The King

Notwithstanding the undoubted existence of republics from the Rgvedic times to about the fourth century A.D., there is hardly any gainsaying that monarchy was the usual form of government prevalent in ancient India. Whereas in republics the power of the state was vested in many, in a monarchial kingdom the king was the supreme head in all matters of administration, executive, military, revenue and judicial. But circumstances being diverse in different ages and the personality of rulers being constantly variable, the power of the king varied from time to time and kingdom to kingdom. Thus while in the early Vedic period the royal power was considerably circumscriptive, in the days of the Imperial Mauryas it reached the summit of its glory. From about the post-Gupta period onwards, if not from a still earlier date, there was a steady decline of the central authority which culminated in the dethronement of most of the indigenous ruling houses and installation of the Delhi Sultanate.

I

The King in the Rgvedic Period

The king in the Rgvedic period was generally styled Rājan, although he was also sometimes called Viśpattī, head of the viś. In the Rgveda we come across terms like samrāt, ēkarāt and adhirāt which would indicate the existence of different gradations of monarchy in those days of hoary antiquity. This is quite natural in an age which was characterised by frequent outbreaks of war among kings either for survival or extension of hegemony. The victorious and ambitious kings would
justifiably adopt more dignified titles in contrast to the colourless epithets, usually assumed by rulers of ordinary stature.

Kingship was normally hereditary. In the Rgveda we can trace at least three lines of succession like that of Vadhrayaśva, Divodāsa, Pijavana and Sudās; or Durgaha, Girikṣit, Purukutsa and Trasadasyu; or Mitrāśiti, Kuruśravaṇa and Upamaśravas. A passage of the Rgveda, which credits the people (viśas) with the election of their king, presupposes that the Rgvedic monarchy was occasionally elective. It cannot be definitely ascertained whether the general public or the elite alone were entitled to franchise. Similarly it is far from being known whether in the event of any such election the choice was limited to the royal family or was left open. It may be noted in this connection that the theory of the prevalence of elective monarchy in the early Vedic period has been opposed by some competent Indologists, including Geldner, on the ground that the passages cited are not indicative of choice by the cantons but of acceptance by the subjects.

The king’s exchequer derived its revenue from the tribute of the conquered tribes as well as the gifts given by his people. The gifts of the people, known as bali, which apparently consisted of agricultural produce and the stock of cattle, were at first voluntarily offered, but in the course of time, they developed into fixed payments, ‘which the king could exact, if denied’.

In the Rgveda, we hardly come across a passage which alludes to the king’s administration of justice. But it is not improbable that he, with the aid of assessors, exercised criminal and civil jurisdiction. Despite being the pivot in the realm of administration, the Rgvedic king could hardly wield his power unabated. Generally speaking, the state in those days was tribal in character and tiny in dimension, as was the case with the city states of ancient Greece, in consequence of which the leading men maintained a strict vigil upon his activities. The royal power was moreover checkmated by an assembly, called Samiti, which, if the view of A.S. Altekar is accepted, ‘consisted of the heads of the few military and aristocratic families which occupied a prominent position in the political and social life of the community’. A passage in the Rgveda which refers to king Trasadasyu as a demi-god (ardha-deva), seems to imply
that the divinity of kingship was not altogether unknown. Since this is the solitary passage alluding to the divine character of the king, it appears that the doctrine of the deification of kingship was not widely approved in contemporary society.

II

The King in the Later Vedic Age

The age of the later Vedic Samhitās, the Brāhmaṇas, the Āraṇyakas and the Upaniṣads witnessed an appreciable growth of royal power and prestige. This was because, first, the state grew larger than the Rgvedic kingdom; second, the newly emerged warrior class became a tower of strength to the king; and third, the Samiti, which proved to be a healthy check upon royal authority in the earlier epoch, could hardly wield its power so effectively in this age. Even then we hear of the expulsion of kings from their dominions. The Śṛṇjaya king Duśṭaṛtu Paumāśāyana was deposed; Dīrghaśravas was banished and Sindhuksit was exiled. In the later Vedic literature, we meet with terms which are indicative of different grades of kingly power. The view that the Bhoja, the Rājan, the Svarāt, etc., belonged to the different categories of kings in accordance with their military renown and the extent of their kingdom is not in agreement with a passage in the Aitareya Brāhmaṇa which states that the kings of the east were called Samrāt, those of the south were known as Bhoja, the monarchs of the Nīcyas and the Apācyas were called Svarāt, the sovereigns of Uttara-Kuru and Uttara-Madra in the north were termed as Virāt and the suzerains of the central region were designated as Rājan. But the view that words like samrāt, bhoja, etc., have only a regional significance, as advocated in the above passage of the Aitareya Brāhmaṇa, is unfortunately contradicted by other evidence. The importance of kingly rank is emphasised by the performance by the king of sacrifices like the Vājaspeya, the Āsvamedha and the Rājasthāya.

At the time of his accession to the throne, the king is 'clad in the ceremonial garments of his rank, is formally anointed by the priest, steps on tiger-skin to attain the power of the tiger, takes part in a mimetic cattle-raid, assumes the bow and arrow, and steps as a conqueror to each of the four quarters, an action
paralleled in the coronation of the Hungarian king'. The nature
and form of coronation (rājya=ābhiṣeka) have raised a lot of
controversy among scholars. P.B. Udgaonkar maintains that
coronation consisted of several rituals including Rājasūya,
Vājapeya and Sarvamedha. Coronation, properly so called,
means rites which ‘are designed to endow the personage selected
for the office of king with the attributes and power required
for kingship’. Judged in this context, Rājasūya and Vājapeya,
which were undertaken to achieve universal dominion and king-
ship, respectively, were not parts of the ceremony of the
installation of a king; nor did Sarvamedha form a part of it.
K.V. Rangaswami Aiyangar seems to be right when he obser-
ves, ‘The ordinary ceremony of installation of the king was
also a rājasūya, because the king was ceremonially ‘born’ of it,
but the two must be distinguished. The sacrifice of Rājasūya
took about two years to finish, and was therefore a dirgha-
sattra. The installation ceremony, on the other hand, lasted
only some days.’ The statement of the Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa
that ‘to the king doubtless belongs Rājasūya, for by offering
Rājasūya he becomes king’ (Rājīṇa eva Rājasūyaṁ/ Rājā vai
Rājasūyen=este bhavati/) does not go against this presumption,
for the word rājasūya of the passage does not denote the great
Vedic sacrifice of the same name but the consecration of the
king.

The theory of the divinity of kingship became fairly popular
in this age. King Parīkṣit is described in the Atharva Veda as
a ‘god who is above mortals’ (yo devo martyāṁ=adhi) while a
newly elected king is extolled in the same text as an Indra in
human form (Indr=endra manusyāṁ). The same feeling is echoed
in the Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa wherein the king is represented as a
visible symbol of god Prajāpati.

It is quite in conformity with the augmentation of the kingly
power that his office should be hereditary. The Śatapatha
Brāhmaṇa mentions that the Śrājaya king Duṣṭartha Paumā-
yana inherited his kingdom through ten generations (daśa-
puruṣaṁ rājyaṁ). That kingship was occasionally elective is
vouchsafed by a passage in the Atharva Veda which states that
the people were sometimes empowered to elect their king (tvāṁ
viṣo vṛṇaṁ rājyaṁ). If the opinion of R.N. Dandekar
be accepted, it was a smaller body, constituting what may be,
called the electoral college, and not the whole community, that elected the king.

Insofar as the functions of the king are concerned, there is hardly any evidence to show that these underwent any fundamental change in this age. He still led his men in war and took an active part in the administration of justice. There are references in the contemporary literature to show that he controlled the land of the tribe, but there is hardly any conclusive evidence in favour of the royal ownership of all the land in the kingdom. It is sometimes argued that land was a communal property throughout the Vedic period and that the concept of royal and private ownership of land was of much later origin.

III

*The King in the Post-Vedic Period*

For our knowledge in regard to the kingship in the post-Vedic period we may turn to the testimony of the Jātaka and Dharmasūtra literature, although admitting that the information, as is supplied by it, is far from being adequate. The Jātakas imply that the people sometimes jealously guarded their rights and privileges and revolted against the tyrannical rule of their king. The *Padakusalāmāna Jātaka*, for example, speaks of an unrighteous monarch who was dethroned by the people who later on selected a suitable Brāhmaṇa as their king. The *Saccāṅkira Jātaka* similarly states how a bad king was deposed and a Brāhmaṇa was placed on the throne.

In some of the Jātakas we find the enumeration of the tenfold duty of the king (*dasa-rāja-dhamme*) which comprised munificence, a moral course of life, sacrifice, truthfulness, mildness, self-denial, forgiveness, nonviolence, forbearance and a yielding disposition. But these aforesaid qualities, as has been rightly pointed out by Fick, 'give us no idea of the essence of the kingly power, the obligations or functions of the Rājan, because they contain universal prescriptions of morals applicable to the whole Buddhist laity.' It is worth noting that the Buddhist sources do not refer to the maintenance of castes which, according to the Brahmanical sources, constituted one of the fundamental duties of the king. This is what is exactly
expected of the Buddhists who are most critical of the caste system.

Turning to the Dharmasūtra writers, we find Gautama laying down that the king is the master of all, with the exception of the Brāhmaṇas. Āpastamba similarly enjoins that the king rules over all the people, excepting the Brāhmaṇas. As regards the duty of the king, Gautama observes: ‘He shall protect the castes and orders in accordance with justice. And those who leave the path of duty, he shall lead back to it . . . His administration of justice shall be regulated by the Veda, the Institutes of the Sacred Law, the Āṅgas and the Purāṇas.’ With this may be compared the following statement of Āpastamba: ‘If any persons, other than Brāhmaṇas, transgress their orders, the king, after having examined their actions, may punish them even by death. But such Brāhmaṇas should be sent to the domestic priest for trial. Let him not live better than his Gurus or ministers. He should take care of the welfare of his subjects.’ Vasiṣṭha also says an identical thing when he says, ‘The particular duty of a king is to protect all beings; by fulfilling it, he obtains success in this world and in the next. Let the king pay attention to all the laws of countries, subdivisions of castes (jāti) and families and make the four castes (varna) fulfil their respective particular duties.’

