

RĀJAPŪTA POLITY



RĀJAPŪTA POLITY

[Political System of the Early Medieval India]

by

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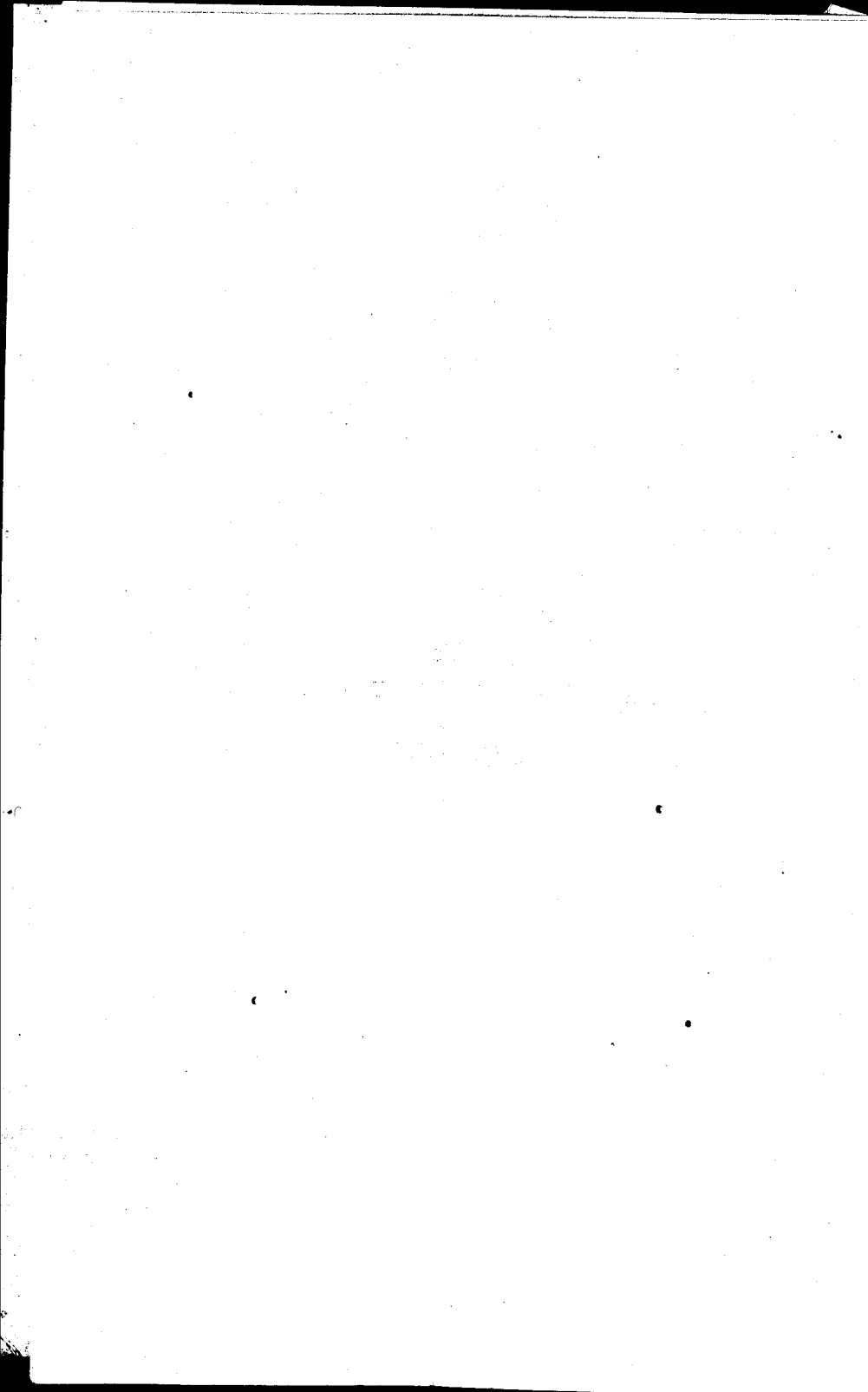
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To
THE LOVERS OF RĀJAPŪTA HISTORY
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INTRODUCTION

जीवितं मानमूलं हि माने म्लाने कुतः सुखम्

Rājapūta Polity is, here, presented in three sections. The Buddha and Vassakāra, were the historical personalities. Republics existed and executed state-business on the basis of concord and constitution. The fact that Vassakāra employed the policy of mithubheda (dissension and disunity) shows the state of polity in the age of the Buddha. The traditions continued.

