









General view of Excavations at Pataliputra

# CHANDRAGUPTA MAURYA

BY

PURUSHOTTAM LAL BHARGAVA, M. A., Shastri

*With a Foreword*

BY

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## PREFACE.

As a student of history I have always been fascinated by the career of Chandragupta Maurya, one of the greatest of kings, conquerors and administrators the world has produced. It is indeed strange that such a great personage should have passed almost unnoticed by historians, for there is so far, to my knowledge, not a single book in English describing exclusively his achievements. I was aware of my incompetence to take up this task, yet I thought I might make an attempt. This small monograph is the result. In it, I have tried to describe, in a brief compass, the life and career of Chandragupta making use of all the original sources I could lay my hands upon. I have deviated from the accepted views where I found better evidence to the contrary. For instance, I have accepted the Jain date for the coronation of Chandragupta as it is better supported by facts than the date hitherto generally

accepted. In some matters, of course, it is difficult to achieve any kind of finality till further evidence comes to notice, for example in the case of the pre-Maurya history of Magadha; in such cases I have simply mentioned the probabilities without emphasising the correctness of my views.

Recently, there have been controversies on many points, of more or less important bearing on the subject. I have referred to them in the text where relevant, but I would like to mention one of them here as the text was already printed when it came to my notice. I refer to the controversy regarding the relation of the Brihatkatha to the Mudrarakshasa. Mr. C. D. Chatterji, in a very learned article, which appeared in the *Indian Culture*, Vol. I no 2, has expressed doubt on the authenticity of the statement found in the Dasarupavaloka that the Mudrarakshasa was based on the Brihatkatha, and has shown at length that the two verses following in support of this statement are later interpolations. His arguments in support of the view that the plot of the Mudrarakshasa can not have been taken from the Brihatkatha are, no doubt, convincing. Yet, there is nothing to disprove the probability that the idea of Chandragupta's Nanda descent was suggested to Visakhadatta by the Brihatkatha.

Unfortunately, the book suffers from the lack of proper diacritical marks for Sanskrit words as from a few printing errors here and there. I hope to remedy



## PREFACE

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them in the second edition if and when that comes to be published.

These observations will be incomplete if I did not express my obligation to the different persons from whom I received inspiration and help. If it be not regarded as too personal, I shall, among them, place first my dear father, who goaded me to write out these pages. Among those from whom I received constant encouragement, I would like to mention the names of my kind teacher Mr. K. A. S. Iyer, M.A., Head of the Sanskrit Department, Lucknow University, and Pandit Brijnath Sharga, M. A., LL.B. Advocate. Mr. C. D. Chatterji, M. A., lecturer in Ancient Indian History in the Lucknow University, for whom I entertain high regard as my teacher, was very kind to suggest to me some original sources for the work and to give me his ungrudging help whenever I approached him for the same. I am indebted to Dr. Rama Shanker Tripathi, M.A., Ph. D., of the Benares Hindu University, for suggesting to me certain papers which proved very useful in my work. I have reserved the expression of my gratitude to my esteemed teacher, Dr. Radha Kumud Mookerji, M.A., Ph.D, an authority on Ancient India, not because he deserves the least but because I can not find adequate words for it. His foreword is perhaps more the outcome of his affection for me as his student than the merit of the book and yet I feel infinite satisfaction when I see this humble attempt

so well reviewed by such a high authority on the subject.

Lucknow : }  
*March 1, 1935.* } PURUSHOTTAM LAL BHARGAVA

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## FOREWORD.

Mr. Purushottam Lal Bhargava deserves every congratulation for writing this nice book on an important period of ancient Indian history. It is a small work dealing with the life and achievements of one of the greatest of India's rulers who had achieved the singular distinction of establishing one common political sovereignty over an Indian empire that had extended right upto the borders of Persia. Unfortunately, the history of such an interesting and important personality has been shrouded to some extent in mystery for want of definite evidence and chronological certainties. What adds to the difficulty of his history is that its sources are so diverse. Brahmanical, Buddhist, Jain and even Greek works have all something to say and record regarding the doings of Chandragupta Maurya. Sometimes these sources belonging to different places and times are equally different in their contents and it is a strain on scholarship to reconcile these differences and work out the way to truth through a maze of contradictions. I am glad to say that the different problems with which the subject is bristling have been ably tackled in this book by its young and promising author who is well equipped for his task by his special knowledge of Sanskrit as a Master of Arts of the Lucknow University

**and of Ancient Indian History and Culture which he has studied in its original sources. It is to be hoped that the appreciation of the work by the students of Indian history, which it undoubtedly deserves, will act as a stimulus to the young author for continuing these arduous researches in further publications enriching Indian historical literature.**

**RADHA KUMUD MOOKERJI.**

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बाराहोमात्मयामेस्तनुमवनविधावास्थितस्यानुरूपां  
यस्य प्राग्दन्तकोटि प्रलयपरिगता शिश्रिये भूतधात्री ।  
म्लेच्छैरुद्विज्यमाना भुजयुगमधुना संश्रिता राजमूर्तेः  
स श्रीमद्बन्धुभृत्यश्चरमवतु महीं पार्थिवश्चन्द्रगुप्तः ॥

Mudrarakshasa VII. 19.

## DETERMINATION OF CHRONOLOGY

Thanks to Sir William Jones' identification of Sandrakottos with Chandragupta, the problem of ancient Indian chronology has become comparatively easy to solve.<sup>1</sup> Many other sources have since been discovered which are capable of rendering further valuable aid in this direction. The Puranas, the Buddhist chronicles of Ceylon<sup>2</sup> and the Jain records, when read together, go a long way in solving the vexed problems of chronology. In the judgment of the present writer it is possible to arrive at nearly precise dates by reconciling the diverse chronologies preserved in these works.

Buddhist and Jain authors usually base their calculations on the dates of the passing away of Buddha and Mahavira respectively, and despite occasional mistakes in other matters, they appear to be generally correct when they date an event in terms of these epochs, which were important enough for them to well remember. Professor Geiger has,

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1. Asiatic Researches Vol. IV. pp. 10-11.
  2. Dipavansa and Mahavansa.

after thorough study of the problem, arrived at the conclusion that the Nirvana of Buddha took place in 483 B. C.<sup>1</sup> The date of the death of Mahavira has similarly been determined by Professor Charpentier, on the authority of the Parisishtaparvan and other Jain works, as 468 B. C.<sup>2</sup> We shall accept these dates in determining the chronology of the kings of Magadha upto Chandragupta.

It is, at present, not possible to verify the Puranic account of the Kings of Magadha before the time of Bimbisara. We, therefore, start with that king. The durations of the reigns of Magadhan kings from Bimbisara downwards are diversely given in the Ceylonese chronicles and the Puranas. The Vayu Purana, which is one of the oldest Puranas, seems to have the best preserved list, as calculations made on its basis most nearly agree with the Buddhist and Jain dates. This will be presently manifest.

Bimbisara reigned for 28 years according to the Puranic account, and inasmuch as he died 8 years before the Nirvana of Buddha according to the Mahavansa, he must have come to the throne 36 years

1 Geiger, *Mahavansa* p. XXVIII. Dr. Fleet also agrees with this date.

2. *Cambridge History of India* Vol. 1 p. 156. This date was also suggested by Jacobi, long ago.



## DETERMINATION OF CHRONOLOGY 3

before Nirvana *i. e.* in 519 B. C.<sup>1</sup> After a reign of 28 years he was succeeded by his son Ajatasatru, whose date of accession would thus be 491 B. C. Ajatasatru reigned for 25 years according to the Vayu Purana and was succeeded by his son Darsaka, who, though ignored by the Buddhists and Jains, was a real figure, as will be shown in the next chapter. The date of Darsaka's accession would be 466 B. C., if we accept the reign-period of Ajatasatru as 25 years. Darsaka also reigned for 25 years according to the Vayu Purana, and therefore his successor Udayi must have come to the throne in 441 B. C. Udayi ruled for 33 years according to the Puranas.<sup>2</sup> He, therefore, must have died in 408 B. C. Here, fortunately, the Jain writings come to our help. According to the Parisishtaparvan, Udayi died 60 years after Mahavira's death which occurred in 468 B. C.<sup>3</sup> Thus,

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1. Buddha died in the eighth year of the reign of Ajatasatru, whose accession synchronized with Bimbisara's death, which thus took place eight years before Nirvana. Vide Mahavansa V.

2. Vide Vayu Purana 99 and Matsya Purana 272 for these references.

3. This work, while closing the account of Udayi's reign, says that 60 years had elapsed since the death of Mahavira at the time when Udayi was succeeded on the throne left vacant by his

according to the Jains also, Udayi died in 408 B. C. This startling result sufficiently establishes the fact that each of the authorities at our disposal has preserved much truth, which we can easily disentangle from falsehood by means of comparison.

The history of the period intervening between the death of Udayi and the rise of the Nandas has been ill-preserved. We can, however, determine the total length of this period. According to the Jain *Parisishtaparvan* a period of 95 years elapsed between the death of Udayi and the accession of Chandragupta, and it may well be correct. The Jains further regard the Nandas as having ruled during the whole of this period of 95 years<sup>1</sup>. The *Vayu Purana*, on the other hand, assigns a total period of only 40 years to the Nandas.<sup>2</sup> The *Mahavansa* assigns a still lesser period, but the difference in this case is more apparent than real,

death. Although the name of the successor is wrongly given as Nanda, the date of the transfer of power from the hands of Udayi appears to be correct. Vide *Parisishtaparvan* VI 243.

1 Not 155 years, as given by Dr. Smith in *Early History of India* 4 page 42. According to the Jains, Udayi died 60 years after Mahavira's death and Chandragupta ascended the throne 155 years after the same event, thus implying an interval of 95 years.

2. Mahapadma Nanda 28 years; his sons 12 years. Total 40 years. Vide *Vayu Purana* 99, 328—29.

## DETERMINATION OF CHRONOLOGY 5

as will be presently clear. According to Curtius the first Nanda murdered his sovereign and then, under the pretence of acting as guardian to the royal children, usurped the supreme authority, and afterwards put the young princes also to death.<sup>1</sup> If, as Professor Rai Chaudhury conjectures, the murdered sovereign was Kalasoka,<sup>2</sup> it is clear that his sons have been allotted a separate period by the Mahavansa solely on the ground that the first Nanda pretended to rule in their name for some time. We may, therefore, consider the whole period between the death of Kalasoka and the rise of Chandragupta as the Nanda period. Thus the period is substantially the same<sup>3</sup> as that allotted by the Vayu Purana. We are, therefore, justified in allotting a period of 40 years to the Nandas. Deducting this figure from the total period of 95 years, that elapsed between the death of Udayi and the rise of Chandragupta according to the Jains, we get 55 years as the period between the death of Udayi and the rise of the Nandas. Curiously enough if we add the reign-periods of the kings from the death of Udayi to the death of Kalasoka as given in the

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1. McCrindle-Invasion of India by Alexander p. 222.

2. Political History of Ancient India p. 154.

3. Kalasoka's sons 22 years; Nandas 22 years. Total 44 years. Vide Mahavansa Parichheda V.

Mahavansa (excluding Nagadasaka, who has been misplaced, as will be shown in the next chapter) we get almost exactly the same figure.<sup>1</sup> The Vayu Purana, like the other Puranas, knows of only two kings during this interval, assigning to them a reign of forty-two and forty-three years respectively; but if, as is probable, forty (chatvarinsat) is only a mistake for twenty-four (chaturvinsat) then it is clear that the Puranas also recognize almost the same period having elapsed during this interval.<sup>2</sup> The fact is that while there is contradiction in details, all the works appear to agree in regard to the total period.

Thus 55 years after the death of Udayi, the Nanda family came to power. The rise of the Nanda family, accordingly, may be dated in 353 B.C. After a period of 40 years the Nandas passed the sovereignty of Magadha to Chandragupta in 313 B. C. This is the date given by the Jains, according to whom Chandragupta acquired throne 155 years after the death of Mahavira or 255 years before the era of Vikramaditya. This date is given, not only in the Parisishtaparvan,<sup>3</sup> but also in other Jain

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1. The exact total which we thus get is 54 years.

2. Such corruptions in the Puranas are numerous. The exact total according to this interpretation of the Puranic text would be 53 years.

3. एवं च श्रीमहावीरमुक्तेर्वर्षराते गते

पंचपंचारादधिके चन्द्रगुप्तोऽभवन्तुपः Parisishtaparvan VIII 339

## DETERMINATION OF CHRONOLOGY 7

works such as the Vicharasreni,<sup>1</sup> the Tithoogaliya Payanna and the Tirthoddhara Prakirnaka. Besides being justified by the conclusions, which we have already arrived at, it is also in agreement with immediate and subsequent events, which we shall now discuss.

Till now scholars have been accustomed to fix the date of Chandragupta by guess. As it has been proved beyond doubt that Chandragupta was a contemporary of Alexander for some time, and came to the throne after the departure of the latter from India, it is certain that he acquired the throne at a date later than 325 B. C. Dr. V. A. Smith fixed 322 B. C., as the date of Chandragupta's accession, assuming that his conquest of Magadha and revolt against Greek authority in the Punjab occurred immediately after the death of Alexander.<sup>2</sup> But there is nothing to warrant such an assumption. The presence of Eudemos in the Punjab till 317 B. C., shows that Chandragupta could hardly have conquered the Punjab till that date. Moreover, we

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1. According to Merutunga, the author of the Vicharasreni, Suhastin, the Jain saint, who converted Samprati, became Yugapradhana 245 years after Mahavira's death, i. e. in 223 B. C. This date agrees very well with the date of Samprati, which we obtain by accepting 313 B. C. for Chandragupta's accession. Vide Appendix B.

2. Early History of India<sup>4</sup>. p. 122.

do not hear a word about such a powerful prince as Porus in Chandragupta's military career, in the north-west frontier, which shows that Porus was not alive at that time. Now, Eudemos quitted India after treacherously slaying an Indian prince who was, most probably, Porus. Thus, even on this ground, Chandragupta could not have conquered the Punjab before 317 B. C. Therefore, the earliest date of the conquest of the Punjab by Chandragupta would be 317 B. C. As for Magadha, the Jains and the Buddhists agree that Chandragupta conquered Magadha after subduing the north-west frontier.<sup>1</sup> As it must have taken a few years to reduce the country east of the Punjab, the date 313 B. C., for the accession of Chandragupta is quite plausible.

This date, moreover, fits in with the date of Asoka. Chandragupta reigned for 24 years according to the concurrent testimony of the Puranas and the Buddhists.<sup>2</sup> He, therefore, must have been succeeded by Bindusara in 289 B. C. There is not the same unanimity about the length of this king's reign

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1. The story of Chandragupta and the old woman, which suggests this fact is found in the *Parisishtaparvan* as well as in the *Mahavansatikā*. Vide Chapter VIII.

2. *Vayu Purana* 99. 331. *Mahavansa Parichcheda*.

## DETERMINATION OF CHRONOLOGY 9

but we shall accept the period allotted by the Vayu Purana, as we have done in other cases. According to it, Bindusara reigned for 25 years.<sup>1</sup> Thus, the date of his death would be 264 B. C. This means that Asoka was inaugurated king in 264 B. C. According to the Mahavansa, Asoka was inaugurated in the 219th year after the death of Buddha,<sup>2</sup> which would also give 264 B. C., as the date for Asoka's inauguration. The assertion of the Mahavansa that Asoka had become king four years before his formal inauguration cannot be accepted as correct, as it is not supported by any other evidence. It seems clear to me from all chronological considerations that there could not have been any considerable interval between the death of Bindusara and the coronation of Asoka; and Asoka's calculation of dates from his *abhisheka* does not necessarily mean, as pointed out by Prof. Bhandarkar, that there was an interval between that event and his father's death.<sup>3</sup>

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1. Vayu Purana 29, 332. The name of Bindusara is erroneously written as Bhadrāsara.

2. जिननिश्चान्तो पच्छा पुरे नस्साभिसिकनो माट्टरंस वस्ससतदयमेवं  
विजानिय Mahavansa Parichcheda V.

3. Bhandarkar—Asoka pp. 9-10.

There can be only one serious objection against this date viz., difficulty in the synchronism of Asoka with the Greek kings mentioned in his edict. But on a closer examination we find that no such difficulty exists. The dates of the Greek kings referred to are thus given in Hultzch's "Inscriptions of Asoka":—

|                                  |                 |
|----------------------------------|-----------------|
| Antiochus II Theos of Syria      | 261-246 B. C.   |
| Ptolemy II Philadelphus of Egypt | 285-247 B. C.   |
| Antigonus Gonatus of Macedonia   | 276-239 B. C.   |
| Magas of Cyrene                  | c 300-250 B. C. |
| Alexander of Corinth             | c 252-244 B. C. |

If we assume the correctness of the assertion that the edict in which the names of these kings are mentioned, was engraved in the 14th year of Asoka's reign,<sup>1</sup> its date would be 251 B. C., and at this date all the kings were alive. Thus there is no difficulty in accepting this chronology, which reconciles Buddhist and Jain dates with Hindu records.

The chronology may be tabulated as follows:—

|            |                   |
|------------|-------------------|
| Bimbisara  | ... 519-491 B. C. |
| Ajatasatru | ... 491-466 B. C. |
| Darsaka    | ... 466-441 B. C. |
| Udayi      | ... 441-408 B. C. |

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1. This is the view of Senart; and it has met with general acceptance.



## DETERMINATION OF CHRONOLOGY 11

Other kings ... 408-353 B. C.

Nandas ... 353-313 B. C.

Chandragupta ... 313-289 B. C.

The Maurya chronology appears at the end of the book.

