

CHAPTER II

GENERAL, GEOGRAPHY, AND POLITICAL HISTORY

North Gujarat - between 23° - $50'$ and 24° - $41'$ North latitude and 71° - $16'$ and 72° - $40'$ East longitude - fills the northern part of Gujarat, a western Indian State on the Arabian Sea. The northern boundary of North Gujarat is comprised of the southern hills of the Aravallis and semi-arid desiccated plain of south-western Rajasthan. To its west is the broad depression of the Rann of Cutch, which is supposed to be a result of "The Geological processes of Pleistocene age"¹. In the south, the plain of North Gujarat is extended further towards Ahmedabad - the capital of the State. It finally ends in the saline waste of the Gulf of Cambay. The hilly country of eastern border separates the Malwa plateau from the coastal plain of Gujarat. Thus, North Gujarat on its three borders - North, West and South - is an open country while its eastern border is bound by hilly country difficult to traverse.

Geographically, North Gujarat can be divided into two distinct regions :

1. Western low-land plain known as The Palanpur Gap.
2. Hilly belt along the eastern border.

PALANPUR GAP :

This region can be described as a lowland region spread

between The Rann of Cutch and the Aravalli outliers. It is a semi-arid plain underlaid by alluvium. This plain is probably created by fluviatile and marine depositions². Its basal complex is harder crystalline deposit. But it is the alluvium that forms the top soil of this region.

EASTERN HILLY REGION :

On account of physical and climatic differences, there is a great contrast between the Western Semi-Arid Plain and the Eastern Hilly Region.

The rocks forming this region are mainly gneiss metamorphic rocks and Mica-schist. Some patches of red and grey granite are also encountered here and there. In local areas, there are sandstones which have withstood the erosion.

This highland region is a hilly belt of jungle, bordering the western fringe of the Malwa plateau. It separates the plateau of Malwa from the plain of Gujarat. Many of the rivers of North Gujarat rise from this hilly country. Therefore, this area is subjected to intense erosion. On account of this erosion, this region has become a land of alternating valleys and water partings. This topographical feature is very clearly prominent in the Sabarmati drainage system.

The hills are the outliers of Aravallis. They are low. Their ranges run north-south forming valleys between them.

At some places, these valleys are utilized as agricultural lands. But in the further north, there are higher peaks like Abu, Jesor etc. But the height of hills diminish as they advance southward.

This hilly region is drained by several rivers like Sabar, Hathamati, Meshvo, Majjum and Vatrak; although several other rivulets and seasonal streams also drain it. All these rivers, when they enter the plain, cut deeply into the loose soil of the western plain of Gujarat and hence have incised beds.

The main river to which all these rivers meet is Sabar, which rises from the Dhebar lake in South Rajasthan. After seeking its way through the hilly tract of Aravalli, it enters the plain of North Gujarat from north-east. It is joined by almost all other rivers of the plain, and finally it falls into the gulf of Cambay. As already mentioned above, due to the looseness of soil, Sabar has cut its course deeply, therefore, the marked feature along its course in the plain is the high cliffs, with gravels at some places. At certain points, these gravels have revealed stone-tools of Paleolithic age⁴. According to Allen⁵, the origin of these gravel patches is the process of denudation during the Pleistocene Period.

North Gujarat owes its strategic and commercial importance to its position near the north-eastern gateways of Gujarat.

It seems that conquerers as well as fugitives from the north and central India who intended to migrate ^{to} Gujarat had only few choices. They had to follow some passes through the hilly belt of eastern border of Gujarat. There are about four such main passes through which such invasions and migrations have come. In the north near Palanpur gap via Abu and Chandrāvati, in the north-east near Idar and Shamalaji, in the east via Dohad and Godhara⁶ and in the south east via Chhota-udaipur. These routes are invariably marked by fortified townships and trading posts at various stages of the route. The fortified township of Chandravati guarded the northern most route, the Idar and Shamalaji forts controlled the middle route, while Dohad and Champaner had a commanding position on the central route. The southern most route was commanded by the fortified township of Chhotaudaipur and Dabhoi.

At this point, it is necessary to discuss the Idar-Shamalaji route in detail because it has much to do with the Buddhist monuments of Devanimori, which are on this route.

From 2nd century B.C., onward, when the Bactrian Greeks, Sakas, Pahlavas and the Kushanas were struggling to establish themselves in North Western India, the trade routes which passed through north-western passes of India and which were linked with the famous "silk-route" linking western world and Asia⁷, were naturally ^tdull of troubles. No trade can flourish or prosper along such politically disturbed route. Hence,

the communications between India and the Western World turned towards other well trodden resource - the sea. The port of ancient Bharukachchha and trade posts like Nagaraka (i.e. modern Broach on the Arabian sea and Nagara on gulf of Cambay) were the most convenient trading centres*. Hence, as time passed, they became more and more prosperous. One of the trade routes which came from North and North Western India passed through the Shamalaji gap, and after passing by Karpatavāñijya (Kapadavanja) and Kathalal, bifurcated round about Nadiad. One of them crossed the Mahi and reached Broach via Ankoṭṭaka (Akota near Baroda), while the other reached the gulf of Cambay via Nagara.

Devanimori is on this trade-route.

Devanimori (long. 73°-26' lat. 23°-39') is a small semi-dispersed village in the Bhiloda Taluka of Sabarkantha District which comprises the north-eastern territory of the State of Gujarat. Most of this district is spread in the above mentioned hilly belt of north-eastern Gujarat. Geographically, Devanimori is situated on the western fringe of the Eastern Hilly region.

*Recent excavation (A.D. 1963-64) at Nagara (District Kaira) under Dr.R.N.Mehta's direction has provided ample evidence in form of Roman antiquities such as amphora sherds etc., which indicate that Nagara was a prosperous place with Roman contacts. That Nagara was an important place is further proved by the Maltraka copper plate grants wherein Nagara is mentioned as "Nagaraka Pathaka", i.e. Nagaraka District. (Shastri H.G. "Maltraka Kalina Gujarat", Vol.2, p. 522).