Dr. Smith observed that "In political institutions no evolution took place" after Harsha's death (E. H. I., p 371). Dr. Jayaswal also believed, "That the period after 700 A. C. is a period of darkness and disruption. Popular institutions decayed and Hindu tradition dwindled" (Hindu Polity, 1955, p. 351). I do not accept it. Section I of this book refers to the salient features of the Hindu Medieval India. Dr. Jayaswal discussed the word vīra (śūra), identifying it with Yaudheya (Hindu Polity, p. 143). Vīra and śūra, as explained in the Yogavāsishṭha, represent the person solely devoted to the protection of his sacred land. Yaudheyas' life based on liberty, equality and patriotism was upheld by Somadeva Sūrī in the early Medieval India (Read my 'History of the Yaudheyas'). In this section—Rājapūta India—I have here dealt with the political system of the Garuḍa Purāṇa (pp. 12-14), which presents a true picture of India on the eve of Turkish conquest of Northern India. It gives new traits and thoughts. We have to interpret the title of Bhāratesvara, given to Prithivīrāja III in the light of the contemporary concept of vīra and vīra-dharma.

Section II discusses the salient features of the Hindu Medieval Thought. Section III discusses the collapse of the Hindu power. I have taken liberties to present Dr. Ghoshal's observations and arguments to shield myself from the unpleasant task of censuring the vague generalisations and speculations particularly the one relating to the so called 'decadent period'. There is vigour and vyaṅga in literature. There is message in sculpture and coins. Symbols speak.

I think, the teachers of Medieval Indian History, so far relying upon the Muslim Chronicles, must read it to assess the other side of the picture. I have not added any thing of my own. I followed the texts and the evidences are cited at every step. Still as a student of Indian History, I have kept my mind open without any bias or prejudice.

Indian culture is composite in its character. It kept its doors and windows ajar. The currents of thought came in from different countries and corners. No body can deny the debt modern India owes to the West for its scientific outlook. But all the races and nations do not travel by the same track.

Mahāmati Vidura, (Ādi P., CVIII. 17) was well-versed in Dhanurveda, Aśva-Vidyā (riding), Gadā-yuddha, Swords-manship, Gaja-śikshā and Nītiśāstra (Ādi P., CVIII, 19) as well as in the Itihāsa-Purāṇas, Veda-Vedāṅgas and in various types of Śikshās (Ādi P., CVIII. 20). He was a great political thinker, who advised Dhṛitarāshṭra to denounce Duryodhana for the safety and security of the country. He asserts :

एकेन कुरु वै क्षेमं कुलस्य जगतस्तथा ।

त्यजेदेकं कुलस्यार्थं ग्रामस्यार्थं कुलं त्यजेत् ॥ आदिपर्ब, ११४ । ३८

ग्रामं जनपदस्यार्थं आत्मार्थं पृथिवीं त्यजेत् ॥ वही, ११४ । ३९ (१)

Vidura's political philosophy based on the policy of renunciation has been upheld in the Early Medieval India. Garuḍa Purāṇa (I. 109. 2), too, upholds this ideal of sacrifice for the sake of higher and nobler cause. Vidura championed the role of sabhā and sabhyās in the preservation of Dharma, Law and Right (Sabhā P., LXIII. 59-64).

Vidulā, a kshatriya princess, well-versed in different śāstras, infused new blood in the heart of her son defeated by Sindhu-rāja (Udyoga P, CXXXIII. 3-4). She urged the dejected prince :—

माऽऽत्मानमवमन्यस्व सैनमल्पेन बीभरः ।

मनः कृत्वा सुकल्याणं मा भैस्त्वं प्रतिसंहर ॥ उद्योग पर्ब, १३३।७

उत्तिष्ठ हे कापुरुष मा शेष्वाँवं पराजितः ।

अमित्रान् नन्दयन् सर्वांन् निर्मानो बन्धुशोकदः ॥ वही, १३३ । ८

अप्यहेरारुजन् दंष्ट्रामाश्वेव निघनं व्रज ।

अपि वा संशयं प्राप्य जीवितेऽपि पराक्रमेः ॥ वही, १३३ । १०

अप्यरेः श्येनवच्छिद्रं पश्येस्त्वं विपरिक्रमन् ।

विनदन् वाथवा तूष्णीं व्योम्नि वापरिशंकितः ॥ वही, १३३ । ११

.....
.....