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## GROWTH OF MAGADHA

There were many kingdoms and republics in India when the founder of Buddhism lived. The most famous kingdoms of that period were Magadha, Avanti, Kosala and Vatsa, while the most important republican clans were the Mallas, the Vrijis, the Sakyas and the Moriyas. The ruling dynasties as well as the republican clans generally belonged to the Kshatriya class. The tendency of the time was towards the growth of monarchies and the republics were generally being merged into the existing kingdoms or otherwise coming under the influence of monarchism. Chandragupta himself, the hero of our story and the 'founder of the greatest Indo-Aryan dynasty known in history',<sup>1</sup> sprang from a republican clan, as we shall see later.

The kingdom of Magadha, which was traditionally founded several centuries before by a king named Brihadratha,<sup>2</sup> was rapidly rising at this period under the rule of a new dynasty whose first important king was Bimbisara. The history of India henceforth

1. Havell-Aryan Rule in India p. 76.

2. This tradition is recorded in the Puranas. Brihadratha was the father of Jarasandha, famous in the Mahabharata.

is the history of this kingdom's growth, which culminated in the rise of the Maurya empire.

Bimbisara began to reign about 519 B. C. and established his capital at Rajagriha. He was a contemporary of Gautama and Mahavira, as well as of Pradyota, Prasenajit and Udayana, the rulers of Avanti, Kosala and Vatsa respectively. He conquered the neighbouring territory of Anga and thereby laid the foundation of Magadhan imperialism.

Bimbisara was succeeded by his son, Ajatasatru, in 491 B.C. The latter was an ambitious monarch and, according to Buddhist accounts, removed his father from the throne<sup>1</sup>. He waged many wars with Prasenajit, the aged king of Kosala. At last, the latter was constrained to conclude peace according to the terms of which he married his daughter to Ajatasatru, ceding the district of Kasi, which became an integral part of Magadha. Ajatasatru defeated the Vrijis also, and annexed Videha to his dominions.

The son who succeeded Ajatasatru in 466 B. C., was Darsaka, according to the Puranas. Some scholars doubt his existence because the Jain and Buddhist writers do not know him<sup>2</sup>. His name,

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1 This is referred to in the Pali canon as well as in the Ceylonese Chronicles.

2. Thus Professor Geiger has remarked: 'Again in the Puranas yet another king, called Darsaka, etc., is inserted between Ajatasatru

however, occurs in Bhasa's *Svapnavasavadatta*, an independent Sanskrit drama, which represents him as a contemporary of Pradyota and Udayana, thereby indirectly supporting even the position assigned to him in the list of Magadhan kings by the Puranas<sup>1</sup>. The omission of his name by Jain and Buddhist writers is, in no way, a hindrance. These writers,<sup>2</sup> for example, make Samprati the direct successor of Asoka, but the Puranas insert Dasaratha in the middle, and no body doubts the existence of Dasaratha, it being proved by his inscriptions in the Nagarjuni hill caves. The case of Darsaka is also similar, and there is no reason to doubt his existence. Moreover, the Jains, although not mentioning Darsaka by name, offer a chronology which perfectly tallies with the chronology of the Puranas, if we admit the existence of Darsaka<sup>3</sup>. Even the Buddhist chronicles of Ceylon mention a king, named Nagadasaka, whom Professor Bhandarkar has identified with Darsaka. But the learned

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and Udayin. That is certainly an error' *Mahavansa*, trans. pp. XLIV, XLV.

1. Mahasena Pradyota and Udayana were already ruling in the time of Ajatasatru according to the Buddhists, and therefore Darsaka could have been their contemporary only by being the immediate successor of Ajatasatru.

2. Vide the *Parisishtaparavan* and the *Divyavadana*.

3. Vide pp. 3-4 supra.

Professor has maintained the position of Nagadasaka according to the chronicles, little caring that there is no independent proof to support that position. Thus, while admitting the identification proposed by Professor Bhandarkar, we see no reason to reject the testimony of the Puranas, Bhasa and chronology in assigning a position to this king. We are, therefore, justified in treating Darsaka, as the immediate successor of Ajatasatru. According to Bhasa, Darsaka continued the foreign policy of his ancestors by concluding matrimonial alliances with the neighbouring potentates<sup>1</sup>.

Darsaka was succeeded in 441 B. C., by Udayi, who was a famous monarch, being celebrated in Jain and Buddhist as well as Hindu works. The Jain and Buddhist writers represent him as a son of Ajatasatru, and it is possible that he was so, the Puranas having made him a son of Darsaka due to the tendency, common to all Indian literature, of making a king the son of his predecessor.<sup>2</sup> Udayi is credited by the Puranic<sup>3</sup> and Jain<sup>4</sup> testimonies with the foundation of Kusumapura

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1. Pradyota, king of Avanti, is represented as seeking the hand of Padmavati, sister of Darsaka, for his own son.

2. The Divyavadana is notorious for it.

3. Vayu Purana 99, 319.

4. Parisishtaparvan VI 180.

or Pataliputra, a city destined to become the capital of one of the greatest empires known in history. The foundation of this city may be dated in the year 438 B. C., following the Puranic account, according to which this event took place in the fourth year of Udayi's reign. Udayi died in 408 B. C., after a reign of 33 years.

Udayi was succeeded by his son and grandson in turn. According to the Puranas, Udayi's son and grandson, who ruled after him, were named Nandivarddhana<sup>1</sup> and Mahanandi respectively. The Buddhists, however, call the son and grandson of Udayi as Anuruddhaka and Munda respectively.<sup>2</sup> It seems to me almost certain that both the authorities

1. Professor Bhandarkar identifies Nandivarddhana, son of Udayi according to the Puranas, with Nandivarddhana, one of the ten sons of Kalasoka according to the Mahabodhivansa. The identification, however, is too far-fetched, there being nothing common between the two, except name. This is not a sufficient reason for identification, as the name Nandivarddhana was not uncommon in ancient India, several persons of that name being recorded in literature. Moreover, Nandivarddhana of the Puranas was the sole successor of his father, while Nandivarddhana of the Mahabodhivansa was one—and not even the eldest—among his ten brothers who are represented as the simultaneous successors of their father, a fact which suggests that none of them really ever ruled.

2. The names of Anuruddhaka and Munda occur in the Ceylonese Chronicles, the latter being mentioned in the Pali canon and the Divyavadana also.

mean the same individuals. The apparent difference may either be due to the fact that the same names have been preserved by our authorities under different forms, or that each of the kings bore more names than one, as was not uncommon in ancient India. Both of these kings are shadowy figures, and nothing is known about them. After Munda, the Ceylonese chronicles place Nagadasaka who has been already identified with Darsaka.<sup>1</sup> Thus the grandson of Udayi remains as the last king of this line, in agreement with the Puranas.

The Ceylonese chronicles next place Susunaga who was followed by his son, Kalasoka. Some scholars have identified these two with Sisunaga and Kakavarna of the Puranas.<sup>2</sup> The latter works, it may be mentioned, place these kings considerably before Bimbisara. There are, however, grounds on which the Ceylonese version can be supported. The Puranas make Sisunaga the destroyer of the dynasty of Pradyota,<sup>3</sup> whose connection with Avanti is also acknowledged by those works.<sup>4</sup> As Pradyota of

1. pp. 14—15 *supra*.

2. Professors Jacobi, Geiger and Bhandarar are the chief among these scholars.

3. Vayu Purana 99.314; Matsya Purana 272. 6.

बृहद्रथेष्वतीतेषु वीरिहोत्रेष्वन्तिषु । पुलकः त्वामिनं हत्वा स्वपुत्र-  
मभिषेद्यति ॥ Matsya Purana 272. 1.

Avanti was undoubtedly a contemporary of Bimbisara, his dynasty could not have been destroyed by Sisunaga, unless we admit that the latter came considerably after Bimbisara. Thus it is certain that either Sisunaga had nothing to do with the Pradyota dynasty or he came considerably after Bimbisara. If the latter alternative be correct, then it is clear that the kingdom of Magadha at this time extended its sway upto Avanti. We cannot, however, be sure until we get further evidence in support of it.

The next family which ruled over Magadha was that of the Nandas. The personal name of the founder of this family seems to have been Nanda, which, in its plural form, became applicable to the whole family, as in other cases (e. g. the Pradyotas). It is obvious from the fact that several authorities give the name of the founder simply as Nanda, and even the Puranic appellation Mahapadma is only an epithet, hinting at the riches of the king, as is apparent from the Bhagavata Purana which dubs the founder in more clear terms as Mahapadmapati (i. e. lord of a vast amount).<sup>1</sup> Mahapadma Nanda had eight sons, whence the family is called as that

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1. महानन्दिसुतो राजन् शहीगर्भोद्भवो बली महापद्मपतिः कश्चिन्नन्दः  
चन्द्रविनाराकुराः Bhagavata P. XII. I.



of the nine Nandas. It is probable, however, that the real ruler throughout was Mahapadma Nanda as, according to many authorities, all the nine Nandas were killed by Chandragupta and Chanakya.<sup>1</sup> The Divyavadana<sup>2</sup> actually mentions only Nanda as having ruled, while Kautilya also calls the ruler dethroned by him simply as Nanda.<sup>3</sup> Even the Greeks give the name of the King of Prassiai as Aggramen, which agrees very well with Ugrasena, an apithet of Mahapadma Nanda according to the Mahabodhivansa. It is true that the Vayu and Matsya Puranas<sup>4</sup> allot a reign of 12 years to the eight sons of Nanda, but that may have been due to the fact that Mahapadma during the last years of his reign rested practically all power in the hands of his sons, who were thus considered virtual rulers during that period—a fact suggested by Dhundhiraja in the introduction to his commentary on the Mudra-Rakshasa.<sup>5</sup> This

1. Vishnu Purana IV. 24; Bhagavata Purana XII 1. Mudra-Rakshasa Act I sloka 13.

2. Divyavadana pp. 319 ff.

3. येन शास्त्रं च शास्त्रं च नन्दराजगता च भूः अमर्षेणोद्धतान्याशु तेन शास्त्रमिदं कृतम् । Arthasastra XV. I.

4. Vayu Purana 99.829 Matsya Purana 272. 21.

5. Mudra-Rakshasa (Nirnaya Sagara) p. 43, sloka 35.

explains why the Greeks also sometimes speak of 'the kings of Prássiá' in plural.<sup>1</sup>

Mahapadma Nanda usurped the throne of Magadha about 353 B. C. According to the Puranas he was the son of the last descendant of Bimbisara<sup>2</sup> by a Sudra woman, but the Jains<sup>3</sup> and the classical writers<sup>4</sup> unanimously represent his father to have been a barber. All the authorities, however, agree that he was a low-born and ambitious monarch. The Puranas assert that many of the dynasties which ruled contemporaneously with the predecessors of Nanda, fell at his rise. These dynasties were the Maithilas, the Kasis, the Ikshvakus, the Kurus, the Panchalas, the Surasenas, the Vitihotras, the Haihayas, the Asmakas and the Kalingas, whose dominions comprised the whole of the Gangetic valley as well as western India and Orissa.<sup>5</sup> Some of them had already been overthrown

1. McCrindle-Invasion of India by Alexander p. 310.

2. That is to say, Mahanandi.

3. Parisishtaparvan VI.

4. McCrindle-Invasion of India by Alexander p. 222.

5. Most of the territories ruled by these dynasties can be identified as follows. N. Bihar (Maithilas) Benares (Kasis), Oudh (Ikshvakus), Agra (Kurus), Kanauj (Panchalas), Muttra (Surasenas), Avanti (Vitihotras), Gujrat (Haihayas) and Orissa (Kalingas). The territory of the Asmakas cannot be definitely identified, but it probably bordered on Avanti.

by previous kings and it was left for Mahapadma to subdue the rest. The conquest of Kalinga was almost certainly accomplished by Mahapadma. In the Hathigumpha inscription, king Kharavela mentions the conquest of Kalinga about 300 years before his time by a king named Nandaraja, who must have been none other than Mahapadma. Some scholars have identified him with a predecessor of Mahapadma by reading a passage as dating the inscription in the 165th year of Muriya Kala, which they interpret as the era of Chandragupta.<sup>1</sup> But even if the reference to the Maurya era has been correctly read, it is not necessary to interpret it as the era of Chandragupta and thereby place the Nandaraja of the inscription considerably before Mahapadma, whose family of nine members is the only Nanda family recognized by all forms of tradition. Moreover, Chandragupta can hardly be credited with the foundation of an era in view of the fact that his grandson Asoka uses his own regnal years. It is more probable that the era referred to is that of Chandragupta's descendant Samprati, who ruled about a century after his

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1. This is the opinion of Messrs. K. P. Jayaswal and B. D. Banerji. The King with whom they identify Nandaraja is Nandivardhana, son of Udayi.

famous ancestor and who is actually known to have founded an era.<sup>1</sup> We may, therefore, believe that the arms of Mahapadma reached upto Kalinga.

Late in the period of the Nanda family, Alexander the Great invaded India. After subduing the countries to the west, he crossed the Indus in 326 B. C. We possess a pretty vivid account of the condition of Northern India at that time, as the Greeks, who came with the invader, as well as the Indians contribute to our knowledge in this case.

The Indus valley at this time was parcelled out among a number of small kingdoms and republics. In the extreme north-west was the kingdom of Taxila, ruled by king Ambhi, who gave a good reception to Alexander, regarding it a fair opportunity for revenge against his rival, Porus, who was perhaps the most powerful king in the Punjab at that time. Porus ruled on the other side of the Jhelum and gave a strong resistance to the invader, but was defeated. Alexander proceeded upto the Beas river and then made a retreat. The retreating army was confronted, among others, by the powerful republican tribes of the Malavas and the Kshudrakas, who gave a severe fight to the invader. Mutual jealousies, however,

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1. Early History of India p. 203n.

proved to be ruinous as usual. Alexander thus became master of the country upto the Beas river.

The whole of the Ganges valley upto Magadha was under the rule of the Nanda family. The Nandas were at the height of their power at the time of the invasion of Alexander the Great. Plutarch informs us that 'the kings of the Gangaridai (Ganges delta) and the Prassiai (Prachi) were reported to be waiting for him with an army of 80,000 horses, 200,000 foot, 8000 war chariots and 6000 fighting elephants'<sup>1</sup>. They were extremely rich and, according to a passage of the Kathasaritsagara, possessed 990 millions of gold pieces<sup>2</sup>. They were, however, very unpopular. The chief reason of their unpopularity was the lowness of their origin. They were also hated on account of their heterodox disposition. The possession of such a huge amount of wealth also probably implies a great deal of extortion on the part of the Nandas.

There are reasons to believe that the great empire built by Mahapadma Nanda showed signs of revolt during the closing period of his reign when he rested all power in the hands of his incapable sons, specially Dhana. The kingdom of Kalinga certainly

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1. McCrindle-Invasion of India by Alexander p. 810.

2. Kathasaritsagara I, IV.

revolted and regained its independence, for if it had remained a part of the Nanda empire, it is unlikely that it could have escaped the iron grip of Chandragupta, whose absence of control over it is implied in a passage in one of the inscriptions of Asoka, its conqueror<sup>1</sup>. Several other kingdoms might have similarly re-asserted their independence.

Such was the condition of India when Chandragupta came on the scene. Magadha had already built up a considerable empire, but the worthlessness of its ruler and the invasion of a foreign king had made the conditions extremely unsettled, and a deliverer was needed. Thus, there were three factors which contributed to the rise of the Maurya empire. The first factor consisted of the conquests effected by the previous rulers of Magadha. The second factor was the unpopularity of the Nandas, coupled with foreign invasion. The third factor was the genius of Chandragupta. If the first factor provided Chandragupta with the resources needed for building a great empire, the second gave him the opportunity to rise. But, above all other things, the main cause of the rise of the glorious Maurya empire was the

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1. In Book Edict XIII Asoka speaks of Kalinga as a country, 'previously unconquered,' which seems to mean unconquered by Asoka's ancestors.

genius of Chandragupta, without which he would not have been able to utilise the resources and the opportunity provided by the first two factors.

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### III

## CAREER OF CHANDRAGUPTA.

We have seen that Northern India was far from being a united country at the time of the invasion of Alexander the Great. But the man who was destined to do more than achieve this unity was already born. This heroic figure was Chandragupta.

The ancestry and early life of Chandragupta is recorded in several works of ancient and mediaeval times although, unfortunately, sufficient details are everywhere lacking. It has hitherto been believed by several scholars, on the authority of some mediaeval works, that Chandragupta was a low-caste man and a scion of the Nanda family. The most important of these works is a collection of stories, without any pretensions to history, known as the Brihatkatha which is preserved through many Sanskrit recensions. Its story of the death of Nanda and the re-animation of his body is obviously not deserving of criticism, and its account of the origin of Chandragupta should also be likewise treated, being not supported by other old works. The other work which calls Chandragupta a low-caste man and connects him with Nanda is the *Mudra-Rakshasa*, which is also said by the



Dasarupavaloka to be based on the Brihatkatha.<sup>1</sup> This work contains many inaccuracies such as the assignation of high birth to Nanda, a statement which led the commentators to postulate that the mother of Chandragupta was a Sudra woman, for otherwise how could the son of a high born man be low born.<sup>2</sup> On the other hand, all the older works recognise Chandragupta as a Kshatriya. The Puranas, no doubt, state that Sudra kingship began with Nanda, but it simply means that kings of Sudra caste were not rare from that time, and not that all the subsequent kings were Sudras, for the Puranas themselves designate the Kanva kings, who belonged to one of the subsequent dynasties, as Brahmans.<sup>3</sup> Therefore, when the Puranas describe the Mauryas as a new dynasty, neither connecting them with the Nandas, nor calling them Sudras, it is clear that they recognised them as Kshatriyas, the caste to which the king normally belonged. The Kalpasutra of the Jains

1. बृहत्कथामूलं मुद्राराक्षसम्—Dasarupavaloka.

2. The commentators of the Mudra-Rakshasa and the Vishnu Purana give the name of Chandragupta's grandmother or mother as Mura. This name, so far from being the origin of Maurya, seems to have been suggested by the latter word, as is clear from the fact that Dhundhiraja, the commentator of the Mudra-Rakshasa, gives the name of the mother of the Nandas as Sunanda which has been obviously coined to resemble the word Nanda.