It is evident from the discussion above that the Dharmasūtra writers are unanimous in upholding the preservation of the order of castes as the foremost duty of the king. They further furnish us with useful information about the king’s revenue. Gautama refers to the king’s levy of taxes. Vasiṣṭha points out that the king should receive one-sixth of the crops. But more details on this issue are, however, provided by Baudhāyana who says, ‘Let the king protect his subjects, receiving as his pay a sixth part.’ This may be taken as implying that the king was entitled to receive the sixth part of the produce of the people on the ground that he was charged with the duty of protecting the people. The view that taxes are the king’s dues for the service of protection favourably compares with the fashionable doctrine, propounded in Europe in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries that taxes are the fees paid for the services of the public authorities. The Brāhmaṇas, no doubt, were exempted from taxation but the king derived a sixth part
of their spiritual merit. That the king had other sources of income is evidenced when Baudhāyana\textsuperscript{36} further observes, ‘the duty on goods imported by sea is, after deducting a choice article, ten paṇus in the hundred’. This statement has generally been taken to mean that\textsuperscript{37} ‘the king may take one article which particularly pleases him out of each consignment, and impose on the rest an ad valorem duty of ten per cent.’ Baudhāyana\textsuperscript{38} elsewhere remarks, ‘Let him also levy just (duties) on other (marketable goods) according to their intrinsic value without oppressing the traders.’ The commentator Govinda interprets the term anupahātya as meaning ‘without deducting (anudhṛtya) a choice article’. It is thus clear from the testimony of Baudhāyana that the king was entitled to receive from the people the sixth part of the produce in addition to certain other taxes imposed on mercantile commodities.

IV

The King in the Maurya Period

It was in c. B.C. 324 that Candragupta\textsuperscript{39} (c. B.C. 324-c. B.C. 300) founded the Maurya dynasty in Magadha by supplanting the Nandas. Both he and his illustrious grandson Aśoka (c. B.C. 272-c. B.C. 232) exercised their political suzerainty over the major part of India and Afghanistan. The former probably adopted the title Devānāmpriya,\textsuperscript{40} while the latter assumed the titles of Devānāmpriya, Pripadarsī and Rājā. As known from the Junagadh inscription of Rudradāman, the title Rājan was also used by one of Aśoka’s officers named Tuṣāspa, who appears to have enjoyed a certain amount of autonomy. The title Devānāmpriya, which was continued by Daśaratha,\textsuperscript{41} the grandson of Aśoka, etymologically denotes ‘beloved of gods’. Pāṇini’s aphorism śaṣṭhyā ākroṣe\textsuperscript{42} seems to imply that the word devānāmpriya is abusive in meaning. Other writers including Bhaṭṭoji Dīkṣita, Rāmacandra and Kaiyaṭa have likewise used the word as meaning a fool (Devānāmpriya iti ca mūrkhe). The Maurya rulers, however, appear to have used it as a complimentary title, comparable with bhavān, āyuṣmān and dīrghāyuḥ. The term Priyadarśī means ‘one who glances amiably’, ‘one who looks on all as dear’ and finally, ‘one who looks after the welfare of all’.
The Maurya rulers, as suggested by the adoption of the title Devānāmpriya, were averse to the doctrine of the divinity of kingship. Nevertheless, they did not lack in any imperial grandeur and dignity and were the supreme heads of the executive, judicial and military departments of administration. For efficient administration, they divided their kingdom into a number of provinces which were again subdivided into a number of smaller units. As has been revealed by the witness of the classical writers and the testimony of contemporary epigraphs, the Maurya kings were ever alert in the discharge of their duty and debt to the people. Megasthenes\(^43\) points out that ‘the king does not sleep in daytime but remains in the court the whole day for the purpose of judging cases and other public business which was not interrupted even when the hour arrived for massaging the body. Even when the king has his hair combed and dressed, he has no respite from public business. At that time he gives audience to his ambassadors.’ The First Separate Rock Edict shows that the Mauryas, particularly Aśoka, were inspired by a lofty ideal of royal duties, for Aśoka declares in that edict, ‘All men are my children. Just as I desire for my children that they may be associated with all kinds of welfare and happiness both in this world and in the next, so also I desire the same for all men’\(^44\) (Save munise paja mamā) Athā pajaṣye ichāmi hakaṁ kirti savena hita-suṣkha hida-lokika pāla-lokikāyekena yājebuti, tathā munisesu pi ichāmi hakaṁ).

The Arthaśāstra,\(^45\) which was probably composed by Kauṭilya under the patronage of Candragupta Maurya, throws welcome light on the royal office. There is hardly any indication in the Arthaśāstra which would suggest that its author regarded the king as divine, but that the king’s power was extensive admits of no doubt. He presides over the executive, revenue and judicial departments of government and is expected to lead the army in the battle-field. Among the executive functions of the king, Kauṭilya mentions the appointment of ministers and other important functionaries, consultation with the council of ministers, sending out of spies and attending to them, taking care of the learned Brāhmaṇas, the distressed, the helpless and women, reception of envoys, etc. The king is further the chief guiding factor in the formulation of foreign policy and the undertaking of military operations and programmes. As the head
of the judicial department, he should not only organise the Kanṭakaśodhana and Dharmasthiya courts, but he sometimes personally decides cases as the highest court of appeal without unnecessary delay. He looks into the revenue and expenditure of the kingdom and is ever alert to increase the revenue by taking an active part in the furtherance of trade, agriculture and industries.

Referring to the sources of judicial laws, Kauṭilya observes, ‘A matter in dispute has four feet, law, transaction, custom and the royal edict; (among them) the latter one supersedes the earlier one. Of them the law is based on truth, a transaction, however, on witnesses, custom on the commonly held view of men, while the command of kings is the royal edict’ (Dharma=ca vyavahāra=ca caritraṁ rāja-śāsanaṁ/ vivād=ārthaś= catuspādaḥ paścimaḥ pūrva-bādhakaḥ// Tatra satye sthito dharmo vyavahāraḥ=tu sākṣiṣu/ caritraṁ samgrahe punsāṁ rājñāṁ= ājñā tu śāsanaṁ//). Kauṭilya thus includes Rāja-śāsana among the sources of law and extols it as superior to the rest. Although we are far from being certain, discrepancy among the law books might have induced Kauṭilya to impose a stamp of inferiority on the authoritativeness of Dharma in judicial matters. Still under the Kauṭilya system the king could seldom turn out to be an unbridled autocrat. He says, ‘(Carrying out) his own duty by the king, who protects the subjects according to law, leads to heaven; of one who does not protect or who inflicts an unjust punishment, (the condition) is the reverse of this’. Kauṭilya further enjoins the king to rule in accordance with Dharma, to accept and enforce the Varṇāśrama system, to show regard to the laws of communities, professions and guilds and to fix the rate of taxes in agreement with the customary law and usage of the communities and region. Kauṭilya emphasises that the paramount duty of the king lies in promoting the welfare of the people. ‘In the happiness of his subjects,’ says he, ‘lies his happiness; in their welfare his welfare; whatever pleases him he shall not consider as good but whatever pleases his subjects he shall consider as good’ (Prajā-sukhe sukhaṁ rājñāḥ prajānāṁ ca hite hitañ/ n=ātma-priyam hitaṁ rājñāḥ prajānāṁ tu priyam hitāṁ//).

Kauṭilya further points out that the life of the king is not one of comfort and leisure but is crowded with packed pro-
grammes throughout the day and the night. The king should divide the day and the night each into eight parts by means of nālikās or by the measure of the shadow of the sun⁴⁹ (Nālikā-bhir=ahar=āstādhā rātrīṁ ca vibhajet chāyā-pramāṇena vā) and discharge during each of these parts the following assignments:

Day:

(i) Receiving reports about the measures taken for defence and accounts of income and expenditure⁵⁰ (Tatra pūrve divasasy=āṣṭabhāge raksā-vidhānam=āya-vyayau ca śrñyāt/);

(ii) Looking into the affairs of the people of both the rural and urban areas;

(iii) Bath, meals and study;

(iv) Receiving revenue in cash and attending to the heads of departments;

(v) Holding consultations with the council of ministers and receiving secret information brought in by spies;

(vi) Recreation at his pleasure or deliberation on state affairs;

(vii) Inspection of elephants, horses, chariots and troops;

(viii) Discussion with the commander-in-chief about military plans.

Night:

(i) Interview with the secret agents;

(ii) Bath, meals and study;

(iii-v) Sleep;

(vi) Contemplation upon the teaching of the science of politics as well as the work to be done;

(vii) Consultation with the councillors and despatching of spies;

(viii) Receiving blessings from priests, preceptors and chaplain and seeing his physician, chief cook and astrologer.⁵¹
V

The King in the Post-Maurya Period

By about the middle of the third century B.C., the Bactrian kings began their rule. These kings generally adopted the title of Basileos but with the augmentation of their power, they assumed more dignified epithets. Eucratides, for instance, at the beginning of his reign, when his dominions probably did not include any part of India, assumed the title of Basileos, but later on he styled himself as Basileos Megalou (Prākr̥t Mahārajasa), probably in imitation of the Achaemenian kings of Iran who described themselves as great kings. Demetrius was originally called Basileos but in the course of time with the expansion of his conquests in India, he took the titles of Basileos and Aniketou in Greek, and Maharajasa and Aparajitas in Prākr̥t.

The claim of divine origin did not find favour with the majority of the Bactrian kings, for we do not come across any title on their coins which would indicate any such pretension on their part. It cannot escape notice that queen Agathoclea prided herself on being simply called Theotropou, ‘god-like’. The case was, however, different with Antimachus who assumed the title Theos.