अलब्ध्वा यदि वा लब्ध्वा नानुशोचति पण्डितः ।

आनन्तर्यं चारभते न प्राणानां घनायते ॥ वही, १३३ । १७

Thus Rājapūta Polity is the expression of the Rājapūta philosophy of life, based on the immortality of soul (Philosophy of Gītā) and it was inspired by Simha-Vikrama. Vidulā advised her son to wait in the hills and to secure allies till Sindhu-rāja (king of Sind), his enemy, was trapped in calamity :

उद्भावयस्व वीर्यं वा तां गच्छ ध्रुवांगति ।

धर्मं पुत्राग्रतः कृत्वा किं निमित्तं हि जीवसि ॥ उद्योग पर्व, १३३।१८

The mother Vidulā would see her son only when he returned victorious after destroying the Saindhavas :

अथ त्वां पूजयिष्यामि हत्वा वै सर्वसैन्यवान् ।

अहं पश्यामि विजयं कृच्छ्रभावितमेव ते ॥ उद्योग पर्व, १३५।२१

Such were the female-thinkers, styled pariṇataprajñā, belonging to heroic race of the kshatriyas, who propagated philosophy of politics (Udyoga P, CXXXV. 25-40, CXXXVI. 1-8).

Mahābhārata discusses the origin of kingship (Rājā)¹ and the State (Rājya)². With the decline of virtue and piety (Veda and Dharma), there grew terror in the hearts of the gods i. e. saintly beings. Moved by their entreaties, Loka-Pitāmaha (Brahmā) had composed a political treatise comprising a hundred thousand adhyāyas (chapters) dealing with *trivarga*, as well as Trayī, Vārtā, Ānvikshiki and Daṇḍa-nīti.³ This Nītiśāstra—śubham śāstram—which aimed at the promotion

1. Śānti P. LIX. 5 :

य एष राज्ञन् राजेति शब्दश्चरति भारत ।

कथमेष समुत्पन्नस्तन्मे ब्रूहि परंतप ॥

2. Ibid., LIX. 13 :

नियतस्त्वं नरव्याघ्र शृणु सर्वमशेषतः ।

यथा राज्यं समुत्पन्नमादौ कृतयुगेऽभवत् ॥

3. Ibid., LIX. 29-33.

of piety and preservation of Law for the welfare of the people, was the outcome of great intellectual deliberation :

उपकाराय लोकस्य त्रिवर्गस्थापनाय च ।

नवनीतं सरस्वत्या बुद्धिरेषा प्रभाविता ॥¹

Based on the essence of *shāḍḡḡṇya* and commended by the sages it discussed Dharma, Artha, Kāma and Moksha.² It was, first of all, grasped by Śiva styled *Viśālāksha* :

ततस्तां भगवान नीतिं पूर्वं जग्राह शंकरः ।

बहुरूपो विशालाक्षः शिवः स्याणुरुमापतिः ॥³

Śiva-*Viśālāksha* reduced it to ten thousand chapters, consequently, styled *Vaiśālāksha* (Śānti P., LIX. 81, 82). Later on, Indra rendered it into an other abridged treatise of five thousand chapters and it was called *Bāhudantkaṁ* (Śānti, P., LIX. 82-i, 83). Bṛihaspati abridged it again into a treatise of three thousand chapters called *Bārhaspatyaṁ* (Śānti, P., LIX. 84). Śukra (Kāvya) turned it into one thousand *adhyāyas* (Śānti P., LIX. 85). It represents the evolution of *Nīti-sāstra* or *Daṇḍa-nīti* in the different ages at the hands of the sages and saints, most probably in the country of *Sārasvata* (Śānti P., LIX. 111). Here the encyclopaedic epic refers to the different schools of political philosophy. *Vaiśālāksha*, or *Māheśvara* school, was held high even in the age of Chand Baradāi. Śiva is also believed to be the founder of the Philosophy of Yoga. The Buddha's thesis of equality is well-known. *Jātakas* uphold the elective nature of kingship and *Bodhisattva*, the future Buddha, attracts the people who offered the exalted office of kingship to the former. The Śākya or Vajjian assemblies are well-known for their regular meetings as well as democratic traditions.