It is about 80 miles north-east of Ahmedabad, the capital of the State of Gujarat, and is accessible by a tar road directly from Ahmedabad, as well as Himatnagar (30 miles), the District headquarters (Sabarkantha District) on the Ahmedabad-Prantij meter-gauge branch of the Western Railway. The famous Vaishnava pilgrimage centre of Shamalaji well-known among scholars for its green-schist sculptures⁸ is only half a mile to the east of Devanimori. Shamalaji is on the National Highway No.8 which connects Bombay and Delhi. This new highway probably follows the same age-old route of ancient time mentioned above.

Actually, Devanimori is nestled almost in the centre of a long valley (Fig. 3 & 4) which is about ten miles long north-south, and about two miles wide east-west. The valley is bounded on all sides by ranges of low hills. The western and eastern ranges which are the main features, run north-south.

The whole valley is interspersed by several streams which feed the river Meshvo. The Meshvo forms the base of the whole drainage system of this valley. It enters this valley from north-west and after flowing along the base of the western ridge takes a sharp turn - almost at right angle - towards west, i.e. towards Shamalaji. At this turning point, it cuts its course through a gorge in the western ridge. The hamlet of Devanimori is about a furlong to the east of this gorge. The Buddhist monuments are situated on the eastern

bank of this bend of river, on commanding elevated position overlooking the gorge, the river as well as the whole valley.

The outliers of Aravallis which bound the valley on all four sides are penetrated at a few points through which foot-paths and seasonal cart-tracks connect Devanimori with the surrounding villages and towns outside the valley. In all, there are seven such bottle-necks of which the main and much frequented is the one through the gorge of the river, which connects Devanimori and Shamalaji. Probably, this is the most ancient communication, as the antiquity of Shamalaji also goes back to early centuries of Christian Era. Out of the other six, three are in the western range, near Nana Samera, Kuski and Jambusar, and the rest in the eastern range near Lusadia, Vaghavadala or Bhimapagala and Kudol. (Fig.3).

As mentioned above, Devanimori is a semi-dispersed village, hence its population is spread in widely scattered houses in an area of about a hundred Acres. But the main nucleus of habitation is developed around the Darabaragadha (The Chieftain's house along with court) of the Thakor (Chieftain). This building is situated on a strategic position of a low hillock or a rock-rib which runs north-south along the central line of the valley. The location of Darbargadha is such that from its position one can have a full view of almost the whole valley and the bottle-necks. The river gorge - to the west - is in front of it. The whole

valley is dotted with dispersed habitations of other villages, namely - Nana Samera, Padaradi, Ramapura, Vaghapura, Himatpura, Adhela, Chapara, Kuski, Kudola and Umedpur.

Physiographically, the whole valley can be divided into five main regions:

- (1) Low rocky rib along the central line of valley.
- (2) The north-eastern depression to the east of Devanimori.
- (3) The fertile belt of alluvium along the eastern bank of the river.
- (4) Loessic mounds.
- (5) Hillocks and knolls.

The low rocky rib which runs all along the central line of the valley is extended between Rampur and Hematpur - a length of about one and a half mile. It separates this part of the valley (northern) into two parts. The area to the east of the village of Devanimori is more or less a low-level area of depression. Its soil is the black cotton soil. This area is dotted with a few natural hillocks.

A long belt of fertile land formed by the alluvium of the river-flood is the main feature of the north-western part of the valley. It is about half a mile long and about a furlong broad at its broadest point. The remaining area of the valley is marked by typical features of natural hillocks formed of rocks of quartzite outcrops. At some places near the western side of the valley, a few loessic mounds are formed due to

wind activity. These dunes revealed some microliths suggesting that this valley is inhabited right from Microlithic age.

As stated above, the only noteworthy river of this valley is the river Meshvo. It rises from the Dungarpur area of southern Rajasthan. It enters this valley from the North. Its flow is confined to only north-western border of the valley. As it is the main river of the valley, the whole drainage system is based on this flow of the river. Moreover, there are two other streams. The one known as Pingali rises from near Lusadia and enters the valley from north-east. On its course towards Meshvo, it is met by two other minor streams which rise from the range of hills to the east of the valley. These streams flow east to west. Another stream rises from the same eastern range near Hematpur and after flowing roughly north-westerly direction takes a turn towards west and joins the river exactly at its bend where the monuments are situated. This stream is fed by another stream which also rises from the eastern range near Bhimapagala, and after flowing east to west meets the above mentioned stream near the Buddhist site. All these streams have cut their beds in the rocky formations of quartzite. The Pingali nala near its confluence has cut the course through the soft alluvium deposit of the river. All these streams are seasonal, although atleast some water trickles throughout the year and due to which pools are formed at some places along their courses. From the direction of the

flows of these streams, it is easy to trace the gradient of this region. It seems that the northern part of the valley upto Rampur has an east to west slope, while the remaining region has south-east to north-west slope. Thus, both gradients merge to the river bed of the river Meshvo.

From the above description, it is easy to conceive the general picture of the valley. From ancient time, man seems to have noted these physical features. This is clearly evident in the eighteen bunds built in this area. The engineering genius of that time (First millenium of Chriatian Era⁹) seems to have realized the advantages of artificial reservoirs formed by harnessing the natural flow of water.

The climate of this region is moderate. Due to hills and the jungle, the rainfall is fairly good (30 to 35 inches). But the soil is sandy except the fertile alluvium belt along the river bank and the depressions between hillocks. Due to this, the agricultural activities are restricted to these fertile areas only. The hillocks and the central rocky rib are not utilized for agricultural purpose, but for habitations only. The hill ranges are covered with thin summer deciduous forest cover.

By economic view point, this area is backward partly owing to the lack of sufficient natural resources and partly due to the negligence of the local state-chiefs under whom this area was undeveloped till its merger with the former

State of Bombay. The cultivation is in a primitive stage. The aboriginal Bhils - who style themselves as the Garasias - still follow the age-old simple methods of a farming while other agricultural communities - very small in number - are a bit advanced. They too do not produce more than their own needs. The chief sources of income are agricultural and jungle products.

POLITICAL HISTORY

The political history of North Gujarat is not continuous and coherent, until the advent of the Maitrakas of Valabhi, followed by the Chavdas and Chaulukyas of Anahilapataka (A.D. 941), when it got its own significance. Before that, north Gujarat was always under the sway of some outside dynasty. Therefore, history of North Gujarat has to be drawn from inferences drawn from the history of neighbouring regions and empires of North India upto the end of first millenium.

