned by Pānīṇī (Beal 1969:54, n.190) and then by a number of classical writers such as Ptolemy, Pliny, Solinus under slightly variant forms as Kapisa, Capissa, Caphasa etc. (Ibid). It may however be a corrupted form of Koh Pīch. The Darah of Pīch in northern Afghānistān is mentioned by Bābur (1987:212) in connection with his excursions in the Kābul valley to bring the whole territory under his control. Raverty (1976:107) is more precise regarding the geographical location of this *darah*. West of the Darah of Chaghān Sarae (White Inn), he writes, is another *darah* of considerable extent, called the Darah of Pīch which is about twenty five Kuroh (one and a half mile to a Kuroh) in length. Narrating an historical event of great importance connected with this darah, Akhund Darwezā – a venerable saint and writer of Peshāwar – remarks (1969:113-14) that the Gibari Sulṭān Behrām, having emerged from this darah brought the countries from Jalālābād to Kashmīr, Swāt and Bajaur under his sway. If so, the countries brought into subjection by the Kṣattreya ruler might have comprised, besides Kapīśa, Lamghān, Nagarahāra, Kābulistān, Zābulistān, Bajaur, Swāt, Gandhāra, Hazāra, etc.

Xuanzang does not mention the name of the Kṣattriya ruler. However, the *Tang-shu* refers to a certain Hing-ye (Khingal) as the ancestor of Ho-hie-tche who ruled Ki-pin (Kapiśa) in 642 CE (Chavannes 1900:131). Twelve generations have passed, the *Tang-shu* further records, since the time of Hing-ye. Taking twenty five years as the average span of one generation 'twelve generations' would take 300 year to complete. Subtracting 300 from 642, we get 342 CE as the initial year of Hing-ye's rule. At this time the Kushan power was on the decline and the time best suited adventurism. It was perhaps under such circumstances that Hing-ye irrupted from Pīch Darah to establish his rule over the 'ten neighbouring countries'.

In commerce the people of Kapiśa, Xuanzang further adds, use gold, silver and also little copper coins which in appearance and stamp differ from those of other counties, but he does explicitly say that such coins were locally manufactured, though his statement does suggest that it probably was the case. Surprisingly no gold coins have so far come to light, and even the silver and copper coins bearing the legend *Deva Śāhi Khingila,* Stein (1979:1, 65) remarks, belong to the Ephthalite series and were struck in Kashmīr. On numismatic grounds these fall in the fifth or sixth century CE.

A king of Kashmīr named Khinkhila, who ruled for more than thirty-six years is mentioned by Kalhaṇa in the Rājataraṅgiṇī (Stein 1979:1, 52, v. 347). This king had the second name Narendrāditya. It may be mentioned here that he was not the only one who had this kind of a second name. Even the king Lahkhana in Kalhaṇa's list of rulers also figures with the second name of

Narendrāditya. Typologically, his coins too fall in the Ephthalite series. In a fragmentary proto-Śāradā inscription of about the seventh century (Nasim 1998-99:77-83), Narendrāditya is written clearly, but, whether it refers to Khinkhila or Lahkhana is hard to say. A silver coin of the Ephthalite type with the legend *Rāja Lahkhana Udayāditya* bears close resemblance to the coin of Khingila and is therefore also ascribed to Kashmīr (Stein 1979:1, 85). It appears very probable, Stein further remarks, that by the Lahkhana – Narendrāditya of the chronicle is meant the same ruler who calls himself Lahkhana Udayāditya on his coins.

The Kābul image of Gaṇesha, actually from Gardez, bears an early Śāradā inscription of about the seventh or early eighth century, which mentions a mahārājadirāja Śri Khiṃgāla (Kuwayama 1999:68-71). The word following his name has become problematical because of its variant readings given by eminent scholars. G. Tucci (1958:279-328) read this name and the following word as Khiṃgalo-tyāna, suggesting that *otyana* may stand for Uḍḍyāna (Swāt). Therefore Khingalo-tyāna may be translated as Khiṃgala, the king of Uḍḍyāna. D.C. Sircar (1963:44-47) however prefers the reading Khiṃgālautyāta suggesting that Otyata was a second name of Khiṃgāla. Prof. Hid'e Nakatani (Kuwayama 1999:71) gives the reading Khiṃgālauḍyāna (Khiṃgāla, the king of Oḍḍyāna). The ink rubbing of the inscription in Kuwayama neither entirely supports the reading of D.C. Sircar, nor that of Prof. Hid'e Nakatani. In our opinion both G. Tucci and D.C. Sircar have correctly read the conjunt *tya*, but in the case of the following letter *na* D.C. Sircar's reading appears to be less credible than that of Tucci, for, the left limb of the Śāradā letter *ta* is more prominent than what we see here (cf. aṣṭtame). Prof. Hid'e Nakatani's reading *ḍya* is even less convincing, for, the Śāradā letter *ḍa* always shows a loop in the middle, which is lacking in the present case. The reading *otyāna* appears to be correct, whatever it may signify. Whether *Odyāna* was intended and written as *Otyāna* by mistake is difficult to say. And then why after all Khiṃgāla has necessarily to be associated with Odyāna (Swāt) alone? Xuanzang tells us that the Kṣattrya ruler (who was no other than Khingāla as we have seen above) had brought ten neighbouring countries under his control; Swāt must have been one of them.