Bhīshma ascribes the collapse of a *republic* to disunity and dissension (*bhedamūla vināśāya hi*);⁴ the strength and stability of a *gaṇarājya* lies in unity (*gaṇāḥ saṅghātavṛittayaḥ*).⁵

1. Śānti P., LIX. 76.

2. Ibid., LIX. 79.

3. Ibid., LIX. 80.

4. Ibid., CVII. 8; CVII. 14

5. Ibid., CVII. 13

The importance of saṅghāta-bala and saṅghāta-vṛitti¹ was well-recognised. The Buddha himself asserted :

अयं जम्बुदीपो इद्धो चेव भविस्सति फीतो च ।
कुक्कुट सम्पातिता ग्राम निगम राजधानियो ॥

Dīghanikāya III, p. 59.

The advent of 'Nāstikā Saindhavā Mlechchhā' in Indian history marks the beginning of the age of the crisis and catastrophe. The period following the fall of the Gupta empire witnessed the forces of disintegration. It has been aptly styled Kali age, the age of strife. When the country was thus suffering from the internecine warfare, Sind was conquered by the Arabs. Tājikas and Turushkas, Garjanakas and Ghoris threatened the north western frontiers, which they occupied. It led to the occupation of the Punjab by the Gaznavids. Mohammad Ghori, a determined and dauntless soldier, conquered Hindustan. It was thus the tragic end of Ancient India. Section I, of the Rājapūta Polity, deals with the salient features of the Rājapūta history. It is styled Rājapūta India.

Rajput Politics was published in 1964. It has gone out of stock and the demands came in for it. Hence it is published again in its revised and enlarged edition. Despite great care and caution mistakes in printing have occurred. I hope the readers will kindly excuse us, as it was published in very trying circumstances particularly due to my ill-health.

I am thankful to my printers for their enterprise.

अध्रुवो हि जयो नाम देवं चात्र परायणम् ।
जयवन्तो हि संग्रामे कृतकृत्या भवन्ति हि ॥