3. 'These 4 Kanva Brahmans will enjoy the earth etc.' (Pargiter p. 71)

mentions a Mauryaputra of the Kasyapa gotra, which shows that the Mauryas were regarded as high class folk.<sup>1</sup> The Buddhist Divyavadana calls Bindusara and Asoka,<sup>2</sup> the son and grandson respectively of Chandragupta, as Kshatriyas. The Buddhist Mahavansa calls Chandragupta himself as a member of the Kshatriya clan of the Moriyas,<sup>3</sup> who are represented by the Mahavansa-tika as a Himalayan off-shoot of the Sakyas.<sup>4</sup> The description of the Moriyas as a Kshatriya clan is confirmed by the Mahaparinibbana Sutta, a portion of the Pali canon and an early authentic work. It mentions the Moriyas as one of the Kshatriya tribes who claimed a portion of the relics of Buddha after the latter's death.<sup>5</sup> This tradition was also recorded in mediaeval inscriptions,

1. S. B. E. Vol 86. p. 286.

2. In the Divyavadana (p. 370) Bindusara said to a woman, 'त्व नापिनी अहं राजा क्षत्रियो मुर्धाभिषिक्तः कथं मया सार्धं समागमो भविष्यति?' In the same work (p. 409) Asoka says to his queen Tishyarakshita 'देवि अहं क्षत्रियः कथं पलायङ्गं परिभक्षयामि'. These passages are significant.

3. मोरियानं क्षत्रियानं वंसे जानं सिरधिरं  
चन्द्रगुप्तोति पञ्चसं चण्डो ब्राह्मणो ततो  
नवमं धननन्दं तं धातेत्वा चण्डकोषसा  
सकले जम्बुदीपसिमे रज्जे समभिसिञ्चि सो ।

4. See chapter VIII sec. A.

5. S. B. E. Vol. XI p. 134.

which call the Maurya family as a branch of the solar race<sup>1</sup> and Chandragupta an abode of the usages of eminent Kshatriyas.<sup>2</sup> Even in modern times, we are aware of a Rajput clan of Moris, whom Tod considered to be the descendants of the Mauryas.<sup>3</sup> Finally, Kautilya himself indirectly suggests the noble origin of his sovereign's family, when he lays down that a high born king, though weak, is better than a lowborn one, though strong.<sup>4</sup> Therefore, it should be regarded as settled that Chandragupta belonged to the Kshatriya clan of the Moriyas.

In the fifth century B. C., the Moriyas were the ruling clan of the republic of Pipphalivana.<sup>5</sup> According to the Mahavansa-tika, which seems to be based on truth and is supported by Jain writings at a further stage, the Moriyas were a branch of the Sakyas and were so called because, when driven by the attack of the Kosalan prince Virudhaka, they left their original home and settled in a place which

1. Ep. Ind. II 222.

2. Rice-Mysore and Coorg from Inscriptions p. 10.

3. The Moris were the ruling clan of Chitor till about 728 A. D. when their territory was wrested by Bappa, the founder of the Sisodia house of Mewar.

4. Arthashastra Book VIII chapter II.

5. Mahaparinibbana Sutta.

abounded in *mayuras* or peacocks. When king Nanda extended his conquests, the Moriyas too must have shared the fate of other clans and monarchies. In fact, we are told by the Mahavansa-tika that Chandragupta's father, whose name unfortunately is not mentioned, was the chief of the Moriya clan and was killed by a powerful Raja, presumably Nanda. Thereafter Chandragupta's mother, who was then pregnant, ran away with her father's relations and lived at Pataliputra in disguise.

At this stage the story is wonderfully corroborated by the Jain Parisishtaparvan and the Utradhyayana-tika, which speak of certain peacock tamers, living near Pataliputra, whose chief's daughter bore Chandragupta.<sup>1</sup> As the Mahavansa-tika expressly says that the Moriya queen and her relations lived in disguise, it is easy to see that the best way of disguising themselves was to act as tamers of peacocks, which were the most familiar objects for the Moriyas. Moreover, as no mention is made of Chandragupta's father in the Jain version it means that it presupposes certain events which, as we have seen, are briefly set forth in the Mahavansa-tika. Thus it is clear from both the Buddhist and Jain accounts that the Moriya family had lost all its

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1. Vide Chapter VIII Sec. B.

previous rank at the time when Chandragupta was born and Justin, the Roman author, rightly observes that Chandragupta was born in humble life.<sup>1</sup> The date of his birth must have been about 345 B. C. as, at the time of Alexander's Indian campaigns in 325 B. C., he was only a boy, probably not more than 20 years of age<sup>2</sup>.

Most of the traditions agree that Chandragupta spent his boyhood in the country of Magadha. According to some of the stories he also lived for some time at the court of King Nanda and being ill-treated plotted against him and was obliged to flee. This account seems to be correct, as it is supported by Justin.<sup>3</sup> There are several stories relating to the uncommon intelligence of Chandragupta even in his boyhood. One of them may be related here with advantage :—

“The Raja of Simhala sent to the Court of the Nandas a cage containing a lion of wax, so well

1. Vide chapter VIII.

2. “Androkottos himself who was then but a youth saw Alexander etc” McCrindle-Invasion of India by Alexander p 311.

3. The story of Dhundhiraja, for example, emphasises the fact that Chandragupta lived at the court of Nanda, and the same thing is suggested by Justin when he says that Chandragupta offended Nandas by his insolent behaviour. Vide Chapter VIII Sec. D.

made that it seemed to be real. He added a message to the effect that any one who could make that fierce animal run without opening the cage should be acknowledged to be an exceptionally talented man. The dullness of the Nandas prevented their understanding the double meaning contained in the message, but Chandragupta, in whom some little breath yet remained, offered to undertake the task. This being allowed, he made an iron rod red hot and thrust it into the figure as a result of which the wax soon ran and the lion disappeared<sup>1</sup>."

We may take it as correct that Chandragupta did live for sometime at the court of Nanda, and being dissatisfied with him, became determined to end his tyrannous rule. He soon got an opportunity. A learned and fiery-tempered Brahman, named Vishnugupta Chanakya, being invited to a religious ceremony at the court of Nanda, was ill-treated by the latter which induced him to take an open vow to revenge against Nanda. Chandragupta then drew Chanakya to his side and instigated a revolt. They were, however, suppressed and obliged to quit the kingdom of Magadha.

Chandragupta then wandered in the northern

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1. Dhundhiraaja's introduction to his commentary on the *Mudra-Raksasa*.

provinces for some time. According to Plutarch, he paid a visit to Alexander also, although there is nothing to indicate that his purpose was to persuade the invader to attack the kingdom of Magadha, as is held by some scholars. A curious story found both in the *Parisishtaparvan* and the *Mahavansa-tika* relates that, while wandering, Chandragupta heard an old woman saying that the cause of his failure was that he revolted against Magadha before conquering the outer provinces, and that, realising his mistake, he made up his mind to conquer the northern provinces. A born leader of men as he was, he soon gathered sufficient men round him to help him in his designs and presently secured the subordinate alliance of a chief named Parvataka, who ruled in some Himalayan district, and whose name finds mention in several independent works.<sup>1</sup>

Chandragupta appears to have begun his career of conquest from the Punjab, perhaps because he could not brook the presence of foreign garrisons in a part of his country, which he had determined to unite under his own sway. Alexander had made his own administrative arrangements in the Punjab

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1. The name of Parvataka occurs in the *Parisishtaparvan*, the *Mahavansa-tika* and the *Mudra-Rakshasa*. Jacob suggests the identification of this chief with a king of Nepal.

when he retreated. An officer, named Philip, was made satrap of the Indus basin, with the confluence of the Punjab rivers with the Indus as the southern boundary of the satrapy. The territory of Sindh was put in charge of Peithon, son of Agenor. King Porus was allowed to rule his own principality as the satrap of Alexander. In 324 B. C., Philip was murdered by his mercenary troops and Eudemos was temporarily appointed in his place, but the death of Alexander in 323 B. C. removed all chances of the arrangement being renewed. At the time of the second partition of the Empire in 321 B. C., the arrangement was continued unaltered, although Peithon, the satrap of Sindh, was transferred to the provinces situated to the west of the river Indus. The Indians were, however, growing intolerant of the domineering foreigners, and the treacherous murder of Porus by Eudemos in 317 B. C. was the signal for revolt. Chandragupta headed the revolt, and Eudemos finding the country too hot for him, quitted India. The Greek officers and soldiers, who still remained in India, were put to the sword and, by 316 B. C., Chandragupta became the unquestioned master of the Punjab.

Having taken possession of the Punjab, Chandragupta advanced towards the east. It is



probable that the provinces of the upper Gangetic valley conquered by Mahapadma Nanda had regained their independence, following his tyrannous rule. These provinces were taken by Chandragupta one by one, although there are indications in the account given by Hemachandra that all of them did not submit with ease. It must have taken a couple of years to reduce completely the portion of the Gangetic valley outside the compressed Nanda dominions.

Chandragupta finally attacked the kingdom of Nanda about 314 B. C. The story of the war between the Nandas and Chandragupta is preserved in several works. According to the *Milindapanho*, the Nanda army was commanded by Bhaddasala<sup>1</sup>. The war is reported to have been a sufficiently serious affair. According to several authorities,<sup>2</sup> all the nine Nandas were killed in this war and the family of Mahapadma was exterminated.

Chandragupta, thus, became master of Northern India. His ally Parvataka also died in the meanwhile, although the legends which relate to the manner of his death are contradictory and

1 S B E 36 p 147.

2 See footnote 1. p. 19 supra.

untrustworthy It is clear that his death removed the only rival who could legitimately claim a share in the conquests, and Chandragupta became the sole master of Northern India. His coronation took place at Pataliputra in 313 B. C.

The events which immediately followed the assumption of authority by Chandragupta are related in the *Mudra-Rakshasa*, a play which, although full of imaginary details, is probably based on events which actually occurred<sup>1</sup>. We learn from it that the son of Parvataka named Malayaketu rose against Chandragupta, with the help of five other chiefs and an ex-minister of king Nanda named Rakshasa. The Machiavellian tactics of Chanakya, whom Chandragupta had made his prime minister, however, succeeded in sowing dissensions in the camp of Malayaketu, and the latter got his own allies murdered. By this act of his, Malayaketu was rendered powerless, but on the intervention of his friend, the ex-minister of Nanda, he was restored in his father's principality as a vassal of Chandragupta.

The Maurya king at this time naturally became secure in his north Indian dominions. But his zeal for conquest could hardly remain satisfied with

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1. This is the opinion of Dr. Smith and Professor Hillebrandt.

what he had already acquired. He pushed his conquests upto the western sea, for we learn from the Junagarh inscription of Rudradaman that Chandragupta had control over Surashtra.<sup>1</sup> Chandragupta also seems to have conquered a considerable portion of trans-Vindhyan India. According to Plutarch, Chandragupta overran all India, which statement, even if we admit of exaggeration, means that Chandragupta conquered the major portion of India.<sup>2</sup> This tradition is recorded in other documents also, for the Mahavansa says that Chandragupta ruled over all Jambudvipa.<sup>3</sup> According to Prof. Aiyangar, Mulnamer, an ancient Tamil author, refers to the advance of Mauryas upto Tinnevely district in early times.<sup>4</sup> Finally, certain Mysore inscriptions refer to Chandragupta's conquest of Mysore.<sup>5</sup> All these statements leave little room for doubt that Chandragupta did conquer a considerable portion of the Deccan.

Chandragupta thus gained recognizance as the paramount sovereign in the whole of India. He had, however, yet to measure strength with the greatest of

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1. Vide Appendix A.

2. McCrindle-Invasion of India by Alexander p. 310

3. Mahavansa Parichchheda V.

4. Beginnings of South Indian History chapter.

5. Rice—Mysore and Coorg from Inscriptions.

his rivals, Seleukos Nikator, formerly a general of Alexander. Seleukos conquered Babylon in 312 B. C. and six years later assumed the title of king. He also subjugated the Bactrians, and then advanced to India, crossing the Indus, about 305 B. C. Shwanbeck has shown at length that Seleukos could not proceed much beyond the Indus,<sup>1</sup> which may be taken to mean that Chandragupta was present in the Punjab at that time. It is, therefore, probable that Chandragupta, not content with the conquest of India, was thinking of marching towards the western regions to emulate the legendary *digvijaya* of Raghu and other ancient kings. Thus, the war between Chandragupta and Seluekos was a clash between two ambitious kings. No detailed account of the actual conflict has survived. But the results, as mentioned by the classical authors, clearly show that Seleukos recognized the superiority of Chandragupta and was obliged to conclude a humiliating treaty. According to this treaty, Seleukos gave a large part of Ariana to Chandragupta in consequence of a marriage alliance. Dr. Smith has very ably shown<sup>2</sup> that the large part of Ariana, referred to by Strabo<sup>3</sup>, was identical with the four satrapies of Aria

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1. This is also the opinion of Lassen and Shlegel.

2. Early History of India<sup>4</sup> p 158

3. McCrindle-Ancient India in classical literature pp. 15 and .88

(Herat) Arachosia (Kandhar) Paropanisadiae (Kabul) and Gedrosia (Baluchistan) all of which Pliny considered as forming part of India.<sup>1</sup> As for the marriage contract, there is no reason to doubt its correctness because both Strabo and Appian refer to it. Thus the real explanation of the whole treaty seems to be that Seleukos married his daughter to Chandragupta, giving the territories of Afghanistan and Baluchistan as a sort of dowry<sup>2</sup>. The two royal families were, in this way, drawn on close friendly terms. We further learn that Chandragupta presented 500 elephants to Seleukos, and the latter sent an envoy named Megasthenes to the Indian court. It is not recorded whether Chandragupta also sent an envoy to the Greek court.

Thus from a homeless wanderer, twelve years before, Chandragupta became the emperor of India and a large part of the former Persian empire. The

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1. McCrindle *Ancient India: Megasthenes and Arrian* p. 156.

2. This view is generally accepted and seems to be correct, as the marriage of Hindu kings with non-Hindu princesses was not unknown in ancient India, the *Mahabharata* mentioning the marriage of Arjuna with a princess of the Naga tribe. On the other hand, a vice-versa case does not appear possible in view of the evident success of the Indian King, besides the fact that in that event the Greeks would naturally have been more explicit, as they are about Alexander's Asiatic marriages.

war with Seleukos was, in all probability, the last war of Chandragupta, and he devoted the remaining sixteen years of his reign in consolidating his empire and establishing a highly efficient system of administration. We can glance something of his personal life at this stage from the writings of Megasthenes preserved in fragments by other writers, and, to some extent, from the Arthashastra of Kautilya, the name by which Chanakya is famous as an author.

Chandragupta lived in a very stately palace, containing gilded pillars adorned with golden vines and silver birds, and furnished with richly carved tables and chairs of state, as well as basins and goblets of gold. "In the Indian royal palace where the greatest of all the kings of the country resides, besides much else which is calculated to excite admiration, and with which neither Susa nor Ekbatana can vie, there are other wonders besides. In the parks tame peacocks are kept, and pheasants which have been domesticated; there are shady groves and pasture grounds planted with trees, and branches which the art of the woodsman has deftly interwoven; while some trees are native to the soil, others are brought from other parts, and with their beauty enhance the charm of the landscape. Parrots

are natives of the country, and keep hovering about the king and wheeling round him, and vast though their numbers be, no Indian ever eats a parrot. The Brachmanes honour them highly above all other birds—because the parrot alone can imitate human speech. Within the palace grounds are artificial ponds in which they keep fish of enormous size but quite tame. No one has permission to fish for these except the king's sons while yet in their boyhood. These youngsters amuse themselves while fishing in the unruffled sheet of water and learning how to sail their boats."<sup>1</sup>

Chandragupta spent his leisure hours in the palace. The care of his person was entrusted to females who were armed<sup>2</sup>. He left his palace either for performing administrative duties or for offering sacrifices or for the chase<sup>3</sup>. When he condescended to show himself in public he was clothed in the finest muslin embroidered with purple and gold. When making short journeys he rode on horse-back, but when travelling longer distances he was mounted

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1. McCrindle-Ancient India in Classical literature pp. 141-142.
  2. McCrindle-Ancient India: Megasthenes and Arrian p. 76 ; Arthashastra Book I, Chapter 21.
  3. McCrindle-Ancient India: Megasthenes and Arrian p. 70.

on an elephant. The hair-washing ceremony of the king was performed with great splendour accompanied with rich presents from nobles, as was also the custom in the Persian Court. The king did not sleep in the day time. In the night he used to change his bed-room from time to time in order to defeat any plots against him<sup>1</sup>.

Chandragupta supervised the administration of justice himself. He did not allow the business to be interrupted even if he had to sit for the whole day, and the hour arrived when he had to attend to his person. In such cases, he continued hearing cases, while four attendants massaged him with cylinders of wood.<sup>2</sup> His busy life seems to have been the cause of his abstaining from sleep during the day time. Kautilya, in fact, lays down the precept that a king should so divide his time-table that he may not sleep for more than three hours.<sup>3</sup>

It is interesting to learn that the king left his palace to offer sacrifices also. The fact probably shows that Chandragupta was a Brahmanical Hindu at least for the greater part of his life, although he inclined towards Jainism during his last days, according to Jain authors.

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1 McCrindle-Ancient India: Megasthenes and Arrian p. 70

2. *Ibid* p. 71

3. Arthashastra Book I Chap 20



Chandragupta was also fond of sports. He delighted in witnessing the fights of elephants, bulls, rams and rhinoceroses. A curious entertainment was provided by ox races. The most favourite sport was chase. The road along which he went for chase was marked with ropes, and it was death to pass within the ropes. He shot arrows either from the back of an elephant or from a platform<sup>1</sup>.

Chandragupta led the life of an energetic emperor of a vast empire for 24 years. We do not know much about his family. The name of one of his queens—for he was, in all likelihood, a polygamist like most monarchs of those times—was Durdhara, according to Hemachandra<sup>2</sup>. His only son whose name is known to us under various forms was Bindusara, who succeeded him on the throne of Pataliputra.