Mauryas (323 B.C. to 187-5 B.C.)

It is a well-known fact that after the advent of the Mauryas, the history of India emerged out of legendary and mythical tales. In the same way, history of North Gujarat also attains at least some definite clerity with the expansion of the Mauryan empire which covered almost whole of India. The chief sources of information about the Mauryan rule in North

Gujarat are epigraphic which refer to the rules of Chandragupta and Ashoka. After Ashoka, we have only indirect literary evidences from Pauranic, Buddhist and Jaina religious texts.

The first reference to Mauryan rule can be traced in the Junagadh rock inscription of Mahakhsatrapa Rudradaman. This inscription refer to Chandragupta's "Rastriya" or a governor named Pusyagupta.⁹ That an officer who even looks after the conservation of a reservoir is a clear testimony of a well established organized execution of Mauryan rule.

Hence, it can be assumed that Mauryan rule must have spread in North Gujarat also.

Bindusara succeeded Chandragupta in about 249 B.C. He was not as famous as his militant father or pious son. No reference about his rule in North Gujarat can be traced. But he was known as 'Amiltraghata' - the killer of enemies. Ashoka had to wedge a war with Kalinga only to complete his empire of Indian sub-continent. Moreover, existence of his inscription in Saurashtra clearly indicates that Mauryan rule in North Gujarat was also a fact. From all these, it can be assumed that Bindusara must have atleast retained the empire of his mighty father. Therefore, North Gujarat also must have been a part of his domain.

Bindusara was succeeded by Ashoka at about 236 B.C.

Ashoka, while referring to his neighbour to the west of his vast empire, refers to a king named "Antiyokah Yonaraja"¹⁰ who has been identified with Antiochus III of Syria. The rock edicts of Ashoka are generally distributed on the borders of his empire. Hence, from these two evidences, it is clear that if Ashoka's empire extended even as far as the domain of Antiochus in north west, North Gujarat must have been under his sway¹¹. Like his grand father, Ashoka also had appointed a Greek or Persian governor named 'Tusaspha' at Girinagara, the present day Junagadha in Saurashtra.

After passing away of Ashoka, we are confronted with obscurity. The vast empire started disintegrating. Ashoka's successors were unworthy of the glory of their forefathers. It seems that after the death of Ashoka, Mauryan empire was divided into three parts. If we consider, Dasharatha's Barabar hill cave inscription (which attests Dasharatha's hold over Magadha), Jinaprabhasuri's Pataliputrakalpa, Hemachandra's Parisistaparva, and Merutunga's Vicharasreni which refer to Samprati as a great Arahanta and patron of Jainism who had established Viharas even in non-aryan countries while ruling at Ujjain¹², it can be safely assumed that after the death of Ashoka, the Mauryan empire was divided into three parts, Jalauka took Kashmira, Dasharatha got established at Pataliputra, and Samprati prospered at Ujjain the chief seat of Jainism. So North Gujarat must have passed under

Samprati. He ruled probably for eight years. His date is provisionally fixed to 200 B.C. after which we have not got any other reference to Mauryas until ^{the} visit of Huentasang who visited India in ~~the~~ later period (7th century). He refers to some small chiefs who were the descendents of Mauryas¹³.

But after Samprati, due to constant raids of the Greeks, Maurya power became weak and without the militant spirit. The last Maurya king was slain by his Brahmin army commander Pusyamitra Sunga (187 B.C.).

Thus, Chandragupta's achievements which were glorified by his grand son Ashoka, retained its roots in North Gujarat latest upto Samprati (200 B.C.), but finally round about 185 B.C. Greeks under Demetrius once more marched on North Western India and Sind, and reached upto Broach.

Bactrian Greeks

Alexander's dream of Hellenizing the world was no more attractive to his generals who succeeded him. They ultimately divided the vast empire among themselves. Thus came into existence the Greek kingdoms of Egypt, Syria, Parthia and Bactria. For some period, they acted as vassals to their kings, but finally when Seleucid princes became weaker and weaker, these governors proclaimed their independence. Thus,

in Bactria (Balkh) Diodotus declared his independence and established his royal dynasty. He was followed by Deodotus II who was overthrown by Euthedemus. This Euthedemus had a long drawn struggle with Antiochos III, but finally, they joined hands wisely against the possible barbaric attack from Central Asia. By an alliance, Antiochos allowed Euthedemus's family to use the royal title (about 206 B.C.). Then he crossed the Hindukush and renewed friendship¹⁵ with an Indian king named Sophagasenus (Subhagasena), probably some Mauryan governor who might have established his independence during disintegrating Mauryan power. Antiochos III had to return to Mesopotamia to settle some trouble in the West and got involved there. Euthedemus picked up the opportunity and extended his domain in Afghanistan, some portion of Iran and even upto North Western part of India. But Demetrius son of Euthedemus was more ambitious than his father. As a prince, he had a good knowledge of practical politics because he had worked as his father's envoy in the Court of Antiochos III and also had led his father's soldiers across Hindukush to India.

For campaigns and conquests of Demetrius and his general Menander, we have to rely on the following sources:

1. Accounts of Strabo (B.C. 54 to A.D.24) Julian and the Periplus.
2. Yugapurāṇa from Gārgisamhitā
3. Mālavikāgnimitra of Kalidas.

4. Square coins of Demetrios and a seal bearing name 'Timitra' from Besnagar.

Out of these four sources, we are mainly concerned with accounts of Strabo (B.C.54 to A.D.24) and Justin which mention that Menander surpassed even Alexander by conquering more nations in India. They state that Demetrius and Menander got possession not only of Patalene (Lower reaches of river Sindhu) but also of kingdoms of Saraostos (Saurashtra) and Sigerdís (Kaccha)¹⁶. But in any of the Pauranic references, there is no mention about Anartta (North Gujarat). Coins of Demetrius or other Greek kings, uptil now, have not been found from North Gujarat, although they are found from Saurashtra and South Gujarat¹⁷. Thus, it seems possible that Greeks came from Sind, overran Cutch and Saurashtra, and by sea reached upto Barigaza (modern Broach).

That the Greek rule might have extended upto Broach can be justified by the evidence of smallest value coins of Eucratides (B.C.180-155) few drachmae of Menander and copper coins of Appolodotus¹⁸.