These kings sometimes followed the Seleucid practice of appointing the heir-apparent as joint-king. Thus Euthydemus II and after him Demetrius II ruled jointly with their father, Demetrius I; queen Agathoclea reigned conjointly with her son Strato I; and Strato I, in turn, was associated with his grandson, Strato II.\(^\text{52}\) It is again interesting to note that the king occasionally allowed his younger son to rule a definite part of the kingdom as a sub-king with the right of coining in his own name. Antimachus served as a sub-king first under his father Euthydemus I and subsequently under his brother Demetrius I; Demetrius II, Pantaleon, Agathocles and Apollodotus were sub-kings under Demetrius I, and both Menander and Strato I are known to have had under them many sub-kings.\(^\text{53}\)

The Śaka kings, who gradually eliminated Greek rule from the north-western part of India, adopted more dignified titles than those of their Indo-Greek predecessors. Maues, the earliest known Śaka king in India, at the beginning of his rule, adopted the usual Greek title Basileos or Basileos Megalou. When he
succeeded in conquering Gandhāra from the Greeks, he styled himself as Basileos Basileon Megalou in imitation of the famous Parthian king Mithridates, ruling at Ctesiphon. This set of titles was adopted by Azes I, Azilises and Azes II on the obverse of their coins without any modification, but there is a slight variation of the corresponding Prākrīt equivalent on the reverse of their coins. Thus while for Maues the Prākrīt titles were Rajatirajasa and Mahatasa, for his successors those were Maharajasa, Rajarajasa and Mahatasa. The titles of the Parthian kings like Vonones, Spalirises, Orthagnes, Gondopharnes, Pacores, etc., were the same as those of Maues' successors.

The system of dual monarchy was popularised in India by the Scytho-Parthian rulers. Like the Seleucid kings of Western Asia, most of these rulers associated their heirs with them as joint kings; the name of the senior partner in Greek occupies the place of honour on the obverse of their coins and that of the junior in Prākrīt appears on the reverse. We may refer, for instance, to the joint issues of Azes I and Azilises which show the legend Basileos Basileon Megalou Azou on the obverse and Maharajasa Rajarajasa Mahatasa Ayilisasa on the reverse. The institution of joint kingship must have acted as a healthy check upon the power and authority of the king. Another check was provided by the Satraps who were charged with the administration of many of their Indian possessions, with full autonomy for all practical purposes.

VI

The Kuśāṇa King

It was during the time of the Kuśāṇa monarchs that an exalted conception of kingship was introduced in India. Kujula Kadphises (c. A.D. 25-c. A.D. 55) at first took the humble title of Yavuga but later on used such imperial titles as Maharāja, Mahānta, Rajadiraja, etc. Wema Kadphises, who was destined to conquer the Indus region, assumed more high sounding titles like Basileos, Basileon, Soter and Megas in Greek, and Maharajasa, Rajadirajasa, Sarvaloga Iśvarasa, Mahiśvarasa and Tradara in Prākrīt. He is given in the Mathura inscription the epithets of Devaputra and Śāhi. Kaṇīṣka I (c. A.D. 78-A.D. 102) adopted the proud title of Shaonano Shao, probably based on
old Persian Khššāyathiyaṇām Khššāyathiya on some of his coins and those of Maharaja, Rajatiraja, and Śāhi in others. Kaniśka I’s titles were continued by his successors like Vāsiśka and Huviśka, while Kaniśka II of the Ara inscription used, in addition to the usual ones, the title of Kaisara which is evidently of Roman origin.

The above titles would unmistakably point out that the Kuśāṇa kings had imbibed a lofty idea of the royal office. Notwithstanding their Buddhist affiliation in the generality of cases, they claimed deification, representing themselves as ‘Sons of Heaven’. There has been a great deal of controversy on the significance of the term Devaputra, as used by the Kuśāṇa kings. F.W. Thomas and U.N. Ghosal opine that it was not an official designation of the Kuśāṇa kings but a complimentary epithet applied to them by their grateful subjects. This view does not appear to be tenable, because, first, Devaputra is mentioned along with other official designations in the Kuśāṇa inscriptions; second, it is applied, along with other official titles, to the contemporary Kuśāṇa king by the Gupta monarch Samudragupta; third, the Chinese sources often describe the Yueh-chi kings as ‘Son of Heaven’; and last, the absence of the title on the Kuśāṇa coins may be ascribed to the lack of space but cannot be treated as a positive proof in favour of Thomas’ contention. It is generally believed, though opposed by Thomas, that the title was derived from the Chinese Tien-tie or Tien-tzu. But it may be remembered that the two Parthian kings, Pharates II and Pharates III, who flourished in the first part of the first century A.D. and preceded the Kuśāṇas, assumed the title of ‘god-fathered’. R.S. Sharma observes in this connection, ‘Apparently when Parthia had been conquered by the early Kuśāṇas, the Parthian titles and dominions alike were appropriated by Kaniśka and his successors.’ It thus seems that the Kaniśka group of kings borrowed this title from their Parthian predecessors, who, of course, might have been inspired to adopt this title after the practice of the Chinese emperors. But the Kuśāṇa royal title Devaputra, which merely alludes to the divine parentage of the king but does not actually identify him with the god or gods, was not in accord with Indian tradition; as a result, it went out of use consequent upon its non-recognition by indigenous kings, subsequent or
contemporary. The title *Shaonano Shao* appears to be of Śaka origin, as may be inferred from the fact that it is written on the Kuśāṇa coins in pure Khotani Śaka language and, further, their Prākṛtised form Šāhānuṣāhi is ascribed to the Śakas by the author of the Kālakācārya Kathānaka.

The Kuśāṇa kings' claim to divinity is manifest in their adherence to the practice of erecting *devakulas* in which the statues of their deceased predecessors were preserved and worshipped as those of gods. Thus the repair of the dilapidated *devakula* of his grandfather at Mathura was undertaken during the reign of Huvīṣka for the increase of his life and strength. It is held by some scholars that the Kuśāṇas in this respect followed the Roman practice on the bank of the river Tiber. But the cult of the dead king was also prevalent in Mesopotamia and Egypt, 'where mortuary temples were built to enshrine the statues of the Pharaohs. Probably the Romans derived this idea from these predecessors and passed it on to the Kuśāṇas either through direct commercial contacts or through some intermediaries.' The deification of kingship, as claimed by the Kuśāṇa monarchs, is further borne out by the evidence of numismatics. 'On the gold pieces of Kadphises II the shoulders of the king are surrounded by luminous rays or flames, and his bust appears to issue from the clouds like the gods of Greece . . . Nimbus appears only on some pieces of Kanishka; on certain gold pieces of Huvishka the sovereign is at once ornamented with nimbus, flames and clouds . . . Vāsudeva had simply the nimbus round his head which is itself surmounted by a pointed tiara. This last type remained that of the Indo-Scythian Kushan kings called the later Kushans.'

Notwithstanding their keen interest in the deification of the institution of kingship, the Kuśāṇa kings appear to have encouraged the idea of the decentralisation of power. They governed their kingdom through subordinate rulers who enjoyed the status of Kṣatrapas and Mahākṣatrapas. The great Satrap Kharapallāna and Satrap Vanaspara governed the eastern part of Kanishka's empire as subordinate rulers. If Nahapāna's contemporaneity with the Kuśāṇa rulers is to be accepted, it would follow that Nahapāna was a Satrap under them. He was virtually independent and issued coins in his own name. If it is conceded that the so-called 'Nameless King' of the copper
coins was a subordinate chief, placed in charge of his Indian conquests by Wema Kadphises, we have to assume that these subordinate rulers were not only empowered to strike coins but they also assumed full imperial titles. There are some indications in favour of the belief that the practice of joint rule was popular with the Kuśāṇa kings. If the suggestion of D.C. Sircar be accepted, Vamataksāma of the Mathura inscription and Vaskuṣāṇa of the Sanchi record were junior partners of Kaṇiṣka I. There seems to be little room for doubt that Huviṣka (years 28-60) actually ruled jointly with Vāsiṣṭha (years 24-28) and Vajhiṣṭha’s son Kaṇiṣka (year 41). ‘Just as the high-sounding titles of the Kuśāṇa rulers,’ writes R.S. Sharma, ‘indicated nothing more than the reality of decentralisation, so also the device of deification was nothing more than an attempt to conceal and remove their political weakness.’ But the view that the weakening of the central government is the corollary of decentralisation appears to be far-fetched. The weakness or strength of a monarchical state was determined by the ability of the king, loyalty of the subordinates and efficacy of the administrative machinery. Power was delegated to the subordinates in order to maintain the effectiveness of administration in every nook and corner of the far-flung kingdom but not to preside over the liquidation of the state. There is no evidence to show that during the days of the early Kuśāṇa kings the governors proved to be insubordinate and set up independent principalities at the expense of their masters.

VII

The Indigenous and Śaka Kings

While grandiloquent titles were being assumed by the foreign kings of India, indigenous rulers remained contented with the use of simpler epithets. Puṣyamitra, the founder of the Śunāga dynasty, called himself a Senāpati, although he twice asserted his claim to paramount sovereignty by performing the Āśvamedha sacrifice. His successors were simply called Rāja. The Besnagar inscription of Heliodorus mentions the Indo-Greek king Antialkidas of Taxila as a Mahārāja, but it applies the designation of Rājā to the contemporary Indian monarch Bhāgabhādra of Vidiśā. Amoghabhūti, who founded a short-lived kingdom
in the region around the Siwalik hills during the second half of the first century B.C., took the titles of Rājā and Mahārāja. The Audumbara kings were similarly called Rājā. One of their kings, Mahādeva, bore the unusual title of Rājarāja.66

The Śaka kings of Western India used the titles of Kṣatrapa, Mahākṣatrapa and Rājā. From the time of Nahapāna onwards, they began adopting the designation of Svāmin. The early Śaka kings followed the system of conjoint rule, according to which the king with the title of Mahākṣatrapa and his son or brother, in the capacity of a Kṣatrapa, jointly carried on the administration of the country. From c. A.D. 200 a peculiar mode of succession came to be established under which system the crown passed from the eldest brother to the younger ones in succession. When the youngest brother died after enjoying his turn to rule, he was generally succeeded by the surviving eldest son of the eldest brother. It is pointed out by some scholars that the Śaka kings were familiar with the practice of elective kingship. The statement on the Junagadh inscription that Rudradāman was appointed king to protect them by the people of all castes (sarva-varṇair = abhisamya rakṣan = ārtham patitve vṛtena) lends colour to such a hypothesis. But this statement does not appear to be true, for, it occurs in eulogistic document, composed by a panegyrist, and secondly, it is contradicted by the fact that the Junagadh inscription elsewhere refers to Rudradāman as earning the title of Mahākṣatrapa through his own prowess (svayam = adhigata-Mahākṣatrapa-nāmnā).