Chandragupta died in or about 289 B. C. According to Rajavalikatha, Chandragupta was a Jain and abdicated at the time of a great famine and repaired to Mysore where he died. In certain Mysore inscriptions the summit of the Kalbappu hill, at Sravan Belgola, is said to be marked with the footprints of

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1. McCrindle-Ancient India Megasthenes and Arrian p. 71

2. Vide the Parikshitapurvan.

the great *munis*, Bhadrabahu and Chandragupta<sup>1</sup>. Bhadrabahu was a Jain leader who lived during the reign of Chandragupta. The Jain tradition, however, is very confused with regard to details. Hemachandra, for example, does not speak of the retirement of Chandragupta and Bhadrabahu together to the southern direction. On the other hand, he suggests that Bhadrabahu died in the sixteenth year of Chandragupta's reign<sup>2</sup>. It is probable that Bhadrabahu died before Chandragupta, and that the latter too, some years after, passed away at the same place where Bhadrabahu had died. Whatever be the case, there is no alternative account of the last days of Chandragupta and, as Dr. Smith has contended, we have to trust the Jain version as being based on truth<sup>3</sup>.

1. Rice - Epigraphica Carnatica Vol I, p 31

2. Parisishtaparvan IX. 112.

3. Oxford History of India p. 76.

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## IV

# ADMINISTRATION OF THE EMPIRE

The limits of the empire governed by Chandragupta are not known with absolute precision. But we can approximate to the truth by combining the accounts of foreign writers with the Indian literary and epigraphic evidence.

The empire extended upto the borders of Persia in the north-west as gathered from the terms of the treaty with Suleukos Nikator.<sup>1</sup> It included the whole of the Indo-Gangetic valley extending, in the west upto Kathiawar as is evident from the inscription of Rudradaman, and in the east, upto Bengal which must have passed to Chandragupta from Nanda, who ruled over Gangaradai (Ganges delta) as well as Prassiai (Prachi)<sup>2</sup>.

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1. Kalhana mentions Asoka among the kings of Kashmir, but as Asoka is known to have conquered only Kalinga, we may conclude that Kashmir formed part of the empire of Bindusara and probably also of Chandragupta. The *Mudra-Rakshasa* play mentions the prince of Kashmir among the subordinate allies of Malayaketu, who subsequently became a vassal of Chandragupta.

2. The inclusion of Bengal in the Maurya empire is also implied in the recently discovered *Mahasthan* inscription. The curious reader is referred to Mr. Jaysawal's article in the *Modern Review* May 1933.

Chandragupta probably exercised some control in the Deccan also, as appears from certain Mysore inscriptions as well as other evidences.<sup>1</sup> Taranath, however, represents Bindusara as having conquered sixteen states, which must have been situated in the south, because we know for certain that northern India was firmly held by Chandragupta. It, therefore, means that either Chandragupta was content to receive the submission of the kings of southern India and it was left for Bindusara to annex their territories or that what Bindusara did was mostly the suppression of a general revolt. The latter view seems more tenable, and thus there is nothing to invalidate the belief that Chandragupta was the suzerain of a large portion of southern India. Certain portions of this region, however, seem to have remained independent. The kingdom of Kalinga is described by Megasthenes as possessing considerable military force, and was probably independent before its conquest by Asoka<sup>2</sup>. The kingdom of Andhra, which lay to its south, is also described by Megasthenes as very powerful, and it also might have

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1. Vide p. 37 *supra*.

2. "The royal city of the Calinga is called Parthalis. Over their king 6000 footsoldiers, 1000 horsemen, 700 elephants, keep watch and ward in 'proincet of war'"--McCrindle—Ancient India: Megasthenes and Arrian p. 138.

been independent<sup>1</sup> in the time of Chandragupta. The Pandya, Chola and Kerala kingdoms of the extreme south were also left alone by Chandragupta and his successors.<sup>2</sup> Thus, Chandragupta was the emperor of practically all India proper excluding Kalinga, Andhra and the Tamil land and including Afghanistan and Baluchistan.

It should, however, be remembered that all this vast empire was not under the direct rule of Chandragupta. There were protectorates as has always been the case in Indian history. Kautilya lays down that "conquered kings preserved in their own lands in accordance with the policy of conciliation will be loyal to the conquerer and follow his sons and grandsons."<sup>3</sup> Chandragupta must have followed this policy to some extent. In fact, Kautilya mentions certain sanghas or oligarchies which probably still existed in the time of Chandragupta. These were the Lichchhavis, the Vrijis, the Mallas, the Madras, the Kukuras,

1. "Next come the Andrae a still more powerful race, which possesses numerous villages, and thirty towns defended by walls and towers, and which supplies its king with an army of 100,000 infantry, 2000 cavalry and 1000 elephants"—McCrindle—*Ancient India: Megasthenes and Arrian* p 141.

2. Asoka mentions these kingdoms as independent in his edicts.

3. *Arthashastra* Book VII Chap 16.

the Kurus and the Panchalas, whose presidents or consuls were called Rajas, and the Kambhojas and Surashtras who had no Raja.<sup>1</sup> The Rajas of these oligarchies probably also acted as the representatives of Chandragupta, while those corporations which had no Raja had to be put in charge of a special officer who was called Rashtriya, and was probably identical with Kautilya's Rashtrapala<sup>2</sup>. The Junagarh inscription of Rudradaman mentions Pushyagupta, the Vaisya, as the Rashtriya of Chandragupta in Surashtra which, at that time, had no Raja, but in the time of Asoka we hear of a Yavana Raja, acting on behalf of Asoka, from which it would appear that at that time Surashtra had adopted the institution of Rajaship.<sup>3</sup> Besides the oligarchies, there were also some kingdoms which were ruled by their own Rajas. Megasthenes mentions several such kingdoms, although it is difficult to identify many of them. Moreover, it is not easy to understand from his writings alone as to which of the kingdoms he mentions were protected and which were independent. Yet, as we know the approximate extent of Chandragupta's dominions

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1. Arthashastra Book XI Chap. 1.

2. Ibid Book V Chap. 3.

3. Vide Appendix A.

we may be pretty certain that the kingdoms which were situated within its boundaries were only protected states. "The essence of this imperial system," to sum up in the words of Dr. Radha Kumud Mookerji, "was thus a recognition of local autonomy at the expense of the authority of the central government, which was physically unfit to assert itself except by its enforced affiliation to the pre-existing system of local government."<sup>1</sup>

We have ample material for describing the administration of the Maurya empire and Dr. Smith has rightly observed that "more is known about the policy of India as it was in the Maurya age than can be affirmed on the subject concerning any period intervening between that age and the reign of Akbar eighteen centuries later."<sup>2</sup> The chief source is the account left by the Greek ambassador Megasthenes. The Arthasastra of Kautilya tells us much about the methods of administration, many of which must have been followed by Chandragupta, although the work seems to be largely theoretical. The edicts of Asoka and the ancient works dealing with Hindu polity are also helpful in adding to our information about the administration of that period.

1. Dr. Radha Kumud Mookerji—*Local Government in Ancient India* P. 10

2. *Asoka, the Buddhist Emperor of India* p. 84.

The king was the head of the administration and was absolute in his powers, having to perform military, judicial, legislative as well as executive functions which we shall deal with as occasion arises. It must, however, be remembered that the autocracy of the king in ancient India was always limited by popular institutions which the state thought it safe to recognise. Mr. Jayaswal has shown at length that the Pauras and Janapadas mentioned in Sanskrit literature were really popular assemblies representing citizens and villagers, and had considerable powers.<sup>1</sup>

Kautilya mentions 18 kinds of Amatyas or high officials<sup>2</sup> who supervised all the branches of administration, and were probably identical with the Mahamatras of Asoka. Megasthenes seems to refer to these very officers as comprising the seventh division of Indian population. They were appointed by the king, no doubt, from among men who had popular backing, as Kautilya expressly says that "whatever pleases himself he shall not consider as good, but whatever pleases his subjects he shall consider as good."<sup>3</sup> The appointment of these Amatyas was the chief executive function of the king.

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1. Hindu Polity-Part II pp 70-108.

2. Arthashastra Book I chapter 12.

3. Ibid Book I chapter 19.



The king was assisted by a Parishad or assembly of councillors, which was a sort of parliament.<sup>1</sup> This body must have consisted of a large number of members. The highest officers of the state were the chief ministers, who were not more than four;<sup>2</sup> and the ablest of whom probably acquired prime ministership, which rank seems to have been enjoyed by Chanakya. The salary of a chief minister was 48,000 panas per annum.<sup>3</sup> The value of a pana, according to Dr. Smith, was not far from a shilling.<sup>4</sup>

The military administration was very elaborate and efficient. We have said that the king had also military functions to perform, and this is clear from the fact that according to Megasthenes the king left his palace to lead the army in the time of war.<sup>5</sup> The highest officer of the army was the Senapati or commander-in-chief, who got a salary equal to that of a chief minister.<sup>6</sup>

We learn from Megasthenes that there was a regular war office for military administration. There was a commission of thirty members divided into

1. Arthashastra Book I chapter 15.

2. Ibid Book I chapter 15.

3. Ibid Book V chapter 3.

4. Early History of India<sup>4</sup> p. 149.

5. McCrindle-Ancient India: Megasthenes and Arrian p. 70.

6. Arthashastra Book V chapter 3.

six boards, each consisting of five members.<sup>1</sup> Kautilya also seems to refer to these boards when he says that each department shall be officered by many chiefs.<sup>2</sup> Each board had probably a superintendent, who seems to have been identical with the Adhyaksha of Arthasastra.

The first board was in charge of navy, and worked in co-operation with the admiral who was probably identical with the Navadhyaksha of Arthasastra. This officer performed all the duties relating to ships such as hiring of ships to passengers, collecting toll from merchants, arrest of suspicious persons and destruction of hinsrikas or pirates.<sup>3</sup> The ships were maintained by the state, and were not restricted to rivers but ventured to sea. These regulations clearly show that there was a considerable ocean traffic in Maurya times.

The second board was in charge of transport commissariat and army service, and worked in cooperation with the superintendent of bullock trains who was probably identical with the Go'dhyaksha of Arthasastra.<sup>4</sup> The bullock trains were used for

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1. McCrindle *Ancient India : Megasthenes and Arrian* p. 88.
  2. *Arthasastra* Book II chapter 4.
  3. *Ibid* Book II chapter 28.
  4. *Ibid* Book II chapter 29.

transporting engines of war, food for the soldiers, provender for cattle and other military requisites.

The third board was in charge of infantry, whose superintendent appears to have been the Pattiadhyksha.<sup>1</sup> The size of the infantry is given by both Pliny<sup>2</sup> and Solinus,<sup>3</sup> but unfortunately they greatly disagree. In view of the fact, however, that Asoka had to offer a very severe fight before he could conquer Kalinga, it does not seem likely that the Mauryas really maintained such a huge infantry as Pliny would lead us to believe. It, therefore, appears that the additional zero of Pliny is only a copyist's mistake, as observed by Prof. Rhys Davids,<sup>4</sup> and Solinus is correct when he says that the Prassian infantry consisted of 60000 soldiers. Arrian has preserved an account of the way in which the Indians in those times equipped themselves for war :—

“The foot soldiers”, we are told, “carry a bow made of equal length with the man who bears it. This they rest upon the ground, and pressing against it with their left foot thus discharge the arrow, having drawn the string far backwards: for the shaft they use is little short of being three yards long, and

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1. Arthashastra Book II chapter 33

2. McCrindle-Ancient India: Megasthenes and Arrian p. 141.

3. Ibid p. 161.

4. Buddhist India p. 266.

there is nothing which can resist an Indian archer's shot, neither shield nor breastplate, nor any stronger defence, if such there be. In their left hand they carry bucklers made of undressed ox-hide, which are not so broad as those who carry them, but are about as long. Some are equipped with javelins instead of bows, but all wear a sword, which is broad in the blade, but not longer than three cubits, and this, when they engage in close fight, they wield with both hands, to fetch down a lustier blow."<sup>1</sup>

The fourth board was in charge of cavalry, whose superintendent appears to have been the Asvadyaksha.<sup>2</sup> The Greek authors unanimously state that the cavalry force of Chandragupta numbered 30000. Each horseman was equipped with two lances and with a shorter buckler than that carried by the foot soldiers.<sup>3</sup> The horses of Kamboja and Sindhu were regarded as the best.<sup>4</sup>

The fifth board was in charge of the war elephants whose superintendent was probably the Hastyadyaksha.<sup>5</sup> The elephants in possession of Chandragupta numbered 9000, according to the

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1. **McCrindle-Ancient India: Megasthenes and Arrian p. 225.**
  2. **Arthasastra Book II chapter 30.**
  3. **McCrindle-Ancient India: Megasthenes and Arrian p. 226.**
  4. **Arthasastra Book II chapter 30.**
  5. **Ibid Book II chapter 31.**

highest estimate.<sup>1</sup> Each elephant carried four men including the driver.<sup>2</sup> Thus the highest figure of men with elephants was 36000.

The sixth board was in charge of the war chariots, whose superintendent was probably the Rathadhyaksha.<sup>3</sup> The number of chariots in possession of Chandragupta is not given, but Mahapadma, the predecessor of Chandragupta, possessed 8000 chariots according to the highest estimate,<sup>4</sup> and the number in possession of Chandragupta might be assumed to be the same, as Dr. Smith has suggested.<sup>5</sup> Each chariot carried three men including the driver.<sup>6</sup> Thus the men with chariots may be assumed to have numbered 24000.

The total number of men in the army of Chandragupta would thus have been 1, 50, 000 in all, being more than those kept by any other state in India at that time. The force thus kept was not a militia but a standing army drawing regular pay and supplied by the government with arms and

1. This is the number given by Pliny: Solinus gives the number as 8000.

2. McCrindle-Ancient India: Megasthenes and Arrian p, 89.

3. Arthashastra Book II chapter 33.

4. McCrindle-Invasion of India by Alexander p, 310.

5. Early History of India 47 p. 132.

6. McCrindle-Ancient India: Megasthenes and Arrian p. 88.

equipment. There were royal stables for horses and elephants and also a royal magazine for the arms.<sup>1</sup>

The civil administration of Chandragupta was equally efficient. The method of city administration prevailing at the time may first be described. The head of the city affairs, according to Kautilya, was the Pura Vyavaharika who was one of the high officers of state.<sup>2</sup> For actual details, however, we must turn to Megasthenes, who has left an account of the way in which Patliputra, the capital, was governed. Other great cities of the empire, such as Taxila and Ujjain probably were also governed on the same lines.

There was a regular municipal commission, which also consisted of six boards, each composed of five members.<sup>3</sup> Kautilya, also, mentions some adhyakshas or superintendents whose duties exactly correspond to the functions of the boards referred to above. Thus the Pautavadhyaksha<sup>4</sup> or the superintendent of weights and measures, the Panyadhyaksha<sup>5</sup> or the

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1. McCrindle-Ancient India: Megasthenes and Arrian p. 88.

2. Arthasastra Book I chapter 12.

3. McCrindle-Ancient India: Megasthenes and Arrian p. 87.

4. Arthasastra Book II chapter 19.

5. Ibid Book II chapter 16.

superintendent of trade and the Sulkadhyaksha<sup>1</sup> or the superintendent of tolls had duties similar to those assigned to the last three boards by Megasthenes. It is, therefore, probable that every board worked in co-operation with a superintendent as in the case of military administration. Much of the administrative elaboration noticed by the Greeks, however, must have been due to the genius of Chandragupta.

The first board looked after everything relating to industrial arts. Its members appear to have been responsible for fixing the rates of wages as well as supervising the work which the artisans did. Artisans were regarded as servants of state, and any body who rendered an artisan incapable of work by causing the loss of his eyes or hands was sentenced to capital punishment.<sup>2</sup>

The second board was responsible for watching the foreigners and attending to their requirements. This board provided the foreigners lodging and escorts and, in case of need, medical attendance. If any foreigner died he was decently buried, and his property was handed over to the rightful claimant. These regulations clearly prove that Chandragupta created wide-spread political and commercial relations

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1. *Arthashastra* Book II chapter 21.

2. *McCrintle-Ancient India: Megasthenes and Arrian* p. 70.

with foreign powers to necessitate such administration.

The third board was in charge of vital statistics. All births and deaths were systematically registered, not only to facilitate the collection of taxes, but also for the information of the government. The high value attached to statistics by the Maurya government has justly evoked the wonder and admiration of modern scholars.

The fourth board supervised commerce, and was authorized to enforce the use of duly stamped weights and measures. A merchant could deal only in one commodity, for which license was given, unless he had paid a double license tax.

The fifth board was required to supervise the trade of manufactured articles. New and old goods were required to be sold separately, and there was a fine for mixing the two. It appears from the Arthashastra that old things could be sold only by special permission.<sup>1</sup>

The sixth board collected tithes on sales, the rate being one-tenth of the profit. If any one practised fraud in the payment of this tax, his punishment was death, probably when the amount

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1. Arthashastra Book IV Chapter 2.



involved was large.<sup>1</sup> It, however, appears that evasion of this tax for honest reasons was not so treated. Even then the penalty was very severe according to modern standards.<sup>2</sup>

In their collective capacity the members of the municipal commission were responsible for the general administration of the city and for keeping the markets, temples, harbours and other public works of the city in order.

It was recognised that "all undertakings depend upon finance"<sup>3</sup>. There was, therefore, a special officer for the collection of revenue called the Samaharta or Collector-general, who got a salary of 24000 panas per annum<sup>4</sup>. He supervised the collection of dues from mines, forests, cattles and roads of traffic, as well as land revenue<sup>5</sup>. Like other great officers he probably also had many adhyakshas or superintendents under him. Thus he must have

1, This regulation appears to be identical with that given by Kautilya in connection with the payment of tolls, viz., "Those who utter a lie shall be punished as thieves" (Arthashastra II. 21). If this is so, then fraud involving a large amount only must have been punished by death, as in the case of theft. The words of Kautilya clearly prove that evasion of taxes by dishonest means only was punishable.