Author of the Periplus (A.D.240), a later witness of old drachmae bearing Greek inscriptions of Appolodotus and Menander cannot provide any clue to suggest Greek domain in North Gujarat.

Thus, after the death of Demetrios, Appolodotus his brother seems to have ruled western portion of his brother's

empire, while the eastern part was under Menander with Mathura as his capital. But, inspite of all these assumptions, we cannot assume with certainty, whether Greeks held North Gujarat also under their sway. Although it should be noted that influence of Greco-Roman culture in Gujarat in form of ceramics, bronze objects and even the architectural and art traditions of Devanimori are the eloquent testimonies of Greek influence either political or cultural.

Sungas (B.C.187 to 75 B.C.)

When Pushyamitra Sunga was busy with thinking about his final successful stratagem of slaying his master Brihadratha, the Greeks under Demetrios were already in possession of their lost territories of North West frontier of India, part of the Punjab and Sind etc., from the Mauryas, whose glory was fading fast. But in the meantime, the Brahmin due to his close proximity detected the throb of discontent of the non-Buddhist classes, and with quick decision and wickedness slain his master openly and usurped the throne. This was beyond Greek imagination. Hence, there was a struggle¹⁹ between Menander and Pushyamitra for getting supremacy in India, out of which Pushyamitra came out with triumph. To signify and proclaim his double victory, Pushyamitra performed two horse sacrifices²⁰.

As mentioned above, Greeks had extended their domain from Bactria to Cutch, covering North Western India and northern limits of Western India²¹. When Pushyamitra started his campaign from Pataliputra, he first siezed Sagal which was on the verge of becoming Greek capital and then pushing upto Sindhu led his army to south along Sindhu, and probably conquered Cutch and Saurashtra. And as Dimetrius had reached upto Brigukaccha, he too might have gone upto that prosperous port on Arabian Sea. But, unfortunately, we have no clear mention about North Gujarat then known as Anartta. But if we consider the significance of his horse sacrifice, it leaves no doubt that he must have, if not conquered, at least subdued all kingdoms or principalities (if there existed any) in this part of the country.

Pushyamitra usurped the throne in 187 B.C., but the date of his conquest is not known exactly. According to Puranas, he ruled for about 36²² years and probably died at about B.C.151.

Agnimitra hero of Kalidasa's 'Malavikagnimitra' and who was a viceroy in his yough at Vidisa (modern Bhelsa) succeeded his father followed by a Sujoyeshtha or Vasujyeshtha according to Puranas. After him, Vasumitra who had a small fight with the Yavanas on Sindhu²³ during his grandfather Pushyamitra's horse sacrifice came to power. He was killed in a dramatic performance (about 75 B.C.)^{23A}.

Kshatrapas (A.D.100 to A.D.375)

The Kshatrapas are divided into two branches. One branch known as the Northern Kshatrapas ruled from Mathura and the other known as Western Kshatrapas administered their authority from Ujjain. History of North Gujarat is concerned with the Western Kshatrapas, whose domains occasionally extended between Ajmer and North Konkan, north south and eastern Malwa and the gulf of Cambay east west.

The history of these Kshatrapas is derived from inscrip-tional and numismatic evidences.

The Kshatrapa coins bear the title and name of the issuer as well as that of his father. Names of these kings are preceded by their titles - Kshatrapa or Mahakshatrapa. The first title indicates a junior position, while the later one indicates full authority as a king. The initial years of many kings are marked with Kshatrapa titles only indicating their subordinate positions under their father or brother. Therefore, the chronology of this dynasty is fixed by the study of these titles and inscriptions.

The names of these kings contain Iranian elements such as their name-ends like 'Daman'. But, as the time passed, the names of later kings were Indianized adding the prefixes like 'svami' etc.²⁴.

The history of Kshatrapas can be divided into two phases. The first phase has only two rulers - Bhumaka and Nahapana. The characteristic coins of Bhumaka, having the symbols of arrow, disc, thunderbolt and Kharosti and Brahmi legends suggest non-Indian origin. Bhumaka is styled as Kshatrapa which suggests that he was probably a vassal or governor of either Pahlavas or Kushanas. He was succeeded by Nahapana. Their relation cannot be established with certainty, but as suggested by N.A.Sastri, they might be uncle and nephew²⁵.

Bhumaka's successor Nahapana is known from his coins and the inscriptions of his son-in-law Ushavadata²⁶.

This inscription wherein charitable deeds of Ushavadata are mentioned refers to one such deed of building of river-side steps on the river Barnasa, i.e. modern Banas a tributary of Chambal, or Banas of North Gujarat. This inscription mentions a vast territory from Ajmer to Sopara and Ujjain to gulf of Cambay²⁷. Hence, from these indirect inscriptional evidences where river Banas of North Gujarat is referred to, it can be assumed that Nahapana's sway on North Gujarat was an established fact. But, as Nahapana's coins do not bear any date, his date is fixed by indirect evidences. The above-mentioned inscription has an unspecified era - dated years 41 & 46. This confusion can be cleared if his coins restruck by Gautamiputra Satakarni. (A.D.106-130) are considered reliable.

These coins found in a hoard near Nasik²⁸ are restruck by the Satakarni ruler Gautamiputra Satakarni. This restriking indicates that Nahapana and Satakarni had atleast some communication and they were contemporary. Secondly, the Nasik inscription of Gautamiputra's mother and another inscription of Gautamiputra himself²⁹ suggests that the territory around Nasik was reconquered by the Satakarni king. But no mention is made about north Gujarat which at that time was probably known as Anartta. The date of Nahapana as suggested by Rapson is A.D.124, which is the latest date known about Nahapana. From this, it seems that Satakarni defeated him at about A.D.124.

Chashtana (A.D.140)

Immediately after the defeat or probably death of Nahapana (A.D.124), Chashtana was appointed as a governor by the Kushanas to retrieve the lost territories of Western India³⁰. The relationship between Chashtana and Nahapana cannot be established, because Chashtana's coins clearly indicate that he was son of Ysamotika.

For the task of regaining the lost territories, he was assisted by his son Jayadamana and grand-son Rudradaman. N.A.Sastri further suggests that the adaptation of Andhra symbols of Chaitya and crescent on Chashtana's coins indicates his success against the Andhras.