The writings of Manu throw light on the royal office during the early centuries of the Christian era. He maintains that one of the most important functions of the king is to uphold the observance of the respective duties of the four castes. Manu says that the king is the protector of the four castes and of the four Āśramas and he should see that the people are engaged in their own duties67 (Sve sve dharme niviśṭanām sarvēśām = anupūrvaśah varṇānām = āśramānān = ca rājā sṛṣṭ = obhirākṣitā).

Referring to the administration of justice, which is another important function of the king, Manu68 says, ‘Rightly considering the place, time, offenders’ power and knowledge of the law of administration, the king should inflict, according to the Śāstras, punishment on persons, doing wrong’ (Tām desakālau śaktih = ca vidyāh = c = āvekṣāya tattvataḥ | tath = ākātaḥ samprapa-
Manu further points out that in return for his service to the people, the king should receive revenue from them. As the leeches, the calves and the bees suck their food little by little, similarly the king should realise from his kingdom the annual revenue little by little⁴⁹ (Yath=ālp=ālpapers-madanty=ādamāṃ vāryokovatsa-ṣatpādāḥ/ tath=ālp=ālpapers grahyāvyo rāṣṭrād=rājāḥ=āvdihaḥ karakaḥ). He should take one-fiftieth part of the surplus cattle and gold; similarly, he must take the sixth, eighth or twelfth part of the paddy⁷⁰ (Paṃcāśaṭ-bhāga ōdēyo rājāḥ paśu hiranyayohi dhānyānām=asṭamaṃ bhāgaḥ sasťhas dvādasha eva vai). The king, though faced with a monetary crisis, should not impose taxes upon a Brāhmaṇa, versed in the Vedas; nor should a true Brāhmaṇa suffer from hunger in his kingdom.⁷¹

Manu declares that the king is divine being created by the Lord out of the particles from the bodies of Indra, Vāyu, Yama, Sun, Fire, Varuṇa, Moon and Kuvera⁷² (Indr=Ānila Yam=Āikānām=Agneś=ca Varuṇasya ca/Candra-vitteśayoś=c=aiva mātrā nihṛṛtya sāśvatiḥ!). Manu points out, ‘Being a man the king should not be slighted though young; for he is some great god come in the form of a man⁷³ (Vāl=opi n=āvaman-tayyo manuṣya iti bhūmipah/ mahatī devatā hy-esā nara-rūpeṇa tiṣṭhati!). There is then a significant difference in the attitude of Manu and his predecessor Kauṭilya towards the king’s divinity, both betraying the sentiment of two different epochs.

VIII

The Gupta King

The early Gupta kings like Śrīgupta and Ghaṭotkaca were simply called Mahārāja, but from the time of Candragupta I onwards, the higher title of Mahārājādhirāja,⁷⁴ evidently derived from the titles Mahārāja and Rājātirāja, as used in the Mathura inscriptions of Huviskā and Vāsudeva, came to be applied to them. In some private records and coins, the Gupta emperors were sometimes described as Mahārāja⁷⁵ and Rājā, but there is no doubt that in the Gupta empire the official designations of a paramount ruler were Paramabhāṣṭāraka and Mahārājādhirāja, and the title of a subordinate king was Mahārāja. The Gupta rulers from the time of Candragupta II Vikramāditya
generally described themselves as *Paramabhaṭagavata* which is indicative of their Vaiṣṇava affiliation. There is no consensus among scholars on the meaning of the term *paramādaiva*, which was also applied to them. H.C. Raychaudhuri rightly interprets it as an imperial title meaning the supreme deity. The term *paramādaiva* has sometimes been taken as referring to an avowed adherent of Viṣṇu, but this explanation is probably untenable. In the Allahabad pillar inscription, Samudragupta is described as a god dwelling on the earth (*Lokadāhāma-deva*), the Incomparable Being (*Acintya-puruṣa*) and the equal of Kuvera, Varuṇa, Indra and Yama (*Dhanadā-Varuṇa = Endr = Āntakasama*). The high-sounding epithets did not always imply increasing power, for a weak ruler like Nārasiṃhagupta had assumed the title of the rising sun (*Bālādītya*). The doctrine of the divinity of the king, as claimed by the Gupta rulers, is corroborated by the evidence of contemporary literature. The Viṣṇu and the *Bhāgavata Purāṇas*, which were probably composed during the time of the Guptas, state that a number of gods reside in the person of the king (*Brahmā Janārdano Rūdrā Indro Vāyur = Yamō Rivih | Ṣṛṭabhir = Aruṇa Dhūtā pāṣā bhūmir = niśākaraḥ | Ete c = ānye ca ye devāḥ śāp = ānugraḥakāriṇaḥ | nṛpasy = aite śārīrasthāḥ sarva-devamayo nṛpaḥ*). The contemporary Sanskrit work *Mudrārākṣasa* declares the king as an image of god Viṣṇu, whereas its commentator Dhuṇḍirāja quotes an anonymous *Smṛti* text to the effect that the king is a human incarnation of Viṣṇu. It may be mentioned in this connection that Sanskrit dramatists time and again have used the word *deva* as a synonym for king. ‘But the divine origin,’ writes T.V. Mahalingam, ‘claimed for monarchy in India is not in any way analogous to the divine right claimed by the early Stuarts in England. The British sovereigns of the early seventeenth century claimed divine origin for their power to support their absolutism. But the Hindu theory was propounded not as a claim for absolutism or autocracy. The view was that the king was an incarnation of God on earth for the support of the people by ruling over them righteously.’

The succession was hereditary, the crown being usually passed on to the eldest son. Occasions were not rare when a junior son was selected by the father to succeed him when he was considered the best among his brothers to occupy the privileged position.
This was most probably the case with Candragupta II, as may be guessed from the epithet tatparigrahita (accepted as his successor), applied to him in the genealogical passages of the Gupta inscriptions. A clear indication of the custom of the selection of the king by the predecessor is afforded by the Allahabad pillar inscription which shows how Candragupta I selected Samudragupta from among his several sons to succeed him on the throne. V.R. Ramachandra Dikshitar is of opinion that under the Guptas the nomination of the successor to the throne by the predecessor was never considered final till it was legally approved by the court and the people. Rāmagupta, he argues, succeeded Samudragupta as the candidature of Candragupta II, though supported by his father, was not finally ratified by the court and the public. But there is no cogent evidence in support of the contention of Dikshitar.

The Gupta kings, as usual, were the centres of all military, political, administrative and judicial powers. They governed their kingdom with the help of ministers and officers of different ranks, but the ultimate responsibility rested with them. They were often their own commanders-in-chief, personally spearheading important military engagements. Indian tradition, however, asserts that the real object of the king is to win the heart of the people by impartial discharge of his duty. He is father to the poor and helpless and a terror to miscreants. The Gupta, nay, Indian ideal of kingship has been remarkably reflected in the writings of the great poet Kālidāsa, who lays down that the king is so called for he pleases his subjects (Rājā prakṛti-rañja-nāt). As a father affectionately looks after his children, the king should likewise protect his subjects (Prajāh praṇānātha pit=eva pāṣī).

The writings of Kālidāsa enlighten us on many aspects of kingship. The kings are painted in his works as being well-tutored in arts and sciences, including the science of warfare and political strategy. Their prime duty was to maintain the established order of social life with the utmost care. The people were required to pay to the king-one-sixth of their cumulative income (gaśṭh=āṁśa-vṛtti). The Abhijñānaśakuntalam discloses that even ascetics were to make over to the king one-sixth of their corn, in addition to the usual contribution in the shape of religious merit. But the taxes, thus collected, were to be
distributed for the good of the people, 'just as the sun by his rays draws up to the skies the water of the ocean only for the purpose of pouring it down a thousand times for the fructification of the earth'. Needless to emphasise that only a few kings could have reached the lofty ideal of kingship, outlined in Kālidāsa's works, in their personal rule.

IX

The King in the Post-Gupta Period

Among the dynasties of the period, following the downfall the Imperial Guptas, mention may be made of the Maukharis, the Later Guptas and the Puṣyabhūtis. The Maukharis and the Later Guptas began with the modest title of Mahārāja but subsequently assumed the imperial title of Mahārājādhirāja. The records of these ruling houses offer us scanty notices of the king's functions but he was undoubtedly the live-wire of the civil and military administration.

The first three kings of the Puṣyabhūti dynasty assumed the simple title of Mahārāja, but it was Prabhākaravardhana who was the first king to call himself Paramabhaṭṭāraka and Mahārājādhirāja. The same titles were also applied to Rājyavardhana and, with more justification, to Harṣa. Harṣa's ideal of kingship and the benevolence of his rule are remarkably brought out by Hiuen Tsang in the following words, 'He (Harsha) was just in his administration and punctilious in the discharge of his duties. He forgot sleep and food in his devotion to good works... The king's day was divided into three periods of which one was given up to affairs of state and two were devoted to religious works. He was indefatigable and the day was too short for him.' The Chinese pilgrim states that in order to ensure good government in the kingdom, Harṣa made tours of inspection throughout his dominions during the three months of the rainy season. But Hiuen Tsang's account would make it abundantly clear that with all his vigilance, Harṣa was not destined to bring about such peace and security as had been accomplished by the Imperial Guptas centuries earlier. We are told by the Chinese pilgrim that the Puṣyabhūti king performed a great ceremony every five years at Prayāga on which occasion he distributed in one day the accumulated
wealth of five years. This shows that, first, the royal treasury was often misused as a private property of the ruling authority, and second, the king was not possessed of the political wisdom that the treasury was not a charitable dispensary but would be kept ever replenished to combat any financial crisis, imperilling the security of the state.