2. It may be mentioned here that as late as the eighteenth century forgery was a capital offence in English law.

3. Arthashastra Book II chapter 8.

4. Ibid Book V chapter 3.

5. Ibid Book II chapter 6.

been assisted by the Akaradhyaksha<sup>1</sup> in the realisation of dues from mines, by the Kupadhyaksha<sup>2</sup> in the realisation of forest dues and by the Sitadhayaksha<sup>3</sup> in the realisation of land revenue.

The mainstay of finance must have been land revenue as it is even now. The normal share of the crown recognized by Hindu lawgivers was  $\frac{1}{8}$ th of the gross produce<sup>4</sup>, which is also referred to by Kautilya in one place<sup>5</sup>. Diodorus, however, mentions the share of the government having been  $\frac{1}{4}$ th of the gross produce. The fact seems to be that in practice the proportion varied largely and all provinces were not treated alike. The farmers were benevolently treated, agriculture being regarded as a great prop for the people. Megasthenes remarks that "there are usages observed by the Indians which contribute to prevent the occurrence of famine among them; for whereas among other nations it is usual, in the contests of war, to ravage the soil and thus to reduce it to an uncultivated waste, among the Indians, on the contrary, by whom

1. Arthasastra Book II chapter 12.
2. Ibid Book II chapter 17.
3. I bid Book II chapter 24.
4. Manu 7.130, Yajn. 1. 13, 335.
5. Arthasastra Book I chapter 13.

husbandmen are regarded as a class that is sacred and unviolable, the tillers of the soil, even when battle is raging in their neighbourhood, are undisturbed by any sense of danger, for the combatants on either side in waging the conflict make carnage of each other, but allow those engaged in husbandry to remain quite unmolested."<sup>1</sup> When famine did occur, the state promulgated various relief measures, which shall be described in the next chapter.

We learn from Megasthenes that the government also paid great attention to irrigation, which seems to have been one of the functions of the agricultural department. The duty of the irrigation officers was to "superintend the rivers, measure the land and inspect the sluices by which water is let out from the main canals into their branches, so that every one may have an equal supply of it."<sup>2</sup> We know from the Arthashastra that water rates were also levied.<sup>3</sup>

There is ample evidence of the fact that much pains and expenses were lavished on irrigation even in remote dependencies. The inscription of the Satrap Rudradaman engraved about the year 150 A. D. tells us something about the history of the

1. McCrindle-Ancient India: Megasthenes and Arrian pp 31-2

2 Ibid p. 86.

3. Arthasastra Book II chapter 24.

Lake Beautiful (Sudarsana) of Kathiawar.<sup>1</sup> We are told that Pushyagupta, the Vaisya, who represented Chandragupta in Surashtra, noticing the needs of local farmers, dammed up a small stream, and thus provided a reservoir of great value. It was adorned with conduits in the time of Chandragupta's grandson Asoka. This work endured for four hundred years, until in A.D. 150, a storm of a "most tremendous fury, befitting the end of a mundane period," destroyed the embankment.

The empire was divided into several parts for purposes of administration. Besides the home provinces of eastern India, which appear to have been under the direct control of the emperor, there were at least three vice-royalties, as can be inferred from the edicts of Asoka. The viceroy of the North-western provinces had his headquarters at Taxila, from where he seems to have controlled Afganistan, Baluchistan, the Punjab, Kashmir and Sindh. The viceroy of western India was stationed at Ujjain and controlled Malwa and Gujrat. The viceroy of south had his capital at Suvarnagiri, which was probably situated in the Raichur district of Nizam's dominions<sup>2</sup>. The viceroys of these territories

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1. Vide Appendix A.

2. Smith-Asoka p. 94n.

were styled Kumaras or Aryaputras and were princes of royal blood. The salary of a Kumara according to the Arthashastra was 12,000 panas per annum.<sup>1</sup>

Below the viceroys there were other officers. The inscriptions of Asoka refer to Rajukas, but it is difficult to identify them with any of the officers mentioned in Arthashastra. Kautilya mentions an officer called Pradeshta, or commissioner, who appears to have been identical with the Pradesika of Asoka. He was probably a district officer charged with the administration of criminal justice and other duties, and got a salary of 8000 panas per annum.<sup>2</sup>

The bureaucracy was assisted by an organised system of espionage. The system of espionage has always been hated by people and so it must have been in the days of Chandragupta. But it had its good points also. It was recognised by Indian statesmen that a king could not rule against the wishes of his subjects. So the spies were employed, not only to detect criminals, but also to get information about the views of the people. The spies were the sixth class of Indian population according to Megasthenes. An unpleasing feature of the espionage system was

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1. Arthashastra Book V chapter 3.

2. Ibid.

that even courtezans were utilized for this purpose.<sup>1</sup> Arrian says that the reports which these spies gave were always true, for no Indian could be accused of lying.<sup>2</sup> This statement is not in contradiction with other records of the character of ancient Indians, although its strict accuracy may be doubted.

The administration of justice was carried on by the courts recognized by the state. According to the Dharmasastras, cases could be decided by a clan, a guild, a corporation and finally a state court.<sup>3</sup> Kautilya even recognizes different kinds of state courts established at Janapada-sandhi, Sangrahana, Dronamukha and Sthaniya, with jurisdiction over two, ten, four hundred and eight hundred villages respectively and composed of three dharmasthas and three amatyas in each case<sup>4</sup>. The case decided by a lower court could proceed to a higher court if the parties were dissatisfied. The final authority was the king, and we know from Megasthenes that large number of people sought the intervention of

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1. McCrindle-Ancient India: Megasthenes and Arrian p. 85; Arthasastra II 27.

2. Ibid p. 217.

3. Yaju 2. 2 30.

4. Arthasastra III 1. The Janapadasandhi Court seems to have had jurisdiction over two villages and not two districts, because the order of enumeration suggests that it was the lowest court.

the King in deciding their cases<sup>1</sup>. The decision of such cases as had not been satisfactorily decided by the lower courts constituted the judicial function of the king.

The procedure of the law courts was equally interesting. The plaintiff had to file his suit along with the name and date, and the defendant had similarly to give his reply in writing. Witnesses as well as documentary evidence were recognized. Certain agreements, such as those entered into in seclusion, in the dead of night or with fraud, were held void<sup>2</sup>.

Megasthenes erroneously asserts that there was no written law in India. As a matter of fact sacred writings were one of the four kinds of law, the other three being custom, agreement and the edicts of the king, the issuing of which from time to time constituted the legislative function of the king. The last three were, however, required to be in accordance with the spirit of the sacred law. The author of the Arthashastra mentions several ancient lawgivers such as Manu, Brihaspati and Usanas, whose writings must have been consulted in deciding cases<sup>3</sup>.

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1. McCrindle *Ancient India: Megasthenes and Arrian* p. 71.
  2. *Arthashastra* Book III chapter 1.
  3. *Ibid* Book III chapter 2.

The penal code was simple. Offences were generally punished with fines, there being three kinds of the latter, viz., the first amercement ranging upto 96 panas, the middlemost amercement ranging upto 500 panas and the highest amercement ranging upto 1000 panas<sup>1</sup>. Crimes which surpassed those for which the highest amercement was prescribed, were punishable with vadha, which term, according to ancient authorities, meant corporal chastisement including beating, shaving off of the hair, mutilation and death<sup>2</sup>. These crimes were generally those which involved violence or moral turpitude, such as murder, hurt, theft, fraud and the submission of false evidence. Even in these crimes there were grades. Thus a thief who stole a property upto the value of 50 panas was punishable with the highest amercement but if he stole goods worth more than 50 panas he was punished with vadha or corporal chastisement,

1. Arthashastra Book III chapter 17

2. Vadha is unanimously interpreted by ancient commentators as corporal punishment, not necessarily death. Manu and other ancient lawgivers recognize four kinds of punishment, viz. vagdanda or warning, dhigdanda or scolding, dhanadanda or fine and finally vadhadanda which is explained by Kulluka, Vijnanesvara and others as corporal punishment from beating and imprisonment to death (Manu 8, 129, Yajn 1, 13 367) Kantilya several times jumps from trifling fines to vadha and it would be absurd to maintain that he has reserved the meaning of that term for death.



which extended upto death, if the offence was very serious<sup>1</sup>. Those persons who spoke a lie, that is to say, committed fraud in the payment of tolls were also punished like thieves<sup>2</sup>. Injury to the limb of any person was punished with the mutilation of the corresponding limb as well as a hand, and if the person injured happened to be an artisan the punishment was death<sup>3</sup>. Judicial torture was also recognized as a method of eliciting confession but it was used with the greatest caution<sup>4</sup>. The efficiency of criminal administration is attested to by Megasthenes who says that in a population of 4,00,000 men in Pataliputra the thefts recorded on any one day did not exceed the value of two hundred drachmae or about eight pounds sterling<sup>5</sup>. Kautilya lays down, in agreement with the Dharmasastras, that "whatever of the property of citizens robbed by thieves the king can not recover shall be made good from his own pocket"<sup>6</sup>.

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1 Arthashastra Book IV chapter 9.

2. Arthashastra II, 21; McCrindle Ancient India p 87.

3 McCrindle-Ancient India: Megasthenes and Arrian p 70.

4. Arthashastra Book IV chapter 8. Kautilya expressly says that 'the production of conclusive evidence shall be insisted upon', and to defend his opinion he gives the example of a certain Mandavya, who, though innocent, confessed when tortured.

5 McCrindle-Ancient India: Megasthenes and Arrian p. 68.

6. Arthashastra Book III chapter 16.

On certain occasions prisoners were set free. One such occasion was the birthday of the King. Other occasions are enumerated by Kautilya in the following passage:—"Whenever a new country is conquered, when an heir apparent is installed on the throne, or when a prince is born to the king prisoners are usually set free."<sup>1</sup>

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1. Arthasastra Book II chapter 36.

## V.

### SOCIAL & ECONOMIC CONDITIONS.

The social, religious and economic condition of the people of India in the Maurya age deserves separate treatment, being a highly interesting subject. Fortunately for us, we possess sufficient materials in the shape of ancient writings of foreigners as well as Indians to permit us to have a fairly satisfactory idea of the manner in which people in those times lived and thought.

The caste system, as we know it, was certainly not fully developed till then. Kautilya still speaks of the traditional four Hindu castes<sup>1</sup> viz. the Brahmanas, the Kshatriyas, the Vaisyas and the Sudras, who probably corresponded to Megasthenes' philosophers, soldiers, husbandmen and artisans<sup>2</sup>. The herdsmen mentioned by Megasthenes may have been outcaste people or panchamas, who had not come within the pale of settled population. Megasthenes mentions two more castes, but he has certainly erred. The overseers and councillors in the service of government certainly were recruited

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1. Arthashastra Book I chapter 3.

2. McCrindle-Ancient India Megasthenes and Arrian p 38

from all castes<sup>1</sup>, and cannot have formed distinct social divisions. Thus it appears that the settled population of India still consisted mainly of four castes, although the process of the formation of new castes as a result of intermarriages had already begun. We, however, learn from Kautilya that among the first three castes a man of higher caste could marry a woman of the lower caste, without the risk of losing caste. The Hindu lawgivers, no doubt, also recognize such marriages, but they regard the offsprings of such marriages as belonging to new castes, thereby discouraging such marriages. Kautilya, on the other hand, expressly says that the son of a Brahman from a Kshatriya woman is no other than a Brahman and the son of a Kshatriya from a Vaisya woman, is no other than a Kshatriya.<sup>2</sup> This bold statement seems to suggest that intermarriage between the three upper castes was still in vogue to some extent. Thus the most rigid division was still between Aryas and Sudras, although sub-divisions must have existed in both of these groups.

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1. Thus Chanakya, the prime minister of Chandragupta, was a Brahman, while Pushyagupta, the Rashtriya of Surashtra, was a Vaisya.

2. ब्राह्मणक्षत्रिययोरननरापुत्रा स्वर्णाः Arthasastra III. 7. Vide the Commentary of T. Ganapati Sastri. Dr. Shamasastri's translation is inaccurate here.

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Kautilya refers to the eight theoretical kinds of marriages recognized by Hindu lawgivers, but it is difficult to believe that all of them were widely prevalent at any time<sup>1</sup>. The first of these viz. the Brahma marriage, in which the parents of the girl marry her to a suitable man after adorning her with ornaments is now the only form of marriage observed by the people, and it must have been the most common one even in those times. Another kind, the Arsha marriage, probably was also prevalent because Megasthenes seems to refer to it when he says that Indians marry wives "giving in exchange a yoke of oxen."<sup>2</sup> The other two kinds, which Kautilya approves, were the Prajapatya, in which the bride and bridegroom were united with the promise of joint-performance of sacred duties, and the Daiva in which the parents of the girl married her to an officiating priest at the time of a sacrifice.

Polygamy was also prevalent according to both Megasthenes<sup>3</sup> and Kautilya, but we learn from the latter that a man could marry more than one wife only in case he had no son from his former wife.

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1. Arthashastra Book III Chap 2; Manu 3 21.

2. McCrindle-Ancient India: Megasthenes and Arrian p 69

3. Ibid.

Kautilya even prescribes the period for which a man should wait before marrying another wife.<sup>1</sup>

The remarriage of widows is also frankly recognised by Kautilya. The only condition for such a kind of marriage was that the widow forfeited whatever had been given to her by her father-in-law and her deceased husband; and if she happened to have sons also, she lost even her own property (Stridhana) which was given to her sons.<sup>2</sup>

What is most curious is that Kautilya also recognizes a kind of divorce. The following passage from the Arthasastra makes it clear. "A woman, hating her husband, can not dissolve her marriage with him against his will. Nor can a man dissolve his marriage with his wife against her will. But from mutual enmity, divorce may be obtained."<sup>3</sup> We are, however, told that divorce even on these conditions could be obtained only in certain kinds of marriages. It is clear from these regulations that the cases of divorce must have been rare and hence Megasthenes is silent on the subject.

The horrible custom of Suttee was absolutely unknown to Kautilya and even Manu. Moreover,

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1. Arthasastra Book III Chap 2.

2. Ibid.

3. Ibid Book III chapter, 3.

the marriage customs described above clearly show that there was no room for that custom, which was probably of Scythian origin and later spread into India. The Greeks, of course, refer to it, but their references apply to the semi-foreign north-west frontier. In India proper the custom was as yet not prevalent.

It is generally believed that the purdah system was non-existent in ancient India. This statement, however, can not stand unqualified. Some kind of purdah was certainly observed by women of aristocratic classes, as Kautilya refers to women who were Anishkasini i.e. "not-stirring-out."<sup>1</sup> References of this kind are not wanting in other Sanskrit works also.<sup>2</sup> At the present time women in many parts of India observe purdah even before certain of their relatives, but no such practice seems to have been prevalent in ancient India.

According to Megasthenes all the Indians were free and not one of them was a slave.<sup>3</sup> But in the light of the Arthashastra we have to modify this statement. As a matter of fact slavery did exist,

1. Arthashastra Book III chapter 1.

2. Panini mentions *Asuryampasyaa* (the women not seeing the sun).

3. McCrindle Ancient India : Megasthenes and Arrian p. 58

but a perusal of Arthasastra makes it clear that it was so different from the slavery which prevailed in the west, that a Greek could hardly notice it. It was forbidden to sell an Arya or freeman (here including Sudra) into slavery except at his own option and dire necessity. "It is no crime," says Kautilya, "for Mlechchhas to sell or mortgage the life of their own offspring, but never shall an Arya be subjected to slavery." He then proceeds to say that if a man is enslaved for inevitable reasons, he should be soon redeemed. "But in order to tide over family troubles, to find money for fines or court decrees, or to recover the (confiscated) household implements, the life of an Arya is mortgaged, they (his kinsmen) shall as soon as possible redeem him (from bondage); and more so if he is a youth or an adult capable of giving help." Moreover a slave in the west had no personal rights; his person was dead. In India, a dasa was little worse than a servant as long as he was not redeemed; his offsprings being free even during his period of bondage. A dasa could even earn independently if he got time from his master's work, and could regain his Aryahood if his independent income become equal to the value for which he was purchased. If a man abused or caused hurt to his slave, or employed the latter to do an ignoble



work, the slave became free. Thus it is clear that although there were dasas in India, the kind of slavery prevalent in the west was non-existent in India.<sup>1</sup>

Of the religions followed in India the Vedic sacrificial religion was still the predominant one, although it was greatly modified in the course of several centuries. The most popular form of this religion was the Bhagavata faith. The founder of this reform was Krishna, whom Prof. Ray Chaudhury has identified with Devakiputra Krishna, mentioned in the Chhandogya Upanishad.<sup>2</sup> According to the Puranic tradition Krishna flourished in the 14th century B. C.<sup>3</sup> The followers of this faith, although continuing to honour the thirty-three Vedic devas, believed in devotion to one Supreme God, whom they called Bhagavan or the Lord. They further regarded Krishna as their saviour. The Greeks also mention Krishna as Herakles. "This Herakles" we are told, "is held in special honour by the

1. Arthashastra Book III Chapter 13

2. Ray chaudhury—The Early History of the Vaishnava Sect

3. All the historical Puranas contain a sloka according to which King Parikshit, who was for sometime a contemporary of Krishna, was born about 1000 years before the accession of Nanda. This gives 14th century B.C as Krishna's time, which may be approximately correct.

Souraseni, an Indian tribe who possess two large cities, Methora and Cleisobora, and through whose country flows a navigable river called the Jobanes.”<sup>1</sup>

The other important religion was Buddhism, founded by Gautama Buddha, in the 6th century B. C. Buddhism put moral obligation in the front, and taught that man was the maker of himself. In this respect it was opposed to Bhagavatism which preached that man could do nothing without the will of God.