After Chastana, we have an uninterrupted line of Kshatrapas and Mahakshatrapas upto Visvasena (A.D.304) because coins of all succeeding Kshatrapas provide the name of the issuer and his father. The duration of Chashtana's rule cannot be established. His coins suggest that it must have been between A.D.140 and A.D.150. That he was ruling in A.D.140 is clearly evident from the reference of his name as 'Tiastenes' and his capital as 'Ozene' in Ptolemy's geography³¹. The recent discovery of Chashtana's coin from Nagara near Cambay by Dr.R.N.Mehta clearly suggests that Chashtana held sway over Gujarat.

Chashtana's son Jayadamana died before his father, by which time his renowned son Mahakshatrapa Rudradaman was already assisting his grand-father.

Mahakshatrapa Rudradaman :

Rudradaman's silver coins and his own inscription at Junagarha is the eloquent testimony of his learned pious personality and successful military campaigns against the "Satakarni, the Lord of the Deccan"³². Unfortunately, the Junagarha inscription does not mention clearly the exact identity of this Satakarni. Who was this Satakarni has been discussed by various scholars. Rapson identified him as Vasishthiputra. Sri Satakarni referred to in the Kanheri

inscription³³. Dr.Bhandarkar thought him to be Gautamiputra Satakarni one of whose sons 'Vasisthiputra Siva Sri Satakarni', was the son-in-law of great Satrapa Rudra mentioned in Kanheri inscription³⁴. On the other hand, K.Gopalachari identifies this Satakarni with one of the successors of Siva Sri Satakarni named Sivamaka (Sivaskanda) Satakarni. Rapson's suggestion of Vasisthiputra Pulumayi as the son-in-law of Rudradaman cannot stand because according to Ptolemy, he was contemporary to Chastana, the grand-father of Rudradaman. Nilakantha Sastri's opinion that the Satakarni referred to in the Junagadh inscription was probably a son of Gautamiputra Satakarni seems to be nearer to fact.

From this discussion, it is evident that the identity of this Satakarni cannot be established firmly. But, from the various epithets of Rudradaman, it is certain that he must have at least inflicted severe blow on the Satakarni power.

His inscription further suggests that 'Anartta' was included in his territory. The list of the territories shows that he recovered the lost glory of Nahapana and spread his domains from East Malwa to gulf of Cambay and Sind-Marwar to North Konkana. He even subdued the Yaudheyas of South Punjab³⁵.

Rudradaman was an enlightened reformer and pious ruler. He did not tax his subjects for even public works like the repairs of the Sudarsana lake near Junagarha. He proclaimed

that no man should be slain except in battle. He was a learned monarch taking interest in grammar, logic, music and other arts. His inscription is dated Saka Era 72, i.e. A.D.150, but he must have ruled good many years after even 150 A.D.

Damaghsada, who had sanskritized his name from Damaghsada to Damajadasri³⁶ (on his coins) succeeded Rudradaman. The duration of his reign is traced from the legends on his coins only, because his name has been discarded from the geneological list given in the Gunda and Jasadana inscriptions of Rudrasimha I and Rudrasena I. Rapson thought that names of Damaghsada and his son are discarded from these inscriptions because of the struggle for power between his son Jivadaman and his brother Rudrasimha I. But, N.A.Sastri thinks that such omissions were common, and hence, has no special significance³⁷.

Like that of his father's, Jivadaman's reign is also proved by his coins only. His coins are issued under the title Mahakshatrapa only. According to Rapson, Jivadaman had some trouble with Rudrasimha I who usurped the throne but was subsequently subdued by Jivadaman. This theory is challenged by Sastri³⁸ and Dr.Bhandarkar on the basis of Gunda inscription which refers to Abhira ruler Isvaridatta, whose rule coincides with the years during which Rudrasimha was reduced to the position of Kshatrapa. They maintain that Rudrasimha

was subdued by the Abhira King and not by Jivadaman. D.C. Sircar is of the opinion that the successes of the Abhira King were probably due to the support of Yajna Satakarni from south.

From these evidences, it can be inferred that there must have been at least some struggle between Jivadaman and Rudrasimha I due to which the Kshatrapa power became weaker and the Abhira and Satavahana rulers took full advantage of such disturbed situation.

Jivadaman had a brother called Satyadaman whose coins bear pure Sanskrit legends. His reign seems to be very short. He died probably before his father's death.

Jivadaman had no son, so his cousin Rudrasena I, son of Rudrasimha I, succeeded him as Mahakshatrapa. The Mulavasar inscription dated S.E.122 (A.D.200) mentions him as Mahakshatrapa. His reign covers 22 years (A.D.200 to A.D.222). He was a Kshatrapa upto S.E.121 (A.D.199) and Mahakshatrapa from A.D.200 to A.D.222.

His inscriptions and coins show that Malwa, Gujarat, Saurashtra and Western Rajasthan were under his sway.

Upto the time of Rudrasena, political influence of Western Kshatrapas was high. Their matrimonial relations were extended as far as Vaishali in East India³⁹.

After Rudrasena I, it became almost a regular practice to succeed one's own brother.

Rudrasena I had two sons - Prithvisena and Damajadasri, but he was succeeded by Sanghadaman who ruled for two years only (S.E.144-145 A.D.222-223). Coins of Damasena bear S.E.145 (A.D.223). Due to this, Altekar assumes that Sanghadaman might have ^dfied while fighting against the Malavas of Ajmer and Udaipur region (Nandsa inscription of Udaipur).

About Prithvisena, there is evidence of only one coin dated S.E.144 (A.D.222).

Damasena who succeeded his brother Sanghadaman as Mahakshatrapa in S.E.145 (A.D.223) had a longer period of reign - S.E.145 to 158 (A.D.223-236).

Damajada II, the second son of Damasena's brother Rudrasena I was Kshatrapa during the earlier part of Damasena's rule as Mahakshatrapa. His coins dated S.E.154-155 (A.D.232-33) suggest his tenure. During his rule as Mahakshatrapa, his eldest son Viradaman held office as Kshatrapa who issued coins in that capacity in S.E.156-160 (A.D.234-238). But he did not succeed Damasena. Now, Yashodaman came to power. So, we may assume that Damasena ruled as Mahakshatrapa upto S.E.160 (A.D.238) when two of his sons - Viradaman and Yashodaman I held the offices as Kshatrapas. But, it should be noted that no coins issued by Damasena during this period bear the title of Mahakshatrapa.