It may be mentioned that Bāṇa does not believe in the divinity of the king, which, according to him, is an invention of unscrupulous flatterers who surround the monarch. In ridiculing the king’s claims to divinity, Bāṇa89 says, ‘Though subject to mortal conditions, they look on themselves as having alighted on earth as divine beings with a superhuman destiny; they employ a pomp in their undertakings only fit for gods and win the contempt of all mankind. They welcome this deception of themselves by their followers. From the delusion as to their own divinity established in their minds, they are overthrown by false ideas, and they think their own pair of arms have received another pair;90 they imagine their forehead has a third eye buried in the skin.’91 Bāṇa’s dislike for the divinity of the king may reasonably be ascribed to his detestable attitude to some of the monarchs of his time like Pulakesin II and Śaśāṅka.

X

The Pratihāra and Pāla Kings

The Pratihāras came into prominence of Indian history from about the second quarter of the eighth century A.D. Whereas, in the records of their feudatories they are given the titles of Paramabhaṭṭāraka, Mahārājādhirāja and Paramēśvara, the Pratihāra kings chose to be called Rājā or Mahārājā in their own inscriptions. The attention of the Pratihāra kings was probably ‘not so much on their political achievements as on their cultural aspirations and fight for the preservation of Indian freedom’.92 Bhoja I of this family, and, his grandson Vināyaka-pāla, to judge from their Ādivarāha coins, describing them as Śrīmad-Ādivarāha, adopted the title of Ādivarāha which was indicative of a ‘certain missionary zeal that they had the power and capacity to save the country from the raids of the Mlechcha hordes’. The epithet Ādivarāha, as assumed by these Pratihāra monarchs, is a further proof of their claim to divinity, which is
also corroborated by the Gwalior inscription where two of their predecessors, Nāgabhaṭa I and Nāgabhaṭa II, are represented as incarnations of the god Nārāyaṇa. The usual titles of the Pāla kings, who ruled almost contemporaneously with the Pratihāras, were Paramesvara, Paramabhaṭṭaraka and Mahārājādhirāja. It may be noted that the order of the three designations in the compound Paramesvara-Paramabhaṭṭaraka-Mahārājādhirāja is differently arranged in the Pratihāra and Pāla records. In the records of the Pratihāras, Paramabhaṭṭaraka comes first in the compound, while in the Pāla inscriptions we find the term Paramesvara at the beginning.

The office of the king remained practically the same in principle and practice in both the Pratihāra and Pāla kingdoms. Kingship continued to be hereditary, although there is a reference in a contemporary document to a king’s election to the royal office. Gopāla, the founder of the Pāla dynasty, is described in the Khalimpur inscription as being appointed their king by the Prakṛtis, who have been differently identified with the people, ministers or high officials. It is sometimes held that the people did not elect Gopāla but they enthusiastically welcomed his rule which had put an end to the state of lawlessness in Bengal.

The king was at the head of all the executive, judicial and military functions of the state, enjoying the sole right to dismiss any officer and appoint any person to any post he liked. The records of our period usually describe the kings as possessing many qualities of head and heart, prescribed, as would be shown later, by the Niti-works. The Pratihāra kings are eulogised in their records as being endowed with bravery, valour and modesty. King Kakka was the master of prosody, grammar, logic and astronomy. He was also a store of arts and had the ability to compose poetry in many languages.

The Pāla king Vīgrahapāla III was acquainted with fine arts.

Now, as one turns to contemporary literary evidence, one meets with abundant material on the institution of kingship in the Nītiṣvākyāmṛta, composed by the Jaina author, Somadeva Sūri. Somadeva identifies the king with the Brahmanical trinity, Brahmā, Nārāyaṇa and Śiva, and states that there is no other visible god than the king himself who is a supreme deity (Rājā hi paramaṁ daivataṁ). As regards the king’s functions, he lays down that the protection of his subjects is
the king's sacrifice (prajā-pālanaṁ hi rājño yajñah), and he is not a king who does not protect his people (sa kim rājā yo na rakṣati prajāḥ). The dangers against which protection has to be provided have been identified as thieves, exiled Kṣatriyas, those who use weights and measures, those who fix the price of commodities, royal favourites, foresters, frontier-guards, officers in charge of gambling, officers of the state, headmen of villages and hoarders of grain. The king is further called upon to see that the Varn-āśrama rules are observed by the people and the prescribed code of conduct is not violated. That kingdom is best, he says, where there is strict adherence to the Varn-āśrama-dharma and where the mixed caste is conspicuous by its absence.

The Agni Purāṇa of about the same period tells us that the welfare of the people is more important to the king than the performance of sacrifices and penance. It further states that the king is like the Sun because of his prowess, like the Moon on account of giving pleasure to the people, like Vāyu because of pervading the whole world through his spies, like Yama as he brings offenders to book, like Fire for the reason that he burns people having propensities, like Kubera on account of the gifts he gives away to the Brāhmaṇas, like Varuṇa as he showers money, like Prthvī because of his patience and forgiveness and like Hari on account of the protection he renders to the people by means of the threefold energies. The author of these passages of the Agni Purāṇa then does not accept the divinity of the king in a literal sense but postulates the functional resemblance between the king and some deities. In this respect his attitude is quite different from that of Manu who regards the king as divine, being created by the particles of different gods.

The duties to be performed by the king daily (prātyahika-karma) are enumerated in the following order:

(i) Rising two n uhūrtas before sunrise;
(ii) Audience with spies;
(iii) Hearing the report on income and expenditure;
(iv) Worship of god and making suitable gifts to the Brāhmaṇas;
(v) Wearing dresses and ornaments and seeing auspicious things;
(vi) Consultation with the astrologer and the physician and receiving blessings of his elders and superiors;
(vii) Attending his court and receiving the Brāhmaṇas, high officers, ministers and the people;
(viii) Hearing daily reports of works and determining the routine of business for the day;
(ix) Adjudication of law-suits;
(x) Consultation with ministers;
(xi) Gymnastics and physical exercises;
(xii) Mid-day bath, visit to temples, etc.;
(xiii) Meal and rest;
(xiv) Study of religious scriptures;
(xv) Inspection of treasury, army, armoury and stores;
(xvi) Evening prayer;
(xvii) Deputing spies to various assignments; and
(xviii) Supper and sleep amidst songs and music.

A comparison of the daily routine, prescribed by the Agni Purāṇa, with the time-table, enumerated in the Arthaśāstra would show that the former account is primarily based on the latter, although a few minor points of disagreement between the two cannot escape notice. Thus, whereas, according to the Agni Purāṇa the king is expected to consult the astrologer and the physician during the day, Kauṭilya urges the king to do the same at night. Again, the Agni Purāṇa does not emphasise the importance of the king’s consultation with the commander-in-chief, as we find in the Arthaśāstra. The Agni Purāṇa, further, does not divide the day and night into various parts for performing different duties, as is done by Kauṭilya. Furthermore, while the Agni Purāṇa advises the king to rise only two muhārtas before sunrise, Kauṭilya expects him to get up a little earlier.

XII

The King of the Post-Pratihāra Period

The decline and fall of the Imperial Pratihāras of Kanauj led to the rise of new powers in different parts of Northern
India like the Kalacuris\(^9\) of Cedi, the Candellas of Jejāka-
bhukti, the Paramāras of Malwa and the Caulukyas of Gujarat.
In Eastern India the Pālas were succeeded by the Senas. The
Kalacuris assumed the usual imperial titles of Paramēśvara,
Paramabhaṭṭāraka and Mahārājaḍhirāja. Karna, Yaśaṅkarna
and Jayasimha of this family added to these titles the epithets
Aśvapati, Gajapati, Narapati and Rājatraya=ādhipati. The
Candellas, likewise, used the conventional imperial titles. Some
of their kings bore the well-known Kalacuri titles of Parama-
māheśvara, Śrīmad=Vāmadevapād=ānudhyāta, Trikaliṅga=
ādhipati, Aśvapati, Gajapati, Narapati and Rājatraya=ādhipati.
The Paramāras also adopted the usual imperial titles. The
early Gāhaḍavāla kings assumed the usual imperial titles of
Paramabhaṭṭāraka, Mahārājaḍhirāja and Paramēśvara. But
Govindacandra adopted the additional epithets of Aśvapati,
Gajapati, Narapati and Rājatraya=ādhipati, which were continu-
ed by his successors. The Caulukya kings, besides being
assigned the usual royal titles, are sometimes called Lāṅkaśeśara-
Nārāyaṇ=āvatāra or Abhinava-Siddharājadeva-Bāla-Nārāyaṇ-
āvatāra which would envisage an honoured position for them,
being looked upon as human incarnations of Viṣṇu, as was the
case with the Pratihāra kings. The Sena kings used the usual
titles from the time of Vijayasena, but the later scions of this
family adopted the additional titles of Aśvapati, Gajapati and
Narapati. The commonplace expression Paramēśvara-Parama-
bhaṭṭāraka-Mahārājaḍhirāja or Paramabhaṭṭāraka-Mahārāja-
dhirāja Paramēśvara was often condensed in the East Indian
medieval records to Paramēśvar=ety=ādi-rāj=āvalī-pūrvavat
or Paramabhaṭṭārak=ety=ādi-rāj=āvalī-pūrvavat.\(^{100}\)

There has been no unanimity among Indologists regarding
the interpretation of the terms, aśvapati, gajapati and narapati.
Rapson\(^{101}\) is inclined to regard them as one title, meaning
‘overlord of the three rājās, the lord of horses, the lord of
elephants, the lord of men’, and points out that the assumption
of this title by a king indicates his possession of the Allahabad
region, the region of the once-famous kingdom of Kauśāmbī.
This is hardly tenable for the simple reason that these titles were
sometimes adopted by kings of other regions. Some scholars
are of opinion that Narapati was the title assumed by the kings
of Telangana and Karnataka and Gajapati was the one assumed by
the kings of Kaliṅga, but it is not likely that all the bearers of these titles were in possession of Telangana and Orissa. It is reasonable to accept the expressions aśvapati, naragati and gajapati in the sense of kings, strong in cavalry, infantry and elephantry, respectively.