Lucknow
July 29, 1968

A. B. L. Awasthi

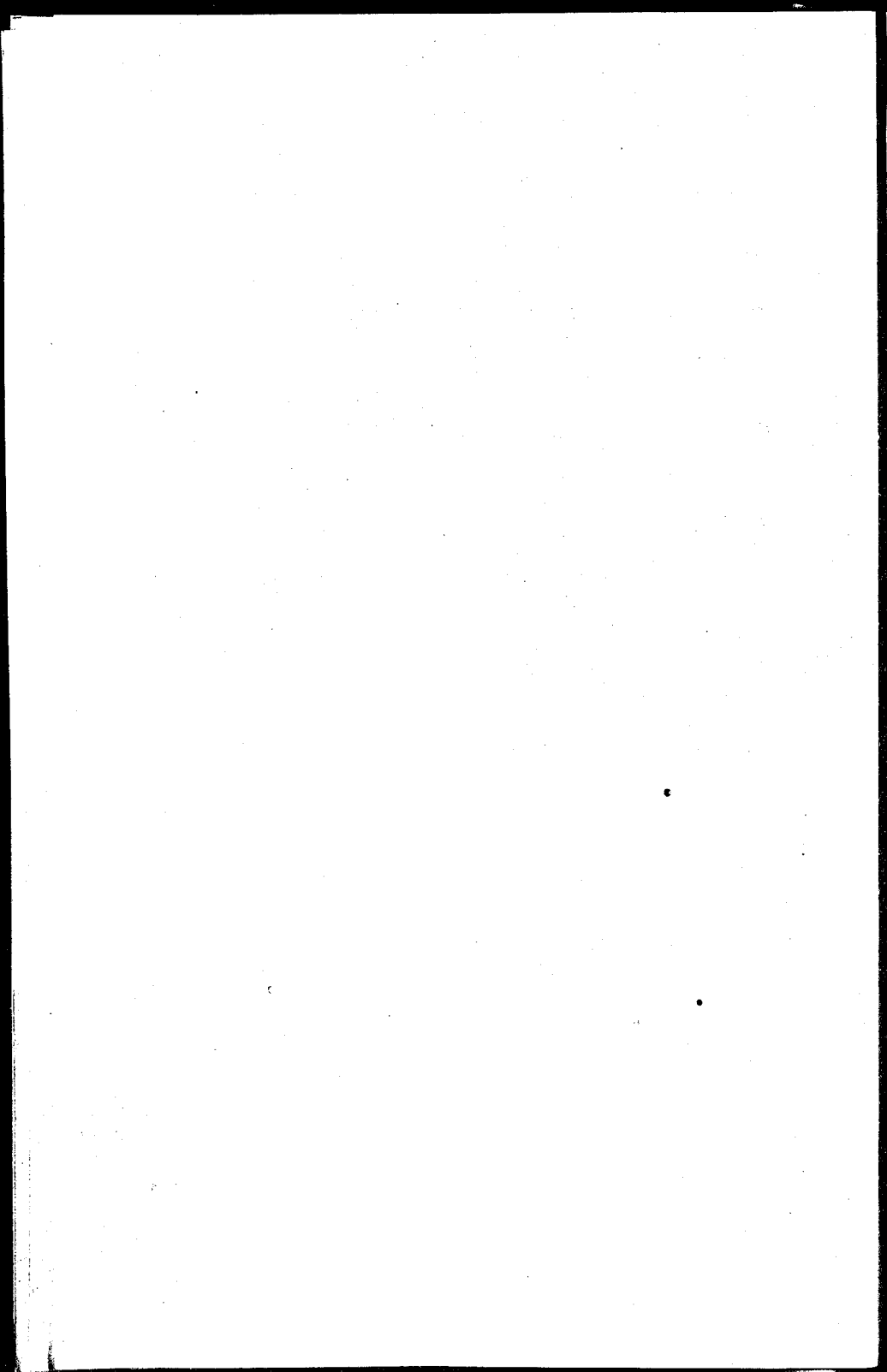
1. Ibid., CVII. 15, 32.

Abbreviations

AAR.	Annals And Antiquities of Rajasthan (Tod)
Anc. India.	Ancient India by Dr. R. C. Majumdar
Bh.	Bālabhārata of Rājasekhara
BKM.	Bṛihat Kathāmañjarī of Kshemendra
CII.	Corpus Inscriptionum Indicarum
DHNI.	Dynastic History of Northern India by Dr. H. C. Ray
D.K. Ch.	Daśakumāra Charita of Daṇḍī
द०कु०च०	
E.Ch D.	Early Chauhān Dynasties by Dr. Dasharatha Sharma
E.H.I.	Early History of India by Dr. V. Smith
GV.	Gauḍavāho of Vākpatirāja
H.G.P.	History of the Gurjara—Pratihāras by Dr. B. N. Puri
H.Ch.	History of the Chāhamānas by Dr. R. B. Singh
Ibid.	Ibidum
INS.	Inscriptions
J.U.P:H.S.	Journal, U.P. Historical Society
K.	Kāṇḍa [cf. Ayodhyā K]
K.A.S.	Kauṭīliya Arthaśāstra (English Translation by Dr. Shamasastri)
K.M.	Kāvya Mīmāṃsā of Rājasekhara
KNS.	Kāmandakiya Nītisāra
KSS.	Kathāsarit Sāgara of Somadeva
LRH.	Lectures on Rajput History by Dr. A.C. Banerjee
Mbh.	Mahābhārata
MMK	Ārya Mañju Śrī Mūlakalpa
Manu	Manu Smṛiti
MR.	Mudrārākshasa of Viśākhadatta
MVC.	Mahāvira Charita of Bhavabhūti
NHC.	Nationalism IN HINDU Culture
N.S.Ch.	Navasāhasānka Charita

P.B.Ch.	}	Prabodha Chandrodaya of Kṛishṇa Misra
Prabodha Ch.		Purāṇa or Parva
P.		
P.R.	}	Prithvirāja Rāso
Pt. Raso		
P.V.		Prithvirāja Vijaya of Jayānaka
R.E.		Rock Edicts
RT.		Rājatarāṅgiṇī
RV. (Rv.)		Rigveda
Rāja V.		Rājavilāsa of Mānakavi
Rupshtk.		Rūpakashaṭkam of Vatsarāja
Sk.		Skanda Purāṇa
St. Sk.		Studies in the Skanda Purāṇa, Part I, by Dr. A. B.L. Awasthi
URC.		Uttara Rāma Charita of Bhavabhūti
V.D., VDR.	}	Vishṇudharmottaram
Vishṇu Dh.		
YV.		Yoga Vāsishṭha





Section I

Rajapūta India

(Northern India from 600 A.D. to 1200 A.D.)