Jainism was the third important religion of that time. This religion, though claiming a high antiquity, was, for all practical purposes, founded by Mahavira, a contemporary of Gautama Buddha. Its basic teaching was *ahimsa* or non-injury to every form of life, however insignificant. According to the Jain tradition Chandragupta himself became inclined towards this faith during his last days.

The worship of images perhaps was first begun by the Jains and the Buddhists, who made beautiful images of their prophets. It was borrowed soon by the Hindus. The worship of images and the institution of temples seems to have gained a strong foothold in the Maurya period. Patanjali has humorously remarked that the Mauryas who wanted

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1. McCrindle-Ancient India Megasthenes and Arrian p. 206

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gold raised it by instituting images of Gods for worship.<sup>1</sup>

Asceticism was also greatly in vogue in the Maurya period. The Greeks refer to the Brachmanes, who were evidently Brahman ascetics, and the Sarmanes who may or may not have been Buddhist Sramanas. There were also Jain munis in sufficient numbers, as well as Ajivikas, an ancient order of ascetics, now long forgotten.

The Greeks have largely quoted from Magasthenes regarding the lives of the Brachmanes. They are said to have lived in simple style and abstained from animal food. They spent their lives in listening to serious discourse, and in imparting their knowledge to others. They already believed in the five elements, from which the world was created.<sup>2</sup> They were of a very independent spirit, for one of them named Dandamis when asked to present himself before Alexander, who called himself the son of Zeus, replied that he also claimed to be the son of Zeus as much as Alexander himself was, and that Alexander should himself come to him if he was anxious to have a discourse.<sup>3</sup> The opinion of

1. मीयः हिन्दुवाचिभिः अर्चाः प्रथिताः

2. McCrindle-Ancient India As mentioned by Arrian, pp.

3. Ibid p. 116.

Megasthenes about the Brachmanes is perhaps summed up in the following passage. "All that has been said regarding nature by the ancients is asserted also by philosophers out of Greece, on the one part in India by the Brachmanes and on the other in Syria by the people called the Jews".<sup>1</sup>

We are fortunate to possess sufficient details, preserved from the writings of Megasthenes, to understand what the Indian people of that period were like. "The inhabitants," we are told, "having a b u n d a n t means of subsistence, exceed in consequence the ordinary stature and are distinguished by their proud bearing."<sup>2</sup> They were noted for their high standard of morality, being generally truthful and honest. They seldom went to law and generally left their houses and property unguarded.<sup>3</sup> They had their superstitions too, as is clear from the Arthasastra, which has several references about witchcraft.<sup>4</sup> Kautilya also gives regulations about gambling, which seems to have been a common vice among the aristocratic classes.<sup>5</sup> The same author

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1. McCrindle *Ancient India: Megasthenes and Arrian* p. 108.

2. *Ibid* p. 30.

3. *Ibid* p. 69.

4. *Arthasastra* Book XIV.

5. *Ibid* Book III chapter 20.

gives elaborate regulations regarding liquor houses,<sup>1</sup> but we are assured by Megasthenes that the people of India did not drink wine except at sacrifices.<sup>2</sup>

Kautilya has preserved interesting details about the economic condition of the country. The system of traffic by barter had passed away, and coins were used for transactions. In the pre-Maurya period punch-marked coins used to be issued by private persons. But if Kautilya mentions what was a fact, it is clear that the government of Chandragupta issued and regulated coins, Kautilya speaks of a regular government mint.<sup>3</sup> The standard coin seems to have been the silver pana, which was probably of about 146 grains. There were also half, quarter and one-eighth of panas. The copper coin was called the mashaka. A gold coin called the suvarna is also mentioned, but perhaps its use was rare.

Of the industries of India agriculture has been the chief one since ancient times, and the Maurya period was no exception. Kautilya has given an account of the crops grown which included rice, barley, wheat, sesamum, linseed, mustard, pulses, sugar cane and cotton.<sup>4</sup> Megasthenes corroborates

1. Arthasastra Book II chap. 25

2. McCrindle Ancient India . Megasthenes and Arrian p. 68.

3. Arthasastra Book II, chap 12.

4 Ibid Book II chap.

the account and gives further particulars, which are worth quoting. "In addition to cereals, there grow throughout India much millet, which is kept well watered by the profusion of river streams, and much pulse of different sorts, and rice also, and what is called *bosporum*, as well as many other plants useful for food, of which most grow spontaneously. The soil yields, moreover, not a few other edible products fit for the subsistence of animals, about which it would be tedious to write. It is accordingly affirmed that famine has never visited India, and that there has never been a general scarcity in the supply of nourishing food. For, since there is a double rainfall in the course of each year,—one in the winter season, when the sowing of wheat takes place as in other countries, and the second at the time of the summer solstice, which is the proper season for sowing rice and *bosporum*, as well as sesamum and millet—the inhabitants of India almost always gather in two harvests annually; and even should one of the sowings prove more or less abortive they are always sure of the other crop. The fruits, moreover, of spontaneous growth, and the esculant roots which grow in marshy places and are of varied sweetness, afford abundant sustenance for man. The fact is, almost all the plains in the country have a moisture

which is alike genial, whether it is derived from the rivers, or from the rains of the summer season which are wont to fall every year at a stated period with surprising regularity; while the great heat which prevails ripens the roots which grow in the marshes, and specially those of the tall reeds."<sup>1</sup>

It is clear from the above that there was no scarcity of crop in India at that time and that various factors tended to the prevention of famine. But, in spite of all this, famine did sometimes occur. The traditions of the Jains record a great famine which occurred in the reign of Chandragupta Maurya. The government, no doubt, adopted various relief measures when famine did occur. Kautilya has recorded several of them. The chief of them were, the distribution of provision by government among the people, the employment of men to repair ruined buildings, request of help from the allies, exhorting the rich persons to contribute to the cause of famine relief and emigration of the population to regions having abundant harvest.

The manufacture of cloth seems to have been the most widespread industry. Agriculture  
Megasthenes has highly praised the robes worn by Indians, for their fineness. According to

1. McCrindle-Ancient India: Megasthenes and Arrian p. 8
2. Arthashastra Book IV chap. 8

are worked in gold, and ornamented with precious stones, and they wear also flowered garments made of the finest muslin."<sup>1</sup> Kautilya gives elaborate regulations, about weaving, which prove the importance of this industry. It is noteworthy that it was a home industry, and women did much of the spinning.<sup>2</sup> Cotton fabrics of Benares, Bengal, Kalinga and Madura were considered to be the best, according to the Arthashastra. The same work also mentions the manufacture of silk, hemp and woollen materials. It is surprising to note that the blankets of Nepal were famous even at that period.<sup>3</sup>

The mining industry was also sufficiently advanced. According to Kautilya, mines were the source of treasury.<sup>4</sup> Precious stones as well as metals formed the objects of mining. The metals known were gold (suvarna), silver (rupya), iron (kalayasa), copper (tamra), bronze (kansya), lead (sisa), tin (trapu) and brass (arakuta).<sup>5</sup> Megasthenes has also recorded his observations on the subject. "And while the soil bears on its surface all kinds of fruits which are known to cultivation, it has also

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1. McCrindle-Ancient India: Megasthenes and Arrian p. 69.

2. Arthashastra Book II chap. 23.

3. Ibid Book II chap. 11.

4. Ibid Book II chap. 12.

5. Ibid Book II chap. 17.



underground numerous veins of all sorts of metals; for it contains much gold and silver, and copper and iron in no small quantity, and even tin and other metals, which are employed in making articles of use and ornament, as well as implements and accoutrements of war."<sup>1</sup> Indeed India was so rich in gold that fables became current that there were gold-digging ants in India.<sup>2</sup>

Trade was in a flourishing condition in the Maurya period. Different places in the country had already gained special reputation for certain things. We have already seen that cotton fabrics of some places were looked upon as specially fine. Southern India was similarly famous for conchshells, diamonds, pearls and gold according to Kautilya.<sup>3</sup> Indian trade, however, was not limited within the country. Even before the Maurya time, India had maintained trade relations with Babylon and other countries,<sup>4</sup> and these relations became all the more brisk in the Maurya period, as is proved by the creation of a special board for foreigners. Indian peacocks and ivory were specially famous outside. Kautilya praises the China silk, which probably proves that

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1. McCrindle-Ancient India: Megasthenes and Arrian p 80.

2. Ibid p 94

3. Arthashastra Book VII chapter 12

4. For a detailed study of this subject the reader is referred to Dr. Radha Kumud Mukerji's excellent book History of Indian Shipping.

there was some traffic even with China.<sup>1</sup> This trade was carried on through ships. Even an early Buddhist work, the Baveru Jataka, refers to a trading journey to Babylon by sea. Kautilya also mentions sea voyage and recommends that the route along and close to the shore is better, as it touches at many trading port towns.<sup>2</sup>

A special feature of the economic life of that period was corporate activity. People following the same profession even though not belonging to the same caste, formed their own sreni, which was much like the mediaeval guild of Europe. The srenis were recognized by the government and had many rights, such as deciding cases of dispute among members of the same sreni. The head of the sreni was called the Sreshthin.<sup>3</sup> Another institution representing corporate life was the system of sambhuya samutthana, which was much like the joint stock companies of the present day. This kind of business corporation was established by several persons contributing some share, and when the profits were earned they were divided among the members in proportion to the share of each member.<sup>4</sup>

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1. Arthashastra Book II chap. 11.

2. Ibid Book VII chap 12.

3. For this vide Masumdar-Corporate Life in Ancient India.

4. Arthashastra Book II chap. 14.

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Much of the prosperity of trade depends upon roads. The Maurya government paid due attention to this necessity. Roads were maintained in order by officers of the proper department and at every ten stadia or half a kos a pillar was set up to show the by-roads and distances.<sup>1</sup> A royal road ran from Pataliputra to Taxila and was the forerunner of the modern Grand Trunk Road. The vehicles used for journeying on the roads are mentioned by Arrian. "The animals used by the common sort for riding on are camels and horses and asses, while the wealthy use elephants—for it is the elephant which in India carries royalty. The conveyance which ranks next in honour is the chariot and four; the camel ranks third; while to be drawn by a single horse is considered no distinction at all."<sup>2</sup>

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1. McCrindle-Ancient India: Megasthenes and Arrian p 86

2. *Ibid* p. 227.

## VI.

### LITERATURE & ART.

A prosperous reign always has a stimulating effect on the activities of the human mind. Unfortunately very little is known about the intellectual achievements of the people in the reign of Chandragupta, but the little that has survived is sufficient to give an idea of the literary and artistic development of the age.

Indian literature was already considerable, and the diffusion of the art of writing had made it greatly accessible. The Vedic literature, including the Samhitas, the Brahmanas and the Upanishads, was already ancient. Even the six vedangas, viz, Siksha, Kalpa, Vyakarana, Nirukta, Chhandas and Jyotisha are mentioned by Kautilya.<sup>1</sup> The oldest Dharmasutras probably had also come into existence. The Ramayana of Valmiki and the kernal of the Mahabharata must have already existed, for Kautilya refers to the events mentioned therein.<sup>2</sup> Even the Puranas in some shape were already recognised, being mentioned in the Arthasastra.<sup>3</sup>

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1. Arthasastra Book I chap. 8.

2. Ibid Book I chap. 6.

3. Ibid Book I chap. 5.

Of the philosophic systems, Kautilya mentions Sankhya, Yoga and Lokayata,<sup>1</sup> besides Jain and Bauddha, which were connected with the religions of the same name. The science of medicine had also sufficiently advanced. Arrian assures us that Indian doctors could cure even snake bite, although the Greek physicians were unable to do so.<sup>2</sup> All this learning was diffused at the centres of education. The most famous of such centres was Taxila. Princes and sons of Brahmans, as well as common people, flocked to it as to a university town. Another famous seat of learning was Benares, which has retained its ancient glory undiminished to the present day. These educational centres must have exercised a great influence on the growth of literature.

The literature of the Maurya period was composed either in Sanskrit or Prakrit or Pali, and may therefore, be classified under these three heads. Owing to the well known deficiency of dates in ancient Indian history, we can definitely assign to this period only a few works, which probably constitute only a fragment of the total literary output of that period. But the works which are known to

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1. Arthashastra Book 1 chap. 2.

2. McCrindle-Ancient India : Megasthenes and Arrian p 228.

belong to this period are important enough to constitute a literature in themselves.

The most important author of the age was Chanakya, the minister of Chandragupta. He is famous by his patronymic in Buddhist and Jain as well as Hindu works. His personal name was Vishnugupta, and he is also known by his surname, Kautilya, which refers to his crooked policy, although one scholar considers it a corrupted form of the gotra name Kautalya<sup>1</sup>. He is described as a Dramila or southerner in a Sanskrit couplet, which also erroneously identifies him with Vatsyayana<sup>2</sup>. Born of poor Brahman parents, he received his education at Taxila, according to tradition<sup>3</sup>. He then, by his shrewdness and ability, became the chief counsellor of Chandragupta, and according to some authorities, continued to guide the affairs of the successor of his master after the latter's death<sup>4</sup>. He is famous both as an author and a statesman. No doubt he was, in spite of his defects, a great man of his age.

The most famous work of Chanakya is the

1. T. Ganapati Shastri—Arthashastra.

2. वात्स्यायनो मल्लनागः कौटिल्यश्चकारमजः द्रामिलः पद्मिलस्त्वामी  
विष्णुगुप्तोऽङ्गलश्चः—Abhidhana Chintamani.

3. Vide Mahavansa tika and Parisihtaparvan.

4. Taranath and Hemachandra have both preserved this tradition.

Arthasastra. Some scholars have expressed doubt on the traditional age of the work on the ground that the author does not mention the name of his sovereign Chandragupta or his capital Pataliputra<sup>1</sup>. But most of the scholars are now agreed that these are not sufficient grounds to disprove its traditional date, and that the work is a genuine composition of the Maurya age<sup>2</sup>. This view is strengthened by the fact that the main features of the government set forth in this book, wonderfully agree with the description of Megasthenes, and the difference in details is due only to the theoretical character of the book. Moreover, several early writers refer to Chanakya as a writer on statecraft, and Dandin, while referring to the work of Chanakya, mentions even its size which agrees exactly with the size, mentioned in the Arthasastra itself<sup>3</sup>. Some of the Sanskrit works, notably the Yajnavalkya Smriti in its present form, are indebted to the Arthasastra in a considerable measure.

The Arthasastra, as its name indicates, is a book on political economy and the art of government.

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1. Keith and Jolly are the chief among those scholars.
  2. Mr. Jayaswal and Dr. Shamasastry have very ably proved the genuineness of this work. Several German scholars also hold the same view.
  3. Dasakunara charita II 8.

It is mainly a prose work, divided into fifteen *adhyakranas* or books, each subdivided into numerous chapters. It deals with the duties of kings, administration of public affairs, law and judiciary, relation with foreign powers, methods of warfare, and secret means to injure an enemy. The book has been condemned by many critics, including such early authors as Bana <sup>1</sup>, on the score of many undesirable things advocated in it, such as the practice of witchcraft and the institution of espionage. No doubt there is much to be said against these and similar other things occurring in the *Arthashastra*. But in judging a book we have to look to both the good and bad sides as well as the circumstances in which it was composed. The condition of India was very unsettled at the time of the rise of the Maurya empire, and all kinds of means might have been considered necessary to restore peace with honour. But the same author has advocated things which deserve nothing but praise. The observation of an Indian scholar may

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1. किं वा तेषां साम्प्रतं येषामतिनृशंसप्रायोपदेशनिर्घृणकौटिल्यशास्त्रं प्रमाणं, अभिचारक्रियाक्रूरैकप्रकृतयः पुरोधसो गुरवः, परांमसंभानपरा मंत्रिणः उपदेष्टारः, नरपतिमहस्रोञ्जिताः लक्ष्म्यामासक्तिः, मरणात्मकेषु शास्त्रेष्वभियोगः, सहजप्रेमाद्ब्रह्मदयानुरक्ता आतत उच्छ्वेयाः—Kadambari.



be quoted to show the attitude of Kautilya towards slavery, and the position of the Sudra. "In regard to slavery, Kautilya's attitude stands apart as a glowing light of liberalism and humanity in a barbaric age. While his contemporary Aristotle was justifying slavery as a divine and a beneficent human institution not only sanctioned by nature, but justified by the circumstances of social existence, he denounced it and strove to abolish it—characterising it as a custom which could exist only among the savage Mlechchhas. He boldly enunciated that among Aryas (freeborn) none should be unfree or enslaved. His definition of the Arya was not narrow. According to him, the Sudra was equally an Arya with members of the higher castes."<sup>1</sup> Chanakya was one of the pioneers to include the Sudra within the Aryan fold, and his motive must have been to strengthen Aryavarta. His view on other social matters are also generally liberal and commendable. He was, moreover, not without his admirers, for Kamandaka, the author of Nitisara, has praised him highly.<sup>2</sup> We may therefore conclude, in the words which Sir Frederic

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1. N. C. Bandopadhyaya—Kautilya p. 211.

2. नीति श आश्रितं श्रीमानर्थशास्त्रमहोदधेः समुद्रमे नमस्तस्मै विष्णुगुप्ता-  
वेशसे Nitisara of Kamandaka.

Pollock wrote about another statesman, <sup>1</sup> that of all the opinions about Chanakya's object in this book, ranging from the vulgar prejudice that he was a cynical counsellor of iniquity to the panegyric of those who regard him as one of the great preparers and champions of Indian unity, the latter at all events contains more truth than the former.

Chanakya is also the reputed author of a collection of witty aphorisms, and a book entitled the Chanakya-sataka on ethical poetry. He is even credited with writing on medicine, and in this capacity is known to Arabic writers as Sanaq.<sup>2</sup> No book of his on the subject, however, is known.