In this period, as in the earlier days, primogeniture was the normal form of succession of the throne. The crown therefore usually passed from the father to the eldest son, who was installed to the office of the heir-apparent, when he had come of age and finished his education and training. That the heir-apparent was selected during the life-time of the ruling king is evident not only from the epigraphical evidence but also from the accounts of foreign travellers.102 This is in consonance with the injunction of the Nīti-writers that an heir-apparent should be selected in the life-time of the ruling king. But the eldest son was denied the crown if he suffered from any physical or mental shortcoming. If the king had no son, the crown usually passed to his younger brother. The Candella king Devavarman, being childless, appointed his younger brother Kīrtivarman as heir to the throne;103 the Cedi Lakṣmaṇarāja, who left no issue, was succeeded by his younger brother Yuvarāja II;104 the Cedi Narasīṁha, who had no issue, was followed on the throne by his younger brother Jayasiṁha; the Paramāra rulers Lakṣmadeva and Jaitugi were succeeded by their younger brothers Naravarman and Jayavarman II,105 respectively; the Cāhamāna Vigraharāja was succeeded by his younger brother Durlabhara-rāja106 and Jājalla by his younger brother Āśarāja107 or Aśvarāja. In the absence of a son or a brother, an uncle was sometimes selected for the throne, as was the case with Prṭhvīvarmadeva who succeeded his nephew, the Candella king Jayavarmadeva who died without leaving any issue.108

The contemporary inscriptive records afford us interesting glimpses into the qualities of royal personages, although their reliability in most cases stands uncorroborated. Many Gāhaḍavāla kings are known to have assumed the title vividha-vidyā-vicāra-vācaspati, 'sound scholar engaged in pondering over the different branches of learning', which is indicative of their scholarship or patronage of learning. The Ratanpur inscription109 of the Cedi king Jājalladeva dated A.D. 1114 informs us how king Prṭhvīdeva was endowed with nobility, bravery and
depth. The Khajuraho inscription\textsuperscript{110} states that Harṣa combined in himself eloquence, statesmanship, heroism, ambition, modesty and self-confidence. The Candella king Sallakṣaṇa-varman is described as 'a master of the sacred lore, a kinsman of the virtuous, a store of arts and an abode of good conduct.'\textsuperscript{111} Intelligence, bravery, religiousness, truthfulness and gratitude were the qualities that characterised the Candella king Devavarman, 'who had full control over all his senses.'\textsuperscript{112} King Jayavarmadeva of this family possessed generosity, truthfulness, statesmanship and heroism.\textsuperscript{113} The Paramāra king Bhoja\textsuperscript{114} was a great poet, being described in the Udayapur record as a prince among poets.

Kings normally used to occupy the throne till their death but there were occasions when they abdicated the throne in favour of their sons, probably either under the influence of Vānaprastha and Sannyāsa or due to infirmity or disease. The Prabhāvakacarita\textsuperscript{116} informs us that king Āma, a son of Yaśo-varman of Kanauj of the earlier period, abdicated the throne in favour of his son Duṇḍuha and spent his life in religious devotions. The Jodhpur inscription\textsuperscript{116} of Bauka tells us how Bhilāditya entrusted the reins of government to his son and went to the river Ganges where he lived as an ascetic for eighteen years. Jāta,\textsuperscript{117} a member of the family of Pratīhāra Bauka, likewise, retired to the pious hermitage of Māṇḍyaya to practise penance after entrusting the administration to his younger brother Bhoja. The Pāla king Vigrahapāla\textsuperscript{118} entrusted the reins of government to his son Nārāyaṇapāla and became an ascetic. The Kalanjār inscription\textsuperscript{119} informs us that the Candella king Jayavarman, being weary of the administrative burden, handed over the government to Prthvīvarman and went to the Ganges. The Cedi king Lakṣmīkarna\textsuperscript{120} probably abdicated the throne in favour of his son. The Dvīśraya Kāvyā\textsuperscript{121} states that the Caulukya king Durlabharāja abdicated the throne in favour of his nephew Bhīma who likewise abdicated the throne to be succeeded on the throne by his son Karṇa. The Hammira-mahākāvyā\textsuperscript{122} also states that Jaitrisimha handed over the administration to his son Hammīra and himself went to the forest. In commenting on the cases of abdication on the part of kings, P.B. Udgaonkar\textsuperscript{123} observes, 'All this evidence clearly indicates that some of the pious rulers of our period.
actually followed the teachings of Hinduism and Jainism which lay down that a person should retire from life at the advent of old age in order to realise the spiritual ideal of human life. In the earlier periods, such instances are relatively few. This may perhaps indicate that the ideal of renunciation was becoming more popular in Hinduism in our period."

The Šukraniti* constitutes a store-house of materials about the king of this period, although it is sometimes held to be a work of a much later period. Šukra regards the king of divine. 'The king is made,' says he,¹²⁴ 'out of the permanent elements of Indra, Vāyu, Yama, Sun, Fire, Varuṇa, Moon and Kuvera and is the lord of both the immovable and movable worlds.' He reminds the king of his eightfold function which consists of punishment of the wicked, charity, protection of the subjects, performance of Rājasūya and other sacrifices, equitable realisation of revenue, conversion of princes into tributary chiefs, quelling of enemies and extraction of wealth from land.¹²⁵ While administering justice 'the king should attentively look after law-suits (Vyavahāras) by freeing himself from anger and greed according to the dictates of Dharma Šāstras, in the company of the Chief Justice, Amātya, Brāhmaṇa and Priest.'¹²⁶ He is enjoined to 'perform his duty by carefully studying the customs that are followed in countries and that are mentioned in the Šāstras, as well as those that are practised by castes, villages, corporations, and families.'¹²⁷ Šukra¹²⁸ lays down that the king should realise funds by any means in order to maintain the commonwealth, the army as well as sacrifices. The collection of revenue is not meant for wives and children, nor for the self-enjoyment of the king himself but is for the maintenance of the army and the subjects and the observance of sacrifices. Šukra¹²⁹ observes, 'The best king is he who, by following the

*Whereas Pradhan (Modern Review, 1916, February) and K.P. Jayaswal (ibid) have placed the work in the fourth and eighth centuries A.D. respectively, U.N. Ghosal (A History of Indian Political Ideas, p. 249), P.B. Udgaonkar (The Political Institutions and Administration, pp. 3-12) and Rajendralal Mitter (The Positive Background of Hindu Sociology, p. 64) have respectively assigned it to A.D. 1200-A.D. 1625, A.D 800-A.D. 1200 and the sixteenth century. R.C. Majumdar (Ancient India, p. 442) is inclined to attribute the text to the latest phase of the early period, although Lallanji Gopal (BSOAS, 1962, XXV, pt. lii) is of opinion that it he work was compiled in the first half of the nineteenth century.
practice of the weaver of garlands, protects his subjects, makes
the enemies tributaries and increases the treasure by their
wealth. The middling king is he who does this by following the
practice of the Vaiśya. And the worst by service and receipts
from fines, holy places and lands consecrated by gods."

XII

Checks on Royal Despotism

It cannot escape notice that by the early medieval period
the Indian king, though still looked upon as the supreme head
of his dominions, stood, in respect of both grandeur and power,
in sad contrast with his predecessors. Since the post-Gupta
days there had been developing in India an elaborate feudal
system that contributed, in no small measure, to the general
weakening of the central authority. Titles like Mahāmandāleś-
vara, Mahāmandalādhipati, Māndalika, Sāmanta, Rāṇaka, Rūta,
Thakkura, etc., denoting feudal lords, occur time and again in
literary documents and epigraphic records. The kingdom was
transformed into a conglomeration of feudal estates and the
king was hardly destined to exercise an effective control over
these potentates who wielded their authority almost like an
independent sovereign within their respective jurisdiction. The
royal power was further on the wane in consequence of the king's
dependence, in most cases, on the military service of his vassals.
The Indian king of this period had seldom any standing army,
and on the outbreak of a war or emergency, he used to summon
his subordinate chiefs to come forward with their armed forces
to join hands with him. He was often helpless in the face of an
external aggression or any other serious danger, and even when
he secured timely and adequate assistance from his feudatories,
his army, which was composed of heterogeneous elements, was
incapable of being welded into a composite whole. In the
circumstances he was not emboldened to assume the character
of an unbridled monarch of all he surveyed.

There were also other factors which were likely to check the
arbitrary powers of the king to a considerable extent. Hindu
political writers have popularised the idea that the king was not
above Dharma which comprised deśa-dharma (local customs),
jāti-dharma (caste rules), kula-dharma (family traditions) and
śreni-dharma (guild regulations) but was to act according to its dictates. Moreover, he is urged to act at every step in consonance with the advice of his ministers, preceptors and Brāhmaṇas. Furthermore, public opinion, which found its expression through local non-official councils that effectively supervised and controlled the district, town and village administrations, likewise served as a check on royal power. Even then there were in ancient India, as in all other parts of the world, some tyrants who oppressed the subjects and ruled arbitrarily, although their percentage to good and benevolent rulers cannot be ascertained.