In the past racial and cultural conflicts between different human groups marked the course of human history. Vedic India had to face the demoniac people headed by Vṛitra, Śambara and Namuchi etc. The conflict between the Āryans, the noble and dignified people, and the Ānāryans, the Dasyus, i.e. the persons of thievish nature, assumed the form of Devāsura saṅgrāma in the subsequent ages as is revealed by the study of the epics, the Purāṇas, and the classical Saṁskṛit works.

Devāsura saṅgrāma represents a cultural conflict between two classes of forces opposed to each other. In the post-Gupta inscriptions Kali figures as a deadly monster, who sapped the vigour and vitality of the Bhāratī nation. It marked the decadence and decline in the moral standards of the society. Haraha Inscription of Īśānavarman asserts that Mukharas (i. e. the Maukharis) checked this trend of ethical decadence and destroyed their enemies :

दुरितवृत्तिरुधो मुखरा : क्षितीशाः क्षत्रारयः

Haraha Ins., verse 3 (ii)

Āchāramārga (Haraha Ins., v. 8), āchāra-viveka-mārga (Haraha Ins., v. 5), Varṇāśramāchāra (v. 6) i. e. the virtuous conduct based on Varṇāśrama dharma and Śruti-patha (v. 9) or satpatha (v. 12.) was rejuvenated by the Mukharas who curbed the traits of Kali (vv., 8, 9, 12, 16). The verse 15 of this inscription runs thus :

प्रविशती कलिमास्त-घट्टिता
क्षितिरलक्ष्यरसातलवारिधौ ।
गुणशतैरवबध्य समन्ततः
स्फुटित नौरिव येन बलाद्धृता ॥

पुत्री च बालकी श्रुत्वा विग्रहं च परस्परम् ।
चौरास्तत्र समाजमुद्देशदेशान्तरादपि ॥

Ibid, III 14. 52.

Thus began the war among the rival princes and their supporters.¹ This account reflects upon the confused currents of Rajput history based on devotion to kshātra-dharma or passion for fighting at a time when the Turks, the hungry bands of Central Asia with insatiable thirst for plunder appeared as robbers. It is evident from the invasions of Sultan Mahmūd of Gāzni and other invaders. Such was Rajput India suffering from the ills.

Whenever a weak ruler came upon a throne, the powerful rulers invaded his territory and occupied it :

दुर्बलस्य यथा राष्ट्रं हरते बलवान्पुः ॥

Nārādiya Pūrāṇa, I. 50.181 (i)

With the death of Skandagupta, the forces of anarchy gained strength. Harsha, however, succeeded in the political unification of a large part of Northern India. But his death was followed by the triangular fight between the Pratihāras, the Pālas and the Rāshtrakūṭas. Decline of the Pratihāras witnessed the rise of the Chandellas, the Paramāras, and the Chāhamānas who fought among themselves. Thus there were wars which ruined the strength of the defenders of the country. They neglected their primary duty, which was to give protection to their people (lokarakshā mahibhritām).³ Thus came a deluge and a dark night of distress.

1. Devībhāgavata P., III. 14 53; III., Chap. 15

2. Ibid, III 16. 2-6

3. Nārādiya P. II. 24. 43 (ii).

SECTION II

Rajaputa Polity

It is too narrow to think that "India had no formal political philosophy".¹ Prof. Basham holds : "From the days of Plato and Aristotle European thought has turned its attention to such questions as the origin of the state, the ideal form of government, and the basis of law, and Politics has long been looked on as a branch of philosophy. India also thought on such questions, but she had no schools of political Philosophy in the western sense, The problems which form the stock-in-trade of the European political philosopher are answered in Indian texts, but in a take-it or-leave-it manner, with little discussion; often indeed the only argument in favour of a position is the citation of an old legend, used much as Plato's adaptations of older myths to reinforce his theories".² I submit to differ with the distinguished scholar. The fault lies more with us than with the texts or the teachers of our ancient polity, which is represented by a galaxy of political thinkers.