The last reference to a Khinkhil/Khinjil in historical literature is found in Ya'qūbi (1969:479) who says that the Abbasid Caliph al-Mahdi (775-785) sent messengers to different kings exhorting them to submit to his authority and that amongst those who did submit was the Kābul Shāh Khinkhil/Khinjil. As the name is written without the characteristic dots which distinguish *kh* from *j*, it can be read either way. This shows that Khinjil was not removed from his office and must have continued to live as a subordinate king.

In 786, Hārūn al-Rashīd succeeded al-Mahdi and assigned Afghānistān to Faḍl b. Yaḥyā in 793. During his tenure as the *amīr* of Afghānistān Faḍl despatched Ibrāhīm b. Jabal to invade Kapisa through Ghorband. As a result of this the city of Bigrām, the capital of the Kabul valley, and the Buddhist place of worship, the celebrated Shābahār, Ghubār (1967:80) writes, were razed to the ground. After this disastrous event, Ghubār further remarks, the capital was shifted to Kābul situated on the bank of the river Logar.

XVI

Both Hye Ch'ao (726 CE) (Fuchs 1938:445) and Wu-K'ong (751 CE) (Levi, S. and Chavannes 1895:357) refer to Turks as rulers of Gandhāra, Kapisa and Zābulistān. Wu-K'ong records to have seen some monasteries in Gandhāra known after the names of the T'u Chüeh king and his wife (K'ohtun/Khātūn). The Pakhtūn historian Khwāju (1977:120) mentions a certain Hiṣār Begham (literally a "Careless Fort") which does not make sense as the name of a fort. If however it was Begam (meaning wife/Khātūn), then it may be the one mentioned by Wu-K'ong. Begham is situated between Sehri Bahlol and Sher Khanai about two and a half miles from the former.

According to Hye Ch'ao, the father of the Tu-Chüeh (Turk) ruler of Gandhāra was formerly subordinate to the king of Jibin (Kapiśa). But later when he had enough force, he assassinated him and ascended the throne. (This king of Jibin

was apparently the same as the Kṣattriya ruler mentioned by Xuanzang and Khinkhil/Khinjil or Khingāla of other sources). In about 640 CE when Xuanzang returned from India, he was received by the ruler of Kapiśa at Hund (Stein 1900:1, 87, n. 6). This shows that the T'u Chüeh of Gandhāra was still under the over lordship of Kapiśa and that it was sometime after this date that he succeeded in killing his erstwhile overlord and usurping his throne. Although it is not clearly stated by Hye Ch'ao that the usurper was the Turkish king contemporary with him, and not his father, but this is how it is taken by Kuwayama (1999:58). This means that the alleged usurpation must have taken place sometime in 726 CE or a little before. This put an end to the Khingal rule in Kipin. As a result the Buddhist Turks of Gandhāra extended their sway to Kapiśa. We have seen above that Kapiśa was invaded by Ibrāhīm b. Jabal who destroyed both Bigrām, the capital, and Shābahār, the celebrated Buddhist place of worship, sometime after 793 CE, and that the capital was shifted to Kābul.

With the end of the Khingal rule shortly before 726, the Turks dominated the entire territory comprising Gandhāra, Kapiśa, Kābul and Zābulistān as mentioned by Hye Ch'ao and others, referred to above. But we still have a Khinkhil, the Kābul Shāh, contemporary with the Caliph al-Mahdi (775-785), as mentioned by Ya'qūbi to deal with. There are only two ways to explain this puzzle: (1) Khinjil, the Kābul Shāh, was a descendant of the last king of Kapiśa assassinated by the Turks of Gandhāra, who succeeded in establishing himself at Kābul even if for a short time in or before the reign of al-Mahdi; (2) the Kābul Shāhs too were actually an offshoot of the Khinjils of Kapiśa taken (or perhaps mistaken) for the Turks.

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