But what could the people do in the event of despotism on the part of their kings? The Śāntiparvan says, ‘That king who disregards righteousness and desires to act with brute force soon falls away from righteousness and loses both righteousness and profit. That king who acts according to the counsels of a vicious and sinful minister becomes a destroyer of righteousness and deserves to be slain by his subjects with all his family.’ With this may be compared Kauṭilya’s statement to the effect that ‘When a people are impoverished, they become greedy, when they are greedy, they become disaffected, when disaffected, they voluntarily go to the side of the enemy or destroy their own master.’ Śukra lays down that ‘the monarch who follows his own will is the cause of miseries, soon gets estranged from his kingdom and alienated from his subjects.’ These and other warnings to kings about the possible consequences of misrule occur quite frequently in ancient Indian literature. Do these extracts prove that a theory of the moral justification of revolt against a bad king was developed in ancient India?

XIII

The Śātavāhana King

When we turn to South India, we find that the Śātavāhana kings, notwithstanding their grand victories and possession of an extensive kingdom, generally called themselves Rājan and sometimes also Svāmin, probably emulating the Saka kings of Western India. Gautamī Balasrī, the mother of Gautamiputra Śatakarnī and grandmother of Vasiṣṭhiputra Pulumāyi, is described in a Nasik inscription as Māhrāja-mātā and Māhā-
rāja-pitāmahī. This shows that the title Mahārāja was also sometimes adopted by the Śatavāhana kings. Some of these kings, including Gautamiputra Śatakarni and his son Vāsiṣṭhiputra Pulumāyi, are known to have borne metronymics along with their personal names. Although various suggestions have been advanced on this issue, it seems that these kings used metronymics in order to distinguish themselves from their predecessors bearing their name as well as from their numerous step-brothers. Succession was usually in the male line. During the minority of the crown prince, either the queen-mother or the brother of the deceased king normally governed the kingdom. It is held that both the Śatavāhana and the Mahāmeghavāhana of Kaliṅga followed the practice of conjoint rule by the ruling chief and his heir, but there is no positive evidence in support of this contention.

The early kings of the Śatavāhana dynasty were staunch followers of the Vedic religion. The Nanaghat inscription refers to the performance of a number of sacrifices by Śatakarni I and to his gifts of cows, elephants and money to the Brāhmaṇas, proving thereby the great hold which the Vedic rituals had on their courts and entourage. The second Nasik cave inscription gives us an insight into the ideal of kingship as visualised by the Śatavāhana monarchs. It states that Gautamiputra Śatakarni ‘properly devised time and place for the pursuit of the Tivaga (i.e., Trivarga), and sympathised fully with the weal and woe of the citizens.’ This is in complete agreement with Kautilya’s recommendation that the king may ‘enjoy in equal degree the three pursuits of life—dharma, artha, and kama—which are interdependent upon one another.’ Another inscription from Nasik reveals how Gautamiputra succeeded in arresting the forces that jeopardised the caste system.

XIV
Kingship in the Kural

Interesting details about the various aspects of the institution of kingship are preserved in the Kural. Unlike most of the early Indian political thinkers, the author Tiruvalluvar does not believe in the divine origin of kingship but points out that the king becomes divine with the impartial administration of justice
and protection of his subjects. The Kural makes the king the most important of the seven elements of sovereignty and considers the rest to be subordinate to him. The importance of the royal office has not been unduly emphasised, because the king was the main pivot of administration and the strength and durability of the government very much depended on his personality. We have spoken of many necessary qualities of the king like diligence, valour, learning, courage, alertness, virtue, righteousness, gracefulness, liberality and impartiality. He is enjoinable to be accessible to all his subjects and never to be harsh of word. He is to develop the resources of his kingdom by the utilisation of natural resources and production, enrich his treasury and properly distribute his wealth. Before any action is taken, the king has to size up the situation by weighing the magnitude of the action, his own strength and the strength of both the enemy and his allies. In assigning duties to different individuals, 'the right man for the right job should be selected and left alone to do his duty and in making the selection there should be no favour or partiality.'

XV

The King in the Pre-Cālukya Period

Pravarasena I, the greatest of the Vākāṭaka king of the Deccan and a part of Central India, assumed the title of Samrāt, while his successors reverted to the simple title of Mahārāja. The reason that led to the change of the title from Samrāt to Mahārāja is not far to seek. If the evidence of the Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa that the performance of Vaijapeya entitles its performer to the title of Samrāt (samrāt-sava) is accepted, it would follow that Pravarasena I was called Samrāt on account of his performance of the Vaijapeya sacrifice, and since none of his successors was credited with it, they, being orthodox Brāhmaṇas, were content with the title of Mahārāja. Pravarasena I was further called Dharma-Mahārāja which was justified by his performance of many sacrifices, including Āsvamedha. The kings of this family were particularly proud of their right of hereditary descent, as is illustrated by the statement that their royalty was obtained in course of succession, appearing in their seals. They, at least on one occasion, followed the practice of dividing
the kingdom among the royal princes, in order to avoid a civil war. This probably happened after the death of Pravarasena I when his kingdom was partitioned among his four sons.

The kings of the Brhatphalayana, Śālaṅkāyana and Viṣṇukuntin dynasties indifferently used the titles Rājā and Mahārājā. The Viṣṇukuntin king Mādhavavarman I performed eleven Aśvamedha sacrifices and flourished at a time when the title of Mahārājādhirāja was popular with the kings of Northern India. Still he was content with the modest title of Mahārājā. Some of the Śālaṅkāyana kings, like the Kadamba rulers of a slightly later period, claimed themselves to be the fifth Lokapāla, the divine protector. In the Hidahadagalli grant, the Pallava king Śivaskandavarman is called Dharma-Mahārājā, while his unnamed father is mentioned therein as Mahārājā bappa-svāmin (i.e., Mahārājā, the father, the lord). The title Dharma-Mahārājā is sometimes taken to mean ‘a Mahārājā who at the time of issue of the record, was engaged in an act of religion or merit’. Fleet understands it to mean ‘a Mahārājā by or in respect of religion’, ‘a pious or righteous Mahārājā’. C.R. Krishnamacharlu supports the view that the successors of the Aśokan Dharma-Mahāmātras assumed the title of Dharma-Mahārājā and Dharma-Mahārājādhirāja after they had asserted their independence, but there is no sufficient evidence in support of this suggestion. The opinion of Fleet may be provisionally accepted at present. It is interesting to note that this title occurs in the Pallava grants only in connection with the names of the ruling kings. The Kadambas derived this title from the early Pallavas, but in their inscriptions this title is applied to both deceased and reigning monarchs. Kanigavarman, the greatest ruler of the house, assumed the title of Dharma-Mahārājādhirāja. Cases of division of kingdom in order to accommodate the claims of the rival groups are few and far between in the history of the Kadamba dynasty, and only one such case is recorded. When Kākutsthavarman died, his kingdom was divided between his two sons, Śāntivarman and Kṛṣṇavarman.

The early kings of the Eastern Gaṅga family of Kaliṅga assumed the title of Mahārājā and very rarely the title of Tri-Kaliṅgādhipati (Lord of Tri-Kaliṅga) was applied to them. The exact meaning of Tri-Kaliṅga is far from certain. Some are of opinion that it signified three divisions of Kaliṅga, while others.
take it to mean the amalgamation of three countries, one of which was Kaliṅga. The statement, ‘Veṅgideśa together with the Tri-Kaliṅga forest’ (Veṅgideśaṁ Tri-Kaliṅg = ὰठανή-γυκταṁ), which is met with in the Eastern Cālukya records possibly helps us to locate the country in the buffer region between the dominions of the later Eastern Cālukyas of Veṅgī and those of the Gaṅgas of Kaliṅganagara.\textsuperscript{133}

XVI

*The King in the Cālukya-Pallava Period*

All the early Cālukya kings of Badami, including Pulakeśin II (c. A.D. 610-42) called themselves Mahārāja. Pulakeśin II was also called Parameśvara. It is stated in the records of his successors that he assumed this title after having defeated the ‘glorious Harṣavardhana, the warlike lord of all the regions of the North’ but this statement appears to be unwarranted. It is not improbable that Pulakeśin II assumed the title of Parameśvara ‘after saving his homeland from enemies and restoring Cālukya sovereignty in the territories of the disaffected neighbours, but . . . an additional significance was later attached to it after his victory over Parameśvara Harṣavardhana’.\textsuperscript{134} From the time of Vikramāditya I, the Cālukyas began to describe themselves as Mahārājādhirāja, Parameśvara and Bhaṭṭāraka (usually not Paramabhaṭṭāraka). An interesting title of these kings was Śrī-Prthivi-vallabha, often contracted into Śrī-Vallabha or Vallabha, which seems to allude to their claim of being incarnations of Viṣṇu. In some early records, the Cālukyas are described as meditating on the feet of Svāmī-Mahāsena, identified with Kāṛttikiyā.

The king was the fountain-head of administration in the Pallava dominions. But until we come to the reign of Sinhaṁvaṣṇu we do not definitely know whether kingship descended from father to son and, if so, whether the rule of primogeniture was in vogue. From the time of Sinhaṁvaṣṇu’s son Mahendra-varman till the reign of Parameśvaravarman II we find that a father was generally succeeded by his eldest son on the throne. It seems that the election of the king by the subjects was not altogether unknown. The Vaikuntha-prerumal temple inscription\textsuperscript{135} shows that when, with the demise of Parameśvara-
varman II, the Pallava kingdom was subjected to anarchy, the important subjects of the kingdom elected a king.\(^{186}\) Mahārājā-dhirāja, Mahārāja, Dharma-Mahārāja and Dharma-Mahārājādhirāja were some of the titles borne by the Pallava monarchs. Some of them were fond of assuming new names at the time of their coronation. Thus Rājasiṁha bore the abhisēkanāma Narasimhavarman II, and Paramēśvara alias Pallava Malla called himself Nandivarman.\(^{187}\) These Pallava kings had further a passion for titles. Mahendravarman I (c. A.D. 600-630), for instance, bore a number of titles like Cetthakāri (temple-builder), Mattavilāsa (addicted to enjoyment), Citrakārappuli (tiger among painters) and Vicitravitta (myriad-minded).