Rigveda refers to the popular philosophers, Angirasa, Brihaspati and other enlightened thinkers. The Brāhmaṇas and Upanishadas, too, refer to ancient thinkers. The Buddha was himself a great political philosopher, who followed the ancient traditions of Hindu Polity.

Political Philosophy of the Buddha

The great religious preacher viz., Śākyamuni Buddha, a prince by birth, was a great political thinker who paved way for national unity. Dealing, with various punishments meted out to sinners (Aṅguttara Nikāya, *I, pp. 46-47.), he observes :

सो दिट्ठघम्मिकस्स वज्जस्स भीतो न परेसं पाभतं विलुम्पन्तो चरति ।
इदं वुच्चति, भिक्खवे, दिट्ठघम्मिकं वज्जं । Aṅguttara, I.,p. 47.

1. Basham A L. The Wonder That Was India., p, 47

2. Ibid., p. 79.

* Tripiṭaka edited by Bhikshu J. Kashyap 1960.



SECTION III

COLLAPSE OF ANCIENT INDIA—ITS CAUSES

“The astounding rapidity of the Turkish conquest constitutes an important problem for the students of Indian history. It is puzzling, nay almost baffling, to explain the almost complete collapse of Northern India, within an incredibly short time, before the onslaught of invaders whose power and resources were hardly equal to those of some of the bigger Hindu states, not to speak of a combination of them. It is natural that men should seek to solve the mystery and find out the real causes that lay behind the great political catastrophe that overwhelmed India. History would appear to be meaningless if facts of such outstanding importance cannot be viewed in their true perspective against a proper back ground. It is no wonder, therefore, that various speculations have been made and diverse solutions offered to the problem”.¹ Dr. Majumdar adds :—

“Certain general considerations must, however, be borne in mind, while we approach the question in a critical spirit. To begin with, we are not sure of the essential facts on which all theories must necessarily be based. The history of the Muslim conquest of India is known, almost in its entirety, from the chronicles written by the Muslims. Apart from a few incidental notices or brief allusions, the Hindu sources are silent on this great episode. But “the picture of a victor, as painted by himself alone, can hardly be regarded as a reliable representation, or even an approximation to truth. The general outline may indeed be fairly correct, but it is impossible to accept, without question, those numerous details which colour the narrative and necessarily form the principal materials for our judgement.”

1. Dr. R. C. Majumdar, *Struggle For Empire*, p. 125.

“This is well illustrated by the current story about the conquests of Muhammed Bakhatyar.....On the face of it, it appears incredible that Lakshmanasena should not have taken adequate steps to defend his frontier against a probable, one might say a known danger, or that his guards should have admitted, without question, the Turkish horsemen inside the capital city at a time when an invasion was apprehended at any moment. The extreme improbability of the situation almost necessarily implies that we have not the full story before us, and that if the defenders' version were known, much that appears incredible today would have appeared, in a different light and we have taken a more rational view of the whole situation”.

Dr. Majumdar continues :—“So long, at least, as the main facts are not definitely established, it is idle to speculate on the causes that led to the debacle of the Hindus. It is equally unwarranted to attribute it solely to the social and religious peculiarities of the Hindus, for our ideas about them are also vague and indistinct, and based on no sure knowledge of facts. It is true that we have a mass of literature and other data on this subject, but it is difficult to explain their bearing on the social evolution in different parts of India at different periods of time.”

“We have thus to grapple with great difficulty caused by the uncertainty in regard to facts—political, social and religious —which must form the essential data in any endeavour to probe the deeper cause underlying the broad fact of the Turkish conquest of India. This should make us pause in our laudable attempt towards a philosophical interpretation of historical facts, and turn our attention to the serious defects underlying all suggested solutions of the very interesting problem. In any case, we must moderate our zeal and fully realise that while it is incumbent on us to discuss the problem, any solution that we may offer at the present state of our knowledge cannot claim any scientific basis, far less, finality in character”.¹

1. Dr. R. C. Majumdar, “The Struggle For Empire” (Bhāratīya Vidyā Bhavana Bombay, 1957), pp. 125-126.

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