Damasena had four sons, Viradaman, Yashodaman, Vijayasena and Damajadasri III. Viradaman died in his early age. His next brother Yashodaman succeeded to lower office in S.E.160 (A.D.238) which is indicated by his coins bearing the title Kshatrapa. He became a Mahakshatrapa in the same year after the death of his father. This is evident from his coins from Sarvania hoard⁴⁰. He had a short rule - 2 years only (S.E.160-161 : A.D.238-239) - as his coins having the title Mahakshatrapa bear a date later than S.E.161 (A.D.239). This is further supported by the evidence of Vijayasena's coin dated S.E.161 (A.D.239) which mentions Vijayasena as a Mahakshatrapa. Vijayasena continued as Mahakshatrapa upto S.E.172 (A.D.250).

According to Rapson, his coins are the last of the best coins of Kshatrapa rule, after which there is a gradual degradation in technique.

Vijayasena was succeeded by his brother Damajadasri III in S.E.172 (A.D.250) who ruled only for five years. His latest date according to Sarvania hoard is S.E.177 (A.D.255). He was followed by Rudrasena II, son of Viradaman, Damasena's eldest son. He ascended the throne in S.E.177 (A.D.255) and reigned for 21 to 22 years from S.E.177 to 198 or 199 (A.D.255 to A.D.276-7). He issued numerous coins (Sarvania hoard alone contains 392). Majority of these coins are undated. His six coins found from Devanimori are also well minted. One of them is deciphered to be belonging to S.E.188 (A.D.266) - the prime

of his rule.

During the reigns of Vijayasena and Damajadasri and early part of the reign of Rudrasena II, the title Mahakshatrapa was held by all of them. But during the later part of the reign of Rudrasena II, he was again brought to the position of a Kshatrapa. Visvasimha, the eldest son of Rudrasena was only a Kshatrapa from S.E.192 to 200 (A.D.270-278). Thus, for a period of about thirty-five years (S.E.161-196 : A.D. 239-274), no one was a Mahakshatrapa. This indicates a decline in the authority of the Kshatrapas. According to Altekar, it seems that Vindhyaashakti, the Vakataka King (A.D.255-275) must have annexed part of eastern Malwa to his domain during this period.

According to Rapson, Visvasimha, son of Rudrasena II was a Kshatrapa from S.E.197 to 199 (A.D.275-277) and hence held his office upto S.E.200 (A.D.278). Bhandarkar also suggests the date to be S.E.200 (A.D.278).

From these two opinions, it can be concluded at least that Visvasimha was probably a Kshatrapa upto S.E.199 (A.D.277) after which he assumed the title of Mahakshatrapa. But his reign seems to be short because Sarvania hoard revealed a coin of his immediate successor Bhartridaman dated S.E.204 (A.D. 282)⁴¹.

From these evidences, it seems that Visvasimha held his title as Mahakshatrapa only for four years; and was succeeded

by Bhartridaman in S.E.204 (A.D.282). In the beginning of his career (S.E.200 to 204), Bhartridaman was merely a Kshatrapa under Visvasimha^h. His latest coins are dated S.E.217 (A.D.295). But he must have ruled for some more years.

The excavations at Devanimori revealed six coins belonging to Bhartridaman. Three of them were deposited in a pot which was placed inside a pyramidal stepped structure built in the core of the Stupa. (For details, see Chapter IV : Architecture). The other three were found from the layers of Phase II. But, unfortunately, none of them provides any date.

Bhartridaman was followed by his son Vishvasena, who never attained the title of Mahakshatrapa. He ruled from S.E.215 to 226 (A.D.293-304). These dates indicate that during the early part of his career, he was his father's assistant. From Devanimori, twelve coins of Vishvasena are found. The dates on three of them can be deciphered, two belong to S.E.215 (A.D.293) and one belongs to S.E.225 (A.D.303). So it seems that these coins were issued when he was under his father.

After Vishvasena, the line of Chastana^h seems to come to an abrupt end. It seems that during the reign of Bhartridaman and Vishvasena, the fortunes of Western Kshatrapas were already heading for a decline. The decline of the Kshatrapa power in western India is generally attributed to the expansion of Sassanian power towards west during the reign of Varhan II (A.D.270-293). But, the interpretation of Paikuli inscription

on which this theory is based is not interpreted satisfactorily^{41A}.

Thus ended the house of Chastana^h which ruled western and part of Central India for about two centuries. This dynasty produced the personalities like Rudradaman I (A.D.150) who was a scholar, pious ruler and a man of militant power.

Kshatrapa Second line:

How the family of Chashtana ended cannot be determined but after a gap of seven years, we have a new line of Kshatrapas, headed by Rudrasimha II, son of Jivadaman.

As Rudrasimha's father Jivadaman has only a petty title of 'Swami', it can be assumed that he belonged to some lower family.

Rudrasimha who usurped the throne about A.D.304-5, and his son Yasodaman were mere Kshatrapas. Their rule is extended from A.D.305 to 332. After this, there is a gap of sixteen years upto S.E.270 (A.D.348). This absence probably indicates decline in Kshatrapa power (affected by the rise of Gupta power).

But, the political strength of this family was revived when Rudrasena III came to power. He had a long reign

(A.D.348-390). At Devanimori also, we have his coins. He was followed by Simhasena (only one coin, hence doubtful) and Rudrasimha III. After this, the Kshatrapa power in Western India seems to have been declining. Ultimately, a vague reference of a King named Skanda is the last faint trace of this line. Hence, it seems that by the end of the fourth century, Kshatrapa power in Western India as well as North Gujarat was totally weak and without political significance. Finally, Kshatrapas were overthrown by Chandragupta II, about 410 A.D.

Guptas (A.D.410 to 455)

The Gupta sway on Gujarat is attested by inscriptional and numismatic evidences. It seems that upto the end of 4th century and first decade of the fifth one, the Western Kshatrapas were able to retain their power in Western India. Even the great military genius like Samudragupta could not conquer or even subdue the Kshatrapas of Ujjain. His Allahabad pillar inscription⁴², which contains a long list of subdued and conquered kings, does not contain any reference of his conquest of the Western Kshatrapas.