The greatest Prakrit author of the age was Bhadrabahu, the Jain pontiff. According to Sthaviravalis Bhadrabahu was the sixth Sthavira after Mahavira. He was the disciple of Yasobhadra. He lived and wrote during the reign of Chandragupta. During the great famine that occurred in the time of Chandragupta, Bhadrabahu repaired to the south and there died by Samadhi. According to some accounts he was accompanied by Chandragupta. But this does not seem to be correct, as according to Hemachandra Bhadrabahu

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1. Machaevelli, with whom Chanakya is often, through rather inappositely, compared.

2. Keith—History of Sanskrit Literature p. 505

died 170 years after the Niravana of Mahavira, i.e. in the sixteenth year of Chandragupta's reign.<sup>1</sup> Bhadrabahu is the reputed author of many Jain Prakrit works. The most famous of these is the Kalpasutra. This book is divided into three parts, viz., Jina charitra (lives of Jinas) Sthaviravali (list of Sthaviras) and Samachari (rules for Yatis). It is doubtful if the whole of this book is the work of Bhadrabahu. Jacobi thinks that the list of Sthaviras contained in this book was probably added by Devardhi, the editor of the Siddhanta. Professor Weber ascertained that the whole Kalpasutra is incorporated as the eighth lecture in the Dasasutra Skandha, which is included in the ten Niryuktis attributed to Bhadrabahu.

The only important Pali work of the Maurya period was the Buddhist Kathavatthu, ascribed to Maudgaliputra Tishya. It was, however, composed in the reign of Asoka and does not strictly belong to the period we are dealing with.

It is obvious from the above that the reign of Chandragupta was not devoid of literary achievements. In the field of arts also the success attained in that remote period by Indians was by no means insignificant as is clear from the following

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1. Parisishtaparvan X 2.

observation of Megasthenes. "They are also found to be well-skilled in the arts as might be expected of men who inhale a pure air and drink the very finest water."<sup>1</sup> We shall briefly note the development of the chief arts in the Maurya period.

Painting has always held a high place among fine arts. We learn from Buddhist writings that fresco painting was already well known. The following passage of Prof. Rhys Davids about painters in Buddhist India may be quoted in this connection. "They were mostly house painters. The wood work of the houses was often covered with fine chunam plaster and decorated with painting. But they also painted frescoes. These passages tell us of pleasure houses, adorned with painted figures and patterns, belonging to the kings of Magadha and Kosala, and such frescoes were no doubt similar in character to, but of course in an earlier style than, the well known ancient frescoes of the seventh and eighth centuries A. D. on the Ajanta caves, and of the fifth century on the Sigri Rock in Ceylon." No doubt this art must have continued in the Maurya period under the patronage of an enlightened Government.

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1. McCrindle-Ancient India : Megasthenes and Arrian p. 30.
  2. Rhys Davids-Buddhist India p 96.

The art of iconography also had considerably developed in the Maurya period. Some statues, recently discovered, have been assigned by specialists near about the Maurya period. One of them is the Parkham statue, now in the Muttra museum. According to Mr. Jayaswal this is a nearly contemporary portrait of king Ajatasatru. Two of the statues discovered near Patna, and now in the Indian Museum, are also believed to belong to the early Maurya period. According to Mr. Jayaswal they represent Udayi and Nandivardhana, though this view is not generally accepted. But even Dr. Smith was of the opinion that the statues belong to the early Maurya period. A colossal female statue found at Besnagar is also supposed to belong to the Maurya period.

Architecture has been considered the queen of arts, and a survey of it is indispensable in a review of the progress of art in the Maurya period. Numerous monuments of the period of Asoka have survived to prove the high skill which the people had attained in his reign. Unfortunately very little has survived of the reign of Chandragupta himself. The reason appears to be that most of the cities in India were still built of the perishable wood, as noted by Megasthenes. We are however, fortunate in

possessing an account of the way in which Pataliputra, the capital, and the royal palace in it were built, and modern excavations have proved its correctness. We may first give the description of Pataliputra as quoted by Arrian—"The greatest city in India is that which is called Palimbothra, in the dominions of the Prassians, where the streams of the Erannaboas and the Ganges unite..... Megasthenes informs us that the city stretched in the inhabited quarters to an extreme length on each side of eight stadia, and that its breadth was fifteen stadia, and that a ditch encompassed it all round, which was six hundred feet in breadth and thirty cubits in depth, and that the wall was crowned with 570 towers and had four and sixty gates."<sup>1</sup> We further learn that the wall which girded the city was also built of wood.

The palace of Chandragupta was highly praised by the Greeks, who regarded it as surpassing in beauty the palaces of Susa and Ekbatana. The excavations at the site of the village Kumrahar carried on by Dr. Spooner have disclosed the remains of a mighty pillared hall of Mauryan date. This, all probably formed part of the palace of Chandragupta himself.

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1. McCrindle-Ancient India : Megasthenes and Arrian p. 67.

The stone fragments of the pillars of this hall were found among ashes buried beneath old brickwalls probably belonging to the Gupta period. Beneath the ashes was a layer of 9 feet of silt which covered the original floor of the hall. According to Dr. Spooner the silt was deposited on the floor of the hall by a flood which occurred somewhere about the time of Christ, and then, after some centuries, the portion above the silt was burnt down by a fire, which accounts for the ashes lying mixed with stone fragments above the silt. In connection with the woodwork of the superstructure Dr. Spooner has made the following remarks. "Judging from the timbers that have been preserved to us, it is clear that the wood work of the superstructure and the room must have been extremely solid and massive, and that the heat of the final conflagration must have been enormous. It is evident that it sufficed to crack off innumerable fragments from that portion of the columns which rose above the silt, and also to expand the metal bolts which fitted into the socket, holes observable in the top fragments of pillars which we have recovered."<sup>1</sup>

According to Dr. Spooner this Maurya hall was

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1, *Archaeological Survey of India 1912-1913* p. 63.

built on the model of the pillared hall at Persepolis. Dr. Smith, however, observed that the resemblance of the Maurya buildings with the Persian palace at Persepolis was not definitely established.

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## VII

# ACHIEVEMENTS OF CHANDRAGUPTA

A review of the life and career of Chandragupta can hardly be complete without a survey of the importance of his achievements. It is strange that a personage who, in ancient times, captured the imagination of Hindu, Buddhist, Jain, Greek and Roman authors alike, has been comparatively ignored in modern times. We shall here discuss his place in history on the ground of his achievements.

Chandragupta began his career as a mere rebel against the existing order of things in India. His first achievement was, perhaps, the expulsion of Greek garrisons from the Punjab in about 317 B. C. Starting from that point, he became, in a brief space of twelve years, the emperor of the greater part of India, entering into possession of that scientific frontier "sighed for in vain by his English successors and never held in its entirety even by the Moghul monarchs of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries"<sup>1</sup> In judging the extent of his conquests, we must remember that India is geographically a continent and the conquest of nearly the whole of this area is no mean achievement. Moreover, as Arrian has noted, a sense of justice prevented the ancient

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1. *Early History of India* p 126

Indian kings from bringing foreign countries under their subjection.<sup>1</sup> They were satisfied by getting their superior power acknowledged by foreign kings, and they performed their *digvijaya* only to this end. Judged by this standard, Chandragupta was a successful *digvijayi* in as much as he defeated the most powerful foreign king, Seluekos Nikator, who held all western Asia under his sway. Thus there can be no doubt that Chandragupta was a great conqueror.

Chandragupta, moreover, was, in a real sense, one of those few men who have changed the destinies of nations. But for him, India, with her numerous warring rulers, would have surely fallen a prey to the ambition of the successors of Alexander. He was solely responsible for the redemption of India.

Chandragupta, however, was no mere military adventurer and his greatness does not depend only upon his military feats. The change he brought about in Indian politics was not flickering or temporary. He knew to organise as well as to conquer a vast empire. His organization was so thorough that his empire passed intact at least to his son and grandson. It is, therefore, obvious that he

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1. McCrindle-Ancient India: Megasthenes and Arrian p. 209.

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had the will as well as the capacity to organize an empire rarely surpassed in magnitude.

Chandragupta has been praised by Indian and foreign authors alike for bestowing prosperity upon his country. Thus, Visakhadatta, the author of the *Mudrarakshasa*, has treated him as Deity descended upon earth to restore peace in the country of India troubled by barbarians. Among foreign writers the only one who has accused Chandragupta of tyranny is the Roman historian Justin, but his opinion is in contradiction with the earlier account of Megasthenes who everywhere refers to the prosperity of the Indian people.

Chandragupta thus distinguished himself in many directions. He was the conqueror of a vast territory, the emancipator of his country, the capable administrator of a great empire, and the harbinger of peace to his people. He is usually considered as the first historical emperor of India. He was undoubtedly the mightiest ruler of his time and one of the most lustrous stars in the firmament of monarchy. It is not easy to embark upon a comparison, but as it is one of the best ways of understanding a person, it would be worthwhile to compare Chandragupta with three of the world's greatest Kings—Alexander, Akbar and Napoleon.

Alexander the Great was undoubtedly a great conqueror. We are bound to be dazzled when we recall to mind his wide conquests in a brief space of time—for he died quite young. Yet the truth is that much of what Alexander accomplished had already been planned by his father, Philip, a man of uncommon ability. Alexander had found his field prepared by his father, and thus had no difficulties to face at the outset of his career. In the words of Mr. H. G. Wells “the true hero of the history of Alexander is not so much Alexander as his father Philip.”<sup>1</sup> Moreover, the countries conquered by Alexander gained nothing by the change of masters. It may be argued that he had schemes of organisation which were frustrated by his early death. But this is hardly borne out by his career. His vanity was insuperable, and his purpose seems to have been to dazzle the world by his valour. His purpose accomplished, he literally drank himself to death. Chandragupta, on the other hand, was a man of a different metal. As brave and courageous as Alexander himself, his sole purpose seems to have been to bring peace and honour to his country. He had no advantages of birth and was actually an exile at the outset of his career. He too was a

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1. Wells—Outline of History page 344

## ACHIEVEMENTS OF CHANDRAGUPTA 103

young man when he came on the scene, but in a brief space of time he had not only conquered but thoroughly organized a vast empire, giving all the advantages of a good government to his people. Thus Chandragupta, on the whole, has better claims for greatness than Alexander.

Akbar, the Moghul monarch, was indeed much like Chandragupta. He has often been compared with Asoka, but in many respects his genius was more allied to that of Chandragupta than to that of Asoka. Like Chandragupta he was a man of 'blood and iron'. Like him again, he was a great conqueror and a great administrator, But it must be remembered that Akbar had inherited the resources needed for forming a great empire as against Chandragupta who struggled from poverty and exile to power. Moreover, the success of Akbar's administration was more due to the personal qualities of his ministers than to his thorough organisation and even Dr. Vincent Smith has admitted that "Akbar's machine of government never attained the standard of efficiency reached by the Mauryas eighteen or nineteen centuries before his time."<sup>1</sup>

Napoleon certainly was one of the most brilliant figures in history. He resembles Chandragupta in

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1. Smith-Akbar the Great Mogul page 896.

as much as he also rose by dint of merit, and not by virtue of his birth. In his early youth he dreamt of an independent Corsica, much as Chandragupta seems to have dreamt of the independence of his country. But later, Napoleon drifted towards a mere ambition for conquest, and failed to maintain his empire. In fact, his country gained nothing by his splendid exploits. In this respect, he too falls behind the great Maurya.

Chandragupta was thus, on the whole, an uncommon genius. He was the founder of the greatest Hindu dynasty, to which also belonged the most famous Buddhist and Jain monarchs.<sup>1</sup> His career supplied materials to many poets for writing upon and he is still a popular hero in modern vernacular literature.

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1. **Asoka and Samprati.**

## VIII. LEGENDS OF CHANDRAGUPTA. A. BUDDHIST.

While Buddha yet lived, driven by the misfortunes produced by the wars of (prince) Vidudabha, certain members of the Sakya line retreating to Himavant discovered a delightful and beautiful location, well watered and situated in the midst of a forest of lofty bo and other trees. Influenced by the desire of settling there, they founded a town at a place where several great roads met, surrounded by durable ramparts, having gates of defence therein, and embellished with delightful edifices and pleasure gardens. Moreover that (city) having a row of buildings covered with tiles, which were arranged in the pattern of the plumage of peacock's neck, and as it resounded with notes of flocks of *kraunchas* and *mayuras* it was so called. From this circumstance these Sakya lords of this town, and their children and descendants, were renowned throughout Jambudipa by the title of "Moriya". From this time that dynasty has been called the Moriyān dynasty.

(Chandragupta was born in this dynasty.) His mother, the queen consort of the monarch of Moriyānagara, the city before mentioned, was pregnant at the time that a certain powerful provincial raja

conquered that kingdom, and put the Moriyān king to death. In her anxiety to preserve the child in her womb, departing for the capital of Puppapura under the protection of her elder brothers and under disguise she dwelt there. At the completion of the ordinary term of pregnancy giving birth to a son, and relinquishing him to the protection of the Devas, she placed him in a vase and deposited him at the door of a cattle pen. A bull named Chando stationed himself by him, to protect him, in the same manner that Prince Ghosha, by the interposition of the Devas, was watched over by a bull. In the same manner, also, that the herdsman in the instance of that prince Ghosha repaired to the spot where the bull planted himself, a herdsman, on observing this prince, moved by affection, like that borne to his own child, took charge of and tenderly reared him, and in giving him a name, in reference to his having been watched by the bull Chando, he called him Chandagutta ; and brought him up. When he had attained an age to be able to tend cattle, a certain wild huntsman, becoming acquainted with, and attached to him, taking him from (the herdsman) to his own dwelling, established him here, He continued to dwell in that village.

Subsequently, on a certain occasion, while



tending cattle with other children in the village, he joined them in a game called the "game of royalty". He himself was named Raja ; to others he gave the offices of sub-king, etc. Some being appointed judges, were placed in a judgement hall ; some he made officers. Having thus constituted a court of justice, he sat in judgement. On culprits being brought up, regularly inspecting and trying them, on their guilt being clearly proved to his satisfaction, according to the sentence awarded by his judicial ministers, he ordered the officers of the court to chop off their hands and feet. On their replying, "Deva, we have no axes"; he answered "It is the order of Chandagutta that ye should chop off their hands and feet, making axes with the horns of goats for blades and sticks for handles. They acting accordingly, on striking with the axe the hands and feet were lopt off. On the same person commanding, "Let them be reunited," the hands and feet were restored to their former condition.

Chanakka, (a Brahman), happening to come to that spot, was amazed at the proceedings he beheld. (He had been insulted by King Nanda, for taking revenge against whom he had already taken into confidence a Prince named Pabbato, and was in search for a second individual entitled to be raised

to sovereign power). Accompanying (the boy) to the village, and presenting the herdsman with a thousand Kahapanas, he applied for him; saying, "I will teach your son every accomplishment, consign him to me." Accordingly conducting him to his own dwelling, he encircled his neck with a single fold of woollen cord, twisted with golden thread, worth a lac.

He invested Prince Pabbato, also, with a similar woollen cord. While these youths were living with him, each had dream which they separately imparted to him. As soon as he heard each (dream) he knew that of these prince Pabbato would not attain royalty; and that Chandagutta would, without loss of time, become paramount monarch in Jambudipa. Although he made this discovery, he disclosed nothing to them.

On a certain occasion having partaken of some milkrice prepared in butter, which had been received as an offering at a Brahmanical disputation; retiring from the main road, and lying down in a shady place protected by the deep foliage of trees, they fell asleep. Among them the Achariyo awaking first rose; and, for the purpose of putting prince Pabbato's qualifications to the test, giving him a sword, and telling him "Bring me the woollen thread

on Chandagutta's neck, without either cutting or untying it," sent him off. Starting on the mission, and failing to accomplish it, he returned. On a subsequent day, he sent Chandagutta on a similar mission. He repairing to the spot where Pabbato was sleeping, and considering how it was to be effected, decided "there is noother way of doing it; it can only be got possession of, by cutting his head off." Accordingly chopping his head off, and bringing away the woollen thread, presented himself to the Brahman, who received him in profound silence. Pleased with him, however, on account of this (exploit), he rendered him in the course of six or seven years highly accomplished, and profoundly learned. Thereafter, on his attaining manhood, deciding "From henceforth this individual is capable of forming and controlling an army," and repairing to the spot where his treasure was buried, and taking possession of, and employing it; and enlisting forces from all quarters, and distributing money among them, and having thus formed a powerful army, he entrusted it to him. From that time throwing off all disguise, and invading the inhabited parts of the country, he commenced his campaign by attacking towns and villages. In the course of their (Chanakka and Chandagutta's) warfare, the

population rose *en masse*, and surrounding them, and hewing their army with their weapons, vanquished them. Dispersing, they reunited in the wilderness and consulting together, they thus decided; "As yet no advantage has resulted from war; relinquishing military operations, let us acquire a knowledge of the 'sentiments of the people.'" Thenceforth, in disguise they travelled about the country. While thus roaming about, after sunset retiring to some town or other, they were in the habit of attending to the conversation of the inhabitants of those places.

In one of these villages, a woman having baked some appalpuwa (pancakes) was giving them to her child, who leaving the edges would only eat the centre. On his asking for another cake, she remarked "This boy's conduct is like Chandagutta's in his attempt to take possession of the kingdom." On his enquiring, "Mother, why, what am I doing, and what has Chandagutta done?" "Thou, my boy, (said she), throwing away the outside of the cake, eat the middle only. Chandagutta also in his ambition to be a monarch, without subduing the frontiers, before he attacked the towns, invaded the heart of the country, and laid towns waste. On that account, both the inhabitants of the town and

others, rising closed in upon him, from the frontiers to the centre, and destroyed his army. *That* was *his* folly."

They on hearing this story of hers, taking due notice thereof, from that time, again raised an army. On resuming their attack on the provinces and towns, commencing from the frontiers, reducing towns, and stationing troops in the intervals, they proceeded in their invasion. After an interval, adopting the same system, and martialling a great army, and in regular course reducing each kingdom and province, then assailing Pataliputra and putting Dhanananda to death, they seized that sovereignty.