This tough task was accomplished by his son Chandragupta II, son of Samudragupta's chief queen Dattadevi. He was known as "Shakari" - enemy of the Shakas. His conquest of Malwa and Gujarat, after defeating Kshatrapa King Rudrasena III of

Ujjain, can be attested by following inscriptions : (1) Udayagiri Inscription of Virasena, Chandragupta's minister of peace and war⁴³, (2) Udayagiri inscription of Sanakanika, a feudatory chief⁴⁴ and (3) Sanchi inscription of a military officer named Amrakardava⁴⁵.

The date of Chandragupta's conquest of Gujarat can be fixed with numismatic evidences only. The latest date of Rudrasena's coins is S.E.319 (A.D.397). The earliest date on the coins which Chandragupta issued in imitation of the Kshatrapa coins is Gupta Era 90 plus X (The unit figure is not deciphered). Thus, the date of Chandragupta's conquest can be fixed latest to about 410 A.D. According to Sankalia⁴⁶, he broke through the north eastern frontier of Gujarat. Here, it may be noted that the latest Kshatrapa coin discovered from Devanimori is belonging to Rudrasena III.

To commemorate his conquest, Chandragupta assumed the traditional title of 'Vikramaditya' (sun of prowess). Chandragupta died between A.D.413 and 415. Thus, he might have ruled Gujarat from A.D.410 to 413-415⁴⁷. This indicates that Chandragupta hardly ruled Gujarat for about five years.

After Chandragupta, Kumaragupta came to power. His numerous coins found from Saurashtra and Gujarat⁴⁸ are eloquent testimony of his long and firmly established regime (A.D.415 to 455) supported by a well organized administrative system.

It seems that Skandagupta who succeeded Kumaragupta had to contest the throne⁴⁹, because his mother was not probably the chief queen, or either he was out of capital at the time of Kumaragupta's death. After assuming power, he had to face the Huna invasions which he repulsed successfully with the help of Yashovarman of Malwa⁵⁰. Skandagupta's rule over Gujarat is clearly proved by the Junagadh inscription of his Governor Parnadatta. This inscription states that Skandagupta was a popular and benevolent ruler whose domain was extended in a vast territory commanded through governors and an organized administrative system. Skandagupta died about A.D.467.

After Skandagupta, Gupta empire seems to be heading towards disintegration, because after him, we have no continuous history of this renowned dynasty. As always happens, once more regional principalities became more powerful and established their kingdoms.

Maitrakas (A.D.470-A.D.800)

After the gradual disintegration and final collapse of Gupta empire, India was once again split up into regional powers like the Kalchuris, Maukharis, Gurjaras, Maitrakas etc. But, among all these, Maitrakas of Valabhi were outstanding because of the longest tenure of their regime and cultural traditions of about three hundred years.

Formerly, due to faulty translation and misinterpretation, the exact identity of this dynasty was shrouded in obscurity⁵¹. Even scholars like Bhagwanlal Indraji missed its correct dynastic name and named it as 'Valabhi'⁵² which is in fact the name of the Maitraka capital. But, fortunately, the intensive researches of Dr.K.Viraji and Dr.Shastri etc. have now revealed its correct identity⁵³.

The main sources of information about the Maitrakas are the numerous copper-plate grants (about one hundred) issued during the reigns of almost all Maitraka rulers. These copper-plate grants provide information about geneology, administration and even the exploits and personality of the Maitraka rulers. Moreover, the inscriptions of Chalukyas, Gurjaras and other dynasties can also render some help. The account of the Chinese monk Yuan Chwang provides valuable information not only regarding religious condition but political as well as social conditions also.

Quite a number of coins belonging to Maitraka dynasty are also available. Three coins are discovered from Devanimori excavation, out of which one is deciphered as that of Sri Sarvabhattaraka. The reading of the rest is a matter of controversy⁵⁴. Even if these deciphered coins are considered correctly deciphered, they cannot provide much information because they do not bear any dates or names of kings.

Bhatarka, the founder of Maitraka dynasty was a Senapati (General) in the Gupta army. His name is spelled in various ways such as Bhattaraka, Bhattarka, Bhatakka etc. But Bhatarka seems to be the authentic original name from which the above names are Sanskritized or some times misspelled⁵⁵. There is no direct evidence of his own to fix the advent of Bhatarka. Hence, his date is derived from the dates of his sons who succeeded him.

For this purpose, we have to rely on the copper-plate grant of his second son Dronasimha (A.D.502), who came to power after his elder brother Dharasena I, who had ascended the throne after Bhatarka. From this evidence, it can be assumed that Bhatarka and Dharasena I who preceded Dronasimha before A.D.502, must have covered about thirty years⁵⁶, out of which earlier fifteen years can be assigned to Bhatarka's rule⁵⁷. The latest date of Gupta power in Saurashtra is A.D.455 according to Junagadh inscription of Skandagupta. Hence, it seems that Bhatarka had to wage war with some opponents between A.D.455 and A.D.470 which is evident from the later inscriptions of his successors which mention that Bhatarka attained his power with the help of his mercenaries and friends. No other details about him except his military conquest can be traced. He was a Saivite which is evident in his title 'Parama Mahesvara'. According to Bhagvanlal Indraji, he shifted the age old capital of Junagadh to Valabhi i.e. modern Vala near Bhavnagar due to its close proximity

to sea⁵⁸. Any how, this shifting became auspicious for the Maitrakas for three centuries.

After Bhatarka, his eldest son Dharasena I came to power during last decades of 5th century (A.D.485 to 500) who was followed by Dronasimha who was enthroned by some superior power probably Gupta emperor Budhagupta or Vainyagupta⁵⁹. Dronasimha ruled from A.D.500 to A.D.520, during which period he had issued about twenty grants. The contents of these grants suggest that he consolidated the Maitraka power and established a well developed administrative system.

After Dronasimha, his younger brother Dhruvasena I came to power. Dates of his inscriptions cover A.D.520 to 544. This indicates that he might have ruled from A.D.520 to about A.D.550. During his reign, Gupta empire had severe blows from Hunas.

Dhruvasena was followed by his younger brother Dharapatta about whom we have no direct evidence of his own grant or inscription. But from evidences of his successors, it seems that he ruled from A.D.549 to A.D.553.