Although this had been brought about, Chanakka did not at once raise Chandagutta to the throne; but for the purpose of discovering Dhanananda's hidden treasure, sent for a certain fisherman (of the river); and deluding him with the promise of raising the *chhatta* for him, and having secured the hidden treasure; within a month from that date, putting him also to death, inaugurated Chandagutta monarch.<sup>1</sup>

#### B. JAIN.

In a village there lived certain persons as

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1. Mahavansa Tika translated by Turnour in his introduction to Mahavansa pp. LXXVI-LXXXI.

tamers of peacocks. Their headman had a daughter. She gave birth to a son who was named Chandragupta. The latter soon grew up into a fine lad.

Chandragupta used to play with the boys of the neighbourhood, and give villages and other things to them, as if he were a king. Sometimes, he made the boys act as horses or elephants to ride on them, for the future of a man is often predicted by his previous conduct. Subsequently, on a certain occasion, a Brahman named Chanakya (who had been insulted by King Nanda of Pataliputra, and who was in search of a person who could help him in his vow of revenge) came there, while wandering. He was surprised at the manners of Chandragupta, and to test the latter he addressed him thus:—"O King let me also have a share in your gifts." Chandragupta also replied, "O Brahman you are at liberty to choose some for yourself from these village kine. No body can dare to withhold what I promise." Chanakya, smiling, said. "How shall I take these kine? I fear the cowhards lest they should best me severely" Chandragupta replied. "Do not fear. I allot these cows to thee. The whole earth can be enjoyed by those who are brave," Chanakya was struck by

his intelligence and asked his playmates as to who he was. The boys told him the way in which, while still in his mother's womb, the boy was promised to be given to an ascetic. Chanakya (remembering that it was he himself who had formerly come to the village in the guise of an ascetic) recognised the boy and induced the latter by means of the promise of securing a kingdom, to accompany him. Chandragupta too, pleased at the idea of acquiring kingship, agreed to accompany him, and Chanakya quickly fled away with the boy like a highwayman. Then, taking hold of his treasures, Chanakya arrayed infantry and other forces, for the sake of destroying Nanda. He then besieged the city of Pataliputra on all sides with his forces thus gathered. King Nanda, however, easily defeated the inadequate forces of Chanakya. Chanakya and Chandragupta, thereafter, fled for their lives, for it is said that one should protect oneself at any cost, prosperity being attainable only by preserving one's life. Nanda, on his part, sent some cavaliers to catch Chandragupta, for kings can not tolerate such persons as covet their kingdom. When Nanda returned to his capital triumphant, the citizens celebrated a festival, each contributing his share according to capacity.

One of the cavaliers despatched by King Nanda reached, due to the swiftness of his horse, very near where Chandragupta had gone. Chanakya, seeing the cavalier from afar and using his quick wit, asked Chandragupta to hide himself in the water of the lake that was situated nearby adorned with lotuses. He himself stayed there silent like a Yogi. The horseman of Nanda quickly came there on his horse, which had the swiftness of wind. He asked Chanakya if he had seen some young man recently passing that way. Chanakya, pretending to take care lest he should break his silent meditation, pointed his finger towards the water with a hum. The cavalier in order to draw out Chandragupta from water, began to wear his swimming gown, as the dancing girl wears her special petticoat (when she has to perform a dance.) Chanakya, in the meanwhile, got hold of the cavalier's sword, and cut off the latter's head, as if to offer to the Water-goddess. Then, as he shouted to Chandragupta, the latter came out of the water, as the moon rises from the ocean. Then having made Chandragupta mount on the horse of the cavalier, Chanakya asked him as to what he thought to himself when was pointed out to the cavalier.



Chandragupta said that, although he might not understand, he saw nothing but good in what his teacher did. Chanakya, on hearing this, thought to himself that such an obedient pupil would never betray him. While they were thus going on, they were again followed by a swift cavalier of Nanda coming like a messenger of Yama. Seeing him, Chanakya again asked Chandragupta to act as before which he did. Chanakya then persuaded a washerman standing there to believe that King Nanda was angry on his guild, and it was best for him to run away, lest he should be killed by the cavalier that was drawing near. The washerman too, seeing the cavalier coming from afar with drawn sword, believed the truth of Chanakya's statement, and fled for his life. Chanakya then began to wash the clothes which the washerman had left behind. The cavalier coming near asked Chanakya (mistaking him to be a washerman) about the fugitives. The quick-witted Chanakya, acting as before, killed that cavalier also. Then Chanakya and Chandragupta resumed their wanderings.....

While thus wandering, Chanakya, accompanied by Chandragupta, reached a village in the evening, as a bird retires to its nest. In that village, roaming

for the sake of alms, he approached the house of a certain old woman, who was serving fresh cooked hot food to her children. There a child, feeling very hungry, got his fingers burnt due to his carelessness. On the child's screaming the old woman remarked: "You are as foolish as Chanakya himself." Chanakya, overhearing, entered her house and asked the matron the reason for her comparison of the child to Chanakya. The old woman replied, "Chanakya in his folly, attacked Nanda's capital, before getting control of the frontiers as a result of which he perished. This child, too, put his hand in the centre before slowly eating from the sides and thus got his fingers burnt. Chanakya thinking that even a woman was more intelligent than him (and realising his mistake) went to the Himalayan regions, and there formed alliance with a chief named Parvataka, with a view to secure his help.

One day, Chanakya suggested to Parvataka the idea of conquering king Nanda and dividing his kingdom between themselves. Parvataka agreed to this, and then Chandragupta, Chanakya and Parvataka started to conquer the kingdom of Nanda. On their way, they besieged a town, but could not capture it. Thereupon Chanakya entered the town in the disguise of a mendicant. There Chanakya

saw seven goddesses and thought that it must have been due to them that the town was safe. While he was thinking of the way of removing the images, certain citizens came to him and requested him to predict as to when the town would be free from the invaders. The preceptor of Chandragupta replied that so long as the goddesses were there the town would not be secure from enemies. The citizens then quickly removed the images, for there is nothing which a troubled person will not do specially under the influence of a crafty fellow. Chandragupta and Parvataka then retreated at the hint of Chanakya, and the citizens became very glad. But the two warriors again came back like a sea-tide and entered the town. Having thus captured this town both the warriors conquered the country of Nanda also, with Chanakya as charioteer. Being guided by Chanakya, the two heroes at last besieged Pataliputra also with a large army. King Nanda at that time had become destitute of sufficient treasures and army and counsel and valour, due to his unvirtuous acts. For prosperity retires with virtue. He (being defeated) requested Chanakya to grant him a safe retirement, for he never does not value his life. Chanakya also allowed him to leave the city with only one chariot, and assured him that none would stop him. He retired as directed.

Then king Nanda having taken with him his two wives and a daughter and a sufficient amount of wealth left the city. The daughter of Nanda, at that time was attracted by the appearance of Chandragupta and gazed at him unwinked like a goddess. By thus gazing by her side glances the daughter of Nanda proved that she had fallen in love with Chandragupta, Nanda too, having understood, asked his daughter to choose her husband according to her will, as was the custom among kings. Accordingly he asked her to get down from his chariot, wishing her well. Being thus asked she got down from that chariot, and began to mount the chariot of Chandragupta, as a result of which the spokes were broken, as a sugar cane breaks when pressed by a *yantra*. Chandragupta thinking it inauspicious tried to remove her from the chariot. Chanakya, however, forbade Chandragupta from doing so, telling him that it was a good omen, not only for Chandragupta but also for his descendants. Then Chandragupta and Parvatika having entered Nanda's palace began to divide the huge wealth of that king. There was also the daughter of Nanda whom the latter had slowly fed on poison, and Parvatika became so enamoured of her that he treated her like an angel. The preceptor of Chandragupta agreed

to confer her upon Parvataka and preparations for marriage were started. But the sweat produced by the nuptial fire caused the transmission of poison in the body of Parvataka, (who took the hand of the girl). Being thus afflicted by the agonies of poison his body began to loose energy and he cried to Chandragupta to procure a doctor lest he should die. But Chanakya whispered to Chandragupta to let him alone to die or be cured, for after all the death of Parvataka would clear away a rival of his. without his incurring any sin. Thereafter the Himalayan chief died and the whole empire passed intact to Chandragupta. Thus Chandragupta became king 155 years after the Mukti of Sri Mahavira.<sup>1</sup>

### C. HINDU.

King Nanda was the lord of 99 crores of gold pieces. When he died his body was re-animated by a person proficient in Yoga and, since then, he was known as Yogananda. Sakatala, the minister, hated Yogananda thinking him to be an imposter. Yogananda, having known it, punished Sakatatala on a false plea. Since then Sakatala became definitely against him.

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1. Parisishtaparvan of Hemachandra VIII 3 389, translated by the author.

One day, while brooding on his plan of revenge, he observed a Brahman digging in a meadow, and asked him the reason for doing that. Chanakya, the Brahman, replied, "I am rooting out this grass which has hurt my foot." The minister was struck at the reply and regarded that angry firm-minded Brahman as the fit person to accomplish the death of Yogananda. He then engaged him by the promise of a reward of one hundred thousand suvarnas to come and preside at the *sraddha* which was to be celebrated in the palace of Nanda. Chanakya accompanied him to his house and on the appointed day went to preside at the *Sraddha*. Another Brahman, Subandhu, however, was desirous of getting precedence for himself and Nanda was persuaded by Sakatala to believe that Subandhu was a fit person to be given precedence. Thereupon Nanda gave orders to remove Chanakya from the place which he occupied. Sakatala communicated the orders to Chanakya, pleading his own innocence in the matter. Burning with rage, Chanakya loosened the knot of his *sikha*, and took a vow to kill Nanda within seven days, after which alone he would tie his *sikha* again. On hearing this Nanda was enraged, but Chanakya escaped and was secretly sheltered by Sakatala. Thereafter, Chanakya

being supplied with all materials, practised a magical rite in which he was an adept, and by which on the seventh day Nanda was deprived of life. Sakatala effected the destruction of Yogananda's son Hiranyagupta also, and raised Chandragupta, the son of the genuine Nanda, on the throne. Chanakya became the prince's minister, and Sakatala having obtained the only object of his existence retired to spend his last days in the woods<sup>1</sup>.

#### D. EUROPEAN.

Saleucus Nicator waged many wars in the east after the partition of Alexander's empire among his generals. He first took Babylon and then with his forces augmented by victory subjugated the Bactrians. He then passed over into India, which after Alexander's death, as if the yoke of servitude had been shaken off from its neck, had put his prefects to death. Sandracottus was the leader who achieved their freedom, but after his victories he forfeited by his tyranny all title to the name of liberator, for he oppressed with servitude the very people whom he had emancipated from foreign thraldom. He was born in humble life, but was prompted to aspire to royalty by an omen significant

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1. *Kathasaritsagara* I. 5 translated by the author.

of an august destiny. For when by his insolent behaviour he had offended Nandrus<sup>1</sup> and was ordered by that king to be put to death, he sought safety by a speedy flight. When he lay overcome with fatigue and had fallen into a deep sleep, a lion of enormous size approaching the slumberer licked with its tongue the sweat which oozed profusely from his body and when he awoke quickly took its departure. It was this prodigy which first inspired him with the hope of winning the throne, and so having collected a band of robbers he instigated the Indians to overthrow the existing Government. When he was thereafter preparing to attack Alexander's prefects, a wild elephant of monstrous size approached him, and kneeling submissively like a tame elephant received him on to its back and fought vigorously in front of the army. Sandrocottu having thus won the throne was reigning over India when Seleucus was laying the foundation of his future greatness. Seleucus having made a treaty with him and otherwise settled his affairs in the east, returned home to prosecute the war with Antigonus<sup>2</sup>.

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1. 'Nandrum' has been substituted for the corrupt reading 'Alexandrum'.

2 Justin (McCrindle-Invasion of India by Alexander pp. 827-8).



## APPENDIX A.

### History of the Sudarsana Lake.

(Portion of the Junagarh Inscription from  
Epigraphia Indica Vol. VIII, Edited and  
Translated by Prof. F. Kielhorn.)

1. Siddham idam tadakam Sudarsanam Gir (i) naga-  
radapi (d) (u) ram a (n) t (a).....(tt) ik-opala-vis-  
tarayam-occhraya-nihsandhi-baddha - dridha-sar-  
a-palikatvat-parvata-pa—
2. da-ppratispardhi-suslish ( t )a(ba) ( ndha ) m.....  
( va ) jaten-akritrimena setubandhenopapannam  
supprativihita-ppranali-pari ( v )cha
3. midhavidhanam cha triskan (dha).....n-adibhir-  
anuagrahair-mahaty-upachaye vartate. Tadidam  
rajno mahakshatrapasya sugrihi—
4. tanamnah Swami-Chashtanasya putra..... h  
putrasya rajno mahakshatrapasya gurubhir-  
abhyastanamno Rudradamno varshe divisap-  
tatitam(e) 70 2.
5. Margasirsha-bahula-prat(i).....h srishtha-vrish-  
tina parjanyaena ekarnava-bhutayam-iva prithi-  
vyam kritayam girer-Urjayatah Suvarnasikata.
6. Palasini-Prabhritinam nadinam atimatrodvrittair-  
vegaih setum (a).....(ya) man-anurupa-prati-  
karamapi - girisikhara-taru-tat - attalak - opatalpa-

*dvāra-saranocchraya-vidhvamsina-yuga-nidhana-sadri*—

7. *sa-paramaghora-vegena vayuna pramathita-salila-vikshipta-jarjarikritava (di).....(k) sh (i) ptaśma vrikshagulma-latapratanaṃ a nadi (ta) la (d) ity-udghatitam-asit. Chatvari-hasta-satani-vinsad-uttarāny-ayatena etavantyeva vistirṇena*
8. *pancha-saptati hastan-avagadhena bhedena nissrita-sarva-toyam marudhannva kalpam-atibhrisam durda.....(s)y(a)rthe Mauryasya rajnah Chandrag (u) (pta) (s) (ya) (r) ashtriyena (V) aisyena Pushyaguptena karitam Asokasya Mauryasya (kri?) te Yavanarajena Tush (a) sphen-adhishthaya*
9. *pranalibhir-ala(m)krita(m).....*

### TRANSLATION

1. This lake Sudarsana, from Girinagara (even a long distance?).....of a structure so well joined as to rival the spur of a mountain, because all its embankments are strong, in breadth, length

\* The following letters have been printed in italics.

1. *a, i, u*, representing long vowels
2. *t, d, n*, representing the letters of टःर्ग
3. *r*, in *ri*, representing ऋ
4. *h*, representing विसर्ग
5. *s*, representing श

## HISTORY OF THE SUDARSANA LAKE 125

and height constructed without gaps as they are of stone, (clay),..... ..furnished with a natural dam (formed by?).....,and with well provided conduits, drains and means to guard against foul matter,.....three sections.....by.....and other favours is (now) in an excellent condition.

3. This same (lake)—on the first of the dark half of Margasirsha in the seventy second—72nd—year of the king, the Mahakshatrapa Rudradaman whose name is repeated by the venerable, the son of.....and son's son of the king, the Mahakshatrapa Lord Chashtana the taking of whose name is auspicious... ..when by the clouds pouring with rain the earth had been converted as it were into one ocean by the excessively swollen floods of the Suvarnasikata, Palasini and other streams of mount Urjayat the dam.....though proper precautions (were taken), the water churned by a storm which, of a most tremendous fury befitting the end of a mundane period, tore down hill-tops, trees, banks, turrets, upper stories, gates and raised places of shelter—scattered, broke to pieces, (tore apart)....., with stones, trees, bushes and creeping plants scattered about, was thus laid open down to the bottom of the river :—

7. By a breach four hundred and twenty cubits long, just as many broad, (and) seventy five cubits deep, all the water escaped, so that (the lake), almost like a sandy desert, (became) extremely ugly (to look at)
  - 8.....for the sake of.....ordered to be made by the Vaisya Pushyagupta, the provincial governor of the Maurya king Chandragupta, adorned with conduits for Asoka the Maurya by the Yavana king Tushaspha while governing etc.
-

## APPENDIX B.

### Maurya Chronology.

#### *I. Important events\**

| Year<br>B. C. | Event.   |
|---------------|--|
| 488           | Foundation of Pataliputra.                             |
| 345           | Birth of Chandragupta.                                 |
| 325           | Chandragupta met Alexander the Great.                  |
| 317           | End of Greek domination in the Punjab by Chandragupta. |
| 314           | Chandragupta invaded Nanda dominions.                  |
| 313           | Coronation of Chandragupta.                            |
| 305           | Seleukos Nikator defeated by Chandragupta.             |
| 289           | Death of Chandragupta.                                 |

\* Most of the dates are nearly exact; some are approximate.

*II. Dynastic Table\**

| Serial no. | King.            | Length of<br>Reign<br>(years.) | Date<br>(B.C.) |
|------------|------------------|--------------------------------|----------------|
| 1          | Chandragupta ... | 24                             | 318—289        |
| 2          | Bindusara ...    | 25                             | 289—264        |
| 3          | Asoka ...        | 36                             | 264—228        |
| 4          | Dasaratha ...    | 8                              | 228—220        |
| 5          | Samprati ...     | 9                              | 220—211        |
| 6          | Salisuka ...     | 13                             | 211—198        |
| 7          | Devavarman ...   | 7                              | 198—191        |
| 8          | Satadhanvan ...  | 8                              | 191—183        |
| 9          | Brihadratha ...  | 7                              | 183—176        |
|            | Total ...        | 197                            | 318—176        |

\* The lengths of reigns are given according to the Puranas. According to the concurrent testimony of the Buddhists and Jains, Kunala, the son of Asoka, was blind and therefore could not have ruled. Hence the period of eight years allotted to him by some Puranas seems to be identical with Dasaratha's reign-period which is also exactly the same. If we accept this, the detailed figures for the reigns of Maurya Kings entirely agree with the total period assigned by the Puranas to the Maurya dynasty as a whole.

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