Dharapatta was succeeded by his son Guhasena, who assumed the imperial title of Maharaja. He ruled from A.D.556 to A.D.570. It seems that during his rule, he overthrew the Yoke of Gupta overlord which is evident in his titles which discards the traditional title 'Paramabhattaraka

Padanudhyata'. That Guhasena was an outstanding ruler in Maitraka dynasty is evident from geneological tables of later kings which refer Guhasena as a descendent of Bhatarka and discard the intervening kings. He was a patron of Buddhist as well as Mahesvara religions⁶⁰.

After Guhasena, Dharasena II (A.D.571-590 to 595) ascended the throne who was succeeded by his eldest son Shiladitya I (A.D.595-A.D.612). According to Huentasang's⁶¹ reference, his kingdom was extended upto Malwa. He was a man of literary test⁶³. He assumed the new title of Dharamaditya (The sun of religion) which indicates his active interest in religion⁶².

Although Shiladitya had a son called Derabhata, his immediate successor was his younger brother Kharagraha I (A.D.615-620). During his reign, he led a victorious campaign upto Ujjain⁶⁴. Against whom this campaign was launched cannot be ascertained.

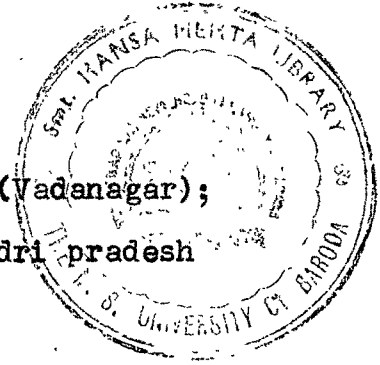
Dharasena III succeeded his father Kharagraha I. His rule lasted only eight years. Only one of his inscriptions is known, which refers him as a learned devotee of Mahesvara religion⁶⁵. His rule coincided with the great struggle between Harsha and Pulikesin II, but to whom he was attached cannot be attested with certainty. According to some scholars, he was subdued by Pulikesin II⁶⁶.

After Dharasena II (A.D. 628-643), his younger brother Dhruvasena II Baladitya (Rising Sun) ascended the throne. His copper plate grants (seven) range between (A.D. 629 and A.D. 640). He was a learned man and pious ruler, who even though he was a Mahesvara, donated lavishly for building Buddhist monasteries⁶⁷. During his reign, Harsha was at the zenith of his power. He defeated Dhruvasena who sought refuge with Daddya II of Broach. But, later on, when Harsha was engaged with Pulikesin II, he played a good diplomatic game by way of a matrimonial alliance with Dhruvasena to whom he gave his daughter in marriage.

According to Nogava plates⁶⁸ during Dhruvasena's reign, Maitraka sway was expanded upto Ratlam in Rajasthan. About the prosperity of his time, Yuwan Chwang mentions that "There are hundreds whose wealth amounts to million. And rarest merchandise from distant countries is found here in abundance."⁶⁹

Dharasena IV (A.D. 643-650) succeeded his father Dhruvasena II. He was the most outstanding ruler of Valabhi, having long titles like "Paramabhattaraka Paramesvara Chakravartin Sri Ajjakapadanudhyata Sri Dharasena"⁷⁰. He was the first Chakravartin king among the Maitrakas. It seems that after the death of Harsha (A.D. 648), he attained supreme power in Western India, bringing under his sway the territories of Khetaka (Kaira), Saurashtra, Bharukachchha (Broach),

Shivabhadrapura (Shivarajapura), Anandpura (Vadanagar);
Malwa and Ujjain and even Vindhya and Sahyadri pradesh
(Modern Khandesh and North Konkan).



It is already mentioned above that after Shiladitya I, the reign of Valabhi had passed to his brother whose sons and grand sons ruled up to Dharasena IV. But after Dharasena IV, Shiladitya's grand son Dhruvasena III came to power.

It seems that during the reign of Dhruvasena III, Maitraka power began to dwindle which is evident in the use of titles. Dhruvasena uses a subdued title like "Paramamaheshvara" and not "Maharajadhiraja", the supreme title. According to Krishna Kumari Viraji⁷¹, this loss of power was due to Vikramaditya I, son of Pulikesin II. At least by A.D. 655, South Gujarat seems to have passed under Chalukyas. Chalukya Governor ruled the Southern Gujarat at this time which is evident from a land grant issued by the Sendraka Officer⁷².

Dhruvasena III was succeeded by his elder brother Kharagraha II - a curious happening. According to Bhagwanlal Indraji, he usurped the throne⁷³. But, there is no evidence to prove this except that Kharagraha does not refer Dhruvasena with much respect which according to Shastri⁷⁴ may be quite natural for an elder brother.

Kharagraha also died without a male issue so Shiladitya II, son of Shiladitya I, the elder brother of Kharagraha II ascended the throne.

Shiladitya II ruled from A.D.658 to A.D.685. He retrieved the lost glory of the family gradually which is evident from his copper-plate grants⁷⁵. During his rule, Vikramaditya I (son of Pulikesin II) seems to have strengthened his position in South Gujarat. But, inspite of this, he could not drive out the Maitrakas⁷⁶. During his reign, first Arab raid of Ghogha (A port on the gulf of Cambay) was repulsed.⁷⁷

Shiladitya III, who succeeded Shiladitya II, was a powerful ruler who resumed all imperial titles and conquered the Gurjara kingdom of South Gujarat. But, his success was short lived, because the Gurjaras of South Gujarat soon sought the help of their Chalukya overlords. According to R.C.Majumdar, Shiladitya alias Vajrata was defeated by the Chalukyas.

Shiladitya IV who succeeded Shiladitya III was defeated by the Chalukya King Vikramaditya II and was compelled to pass South Gujarat to the Gurjaras⁷⁸. The Arab invasion (A.D.735) under Junaid⁷⁹ conquered the Maitraka territories due to which Maitraka power wrecked and thereafter confusion reigned for about two decades when once again Maitrakas resumed some power under Shiladitya V (A.D.740-A.D.762).

After this, Shiladitya V (A.D.740-762) and Shiladitya VI (A.D.762-776) came to power but the glory of the Maitrakas was fading fast. The Gurjara Pratiharas had already wrested Malwa. Moreover, the constant Arab raids (A.D.760 and A.D.776) shattered the imperial power of Maitrakas and finally, this renowned family of Bhatarka faded from annals of History.

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