**XVII**

*The Rāṣṭrakūṭa King*

Monarchy was hereditary in the Rāṣṭrakūṭa kingdom and usually the eldest son inherited the throne of his father. But cases of supersession are not altogether unknown in the Rāṣṭrakūṭa history. This happened when Dhruva chose his third son Govinda III to succeed him on the throne on the ground of the latter's superiority to his other brothers. The occurrence of such statements as sāmantair atha Rāṭṭa-rājyam āhīmālam āmbārtham abhyarthitāḥ, 'He was requested by the feudatories to accept the throne for supporting the glory of the Rāṣṭrakūṭa empire', appearing in the Rāṣṭrakūṭa records, may lend colour to the assumption that feudatories had sometimes a determining voice in deciding the question of succession to the throne, but such statements need not be taken too seriously, and even on those occasions when Govinda II was deposed or Amoghavarṣa III was installed king, Dhruva and Amoghavarṣa III owed their position more to their 'own exertions than to the votes of the feudatories'.\(^{188}\) The Rāṣṭrakūṭa history provides us with a few cases of abdication of the throne by the reigning king, as did Dhruva in his old age in favour of Govinda. When the ruling kings were old and of a religious disposition, as were Amoghavarṣa I and Amoghavarṣa II, the heir-apparents wielded all the powers of the ruling chiefs. This explains why there was the overlapping of the reigns of the above kings and their successors.\(^{189}\) During the minority of the king, usually a male
member of the house was appointed to act as regent. When Amoghavarṣa I was a minor, his cousin Karkka was appointed to rule the kingdom.

As it was in all the contemporary kingdoms, the king was the centre and fountain-head of all power in the Rāṣṭrakūṭa realm. He commanded the army, shouldered the administrative responsibility with the help of trusted and competent officers and acted as the supreme authority in legal affairs. Still it will be a mistake to look upon a Rāṣṭrakūṭa king as an autocrat Sultan. The following observations of A.S Altekar\textsuperscript{160} may be quoted in this connection: ‘It may be pointed out that the Hindu monarchy was in theory always limited, but the constitutional checks thought of in our period by the theorists on the subject were of a different nature from those to which we are accustomed in the present age. Spiritual sanctions, effects of careful and proper education, force of public opinion, division of power with a ministry, supremacy of established usage in the realm of law and taxation, devolution of large powers to local bodies whose government was democratic in substance, if not always in form—these were the usual checks on monarchy relied on by the Hindu political writers.’

XVIII

The Western Cālukya King

The kings of the Cālukya dynasty of Kalyāṇī adopted titles like Samasta-bhuvan=āśraya (asylum of all the worlds), Śrī-Prthivī-vallabha (beloved of the goddess of prosperity and earth), Mahārājādhirāja, Parameśvara, Paramabhaṭṭāraka, Saty=āśrayaka- kula-tīlaka (the chief of the line of Satyāśraya) and Cāluky=ābharaṇa-śrīmat (the ornament of the Cālukyas). These kings were fond of the Malla title, and sometimes the same ruler bore a couple of such titles, as was the case with Someśvara I, who was called both Āhamalla (wrestler in war) and Traïlokya-malla (wrestler in the three worlds).

Someśvara I is reputed to have composed a text in Sanskrit called Mānasollāsa which embodies the king’s own views about the responsibilities and privileges of the royal office. Recommending the ātm=āyattva-rājya or absolute rule of the king, the text says that the best ruler is one who relies on himself and
the worst is he who depends on his ministers. It further adds that only that king deserves to be called a Prabhu, master, who is capable of doing things on his own, wields unbridled commands and is blessed with powers of his own. The king is, however, enjoined not to use his high position to act against the interest of the people and the dharma and desa=cāra of the country.

XIX

The King in the Post-Cālukya Period

With the decline and fall of the Cālukya kings of Kalyāṇī, the Hoysalas of Dorasamudra became the leading power in the Mysore region. During the period of their allegiance to the Cālukya paramountcy the Hoysalas were content with the assumption of the feudatory title of Mahāmanḍalesvara. But Vīra Vallāla II bore a number of titles like Samasta-bhuvan=ādṛaya, Śrī-Prthivī-vallabha, Mahārājādhirāja and Paramesvara, no doubt, in imitation of the Western Cālukya kings. The Pāṇḍya kings, during the palmy days of their rule, assumed the titles of Mahārājādhirāja, Paramesvara, etc. A characteristic feature of the later Pāṇḍya kingship was the system of co-regency which attracted the attention of some contemporary foreign travellers.161

It is from about the middle of the twelfth century A.D. that the Kākatīyas of Warangal came to occupy a prominent place in the political firmament of the Deccan. The later kings of this family usually made the heir-apparets their partners in the governance of the kingdom. Gaṇapati appointed his daughter Rudramadevi his co-regent during the closing years of his reign, and Rudramadevi, in her turn, emulated her father by associating her grandson and heir Pratāparudra with herself in the administration of the kingdom. The crown usually descended in the male line from father to son. The kings of the Kākatīya dynasty, particularly Gaṇapati and Pratāparudra, as a perusal of their inscriptions would suggest, enjoyed a high degree of popularity in their life-time. Still the monarch was the source of all power, and it was he who was the pivot about which the entire structure of government moved. An idea about the kingship of the contemporary period may be gleaned from some
treatises on politics like the Nitisāram by Pratāparudra and the Nitiśāstramuktāvalī of Baddena which lay down that a king should be proficient in the Vedas, Dharmaśastras, political science, art and literature, be possessed of wisdom and integrity, be impartial in the discharge of his duty and ever alert to rule the kingdom for the welfare of his subjects. The king should be kind, considerate and fatherly towards the people who should be granted frequent audiences so that he may be apprised of their grievances. The king is further urged to enforce the caste laws among the people and bring the culprits to book.\textsuperscript{162}

As was the case in North India, land yielded the bulk of revenue for the king in South India. Burnell is of opinion that the royal share in the produce of land was not uniform in North and South India. He\textsuperscript{163} says, ‘There is ample evidence to show that Manu’s proposition of one-sixth was never observed, and that the land tax taken not only by the Muhammadan but by the Hindu sovereigns also was fully one-half of the gross produce.’ But an unequivocal reference to the king’s one-sixth share of the produce in the commentary of Parimelazhagar,\textsuperscript{164} coupled with the unambiguous statement of the Mānasollāsa\textsuperscript{165} that the king is entitled to the sixth, eighth, or twelfth part of the yield of grain from land would make us sceptic about the soundness of Burnell’s hypothesis.\textsuperscript{166}

XX

Epilogue

It may be observed in conclusion that ancient Indian thinkers, most of whom, without any shadow of doubt, enjoyed royal patronage, had time and again denounced unfettered autocracy of a king and emphasised that it was his bounden duty to rule the country in accordance with the sacred law, the varṇa=āśrama system, the laws of communities, professions and guilds, to follow, in levying taxation, the customary law and usage of the communities and regions, and to treat the people he ruled as his own offspring.\textsuperscript{167}

References and Notes

1. The Śabdakalpadrumāḥ (Chapter IV, p. 126) takes the term rājan in the sense ‘to shine’ (rajaś sobhate iti), deriving it as rāj kaṇim. The Viṣṇuṣpatyam points out that the term is capable of being derived
from the root *rañj, 'to please', as well. R.C.P. Singh (Kingship in Northern India, 1968, pp. 38-39) derives the word rājan from the root rāj, which, according to him, means 'to rule, to govern, to be king', etc., but this hypothesis in regard to the etymological meaning of the root rāj is incompatible with the canons of Sanskrit grammar. Generally speaking, the term rājan denoted kings but sometimes it was applied to the elders of the state that established the Saṅgha form of government. Kauṭilya (XI, 1, 5) speaks of the Saṅghas of the Licchavis, Vṛjīs, Mallas, Madras, Kukuras, Kurus and Pañcālas as Rāja-śabā=opajīvin, i.e., those whose members bore the title of Rājā (Licchavīka-Vṛjika-Mallaka-Madraka-Kukura-Kuru - Pañcāl = ādayo rāja-śabā=opajīvinah). The Licchavis are said to have claimed 7,707 Rājans, each of whom, to suggest from the testimony of the Lalitavistara, thought 'I am the king, I am the king' (Ek=āiva eva manyate ahaṁ rājā ahaṁ rājā=eti).

2. III.55.7; 56.5; IV.21.2; VI.27.8; VIII.19.32.
3. VIII.37.3.
4. X.128.9.
5. CHI, p. 84.
6. X.124.8.
7. Vedische Studien, II, p. 303. An opposite view has been propounded by Dikshitar (Kuppuswami Sastri Commemoration Volume, p. 119), who opines that in Vedic India the very election of the king was in the hands of the people.
8. The term bali, though used in the Vedas in the sense of a tribute to the king or to a god, is explained by Bhaṭṭasvāmin (JBORS, XI, p. 83) as denoting a local tax of one-tenth or one-twentieth other than the ordinary one-sixth (Balīḥ saṭ-bhāgāḥ=anyo yathā-deśa-prasidhitō daśa-viniśati-bandhāḥ=ādhikāḥ).
10. IV.42.9.
11. It would, however, be wrong to suppose that in the later Vedic period the Samiti lost all its power. A passage in the Atharva Veda (VII.12.1) describes it as one of the twin daughters of Prajāpati, the Creator (Saṭbhā ca māṁ Samitiṣṭe=c=āvatāṁ Prajāpati duhitaraḥ saṁvidāne). That the king was sometimes eager to cultivate amity with the Samiti is further voucheded by another passage (VI.88.3) in the Atharva Veda (Dhruvāya te Samitiḥ kalpatāṁ=īha). This shows that the Samiti had some control over the king, but its importance was, no doubt, diminished.
13. PIA, p. 52.
16. V.1.1.12.
17. XX.127.7.
21. *Professor Birinci Kumar Barua Commemoration Volume*, p. 34.

22. III.501.


24. I.326.


27. XL.1.

28. II.5.11.1.

29. XI.9; XI.10; XI.19.

30. II.5.11.1; II.5.10.14; II.10.25.10; II.10.25.15.

31. XIX.1; XIX.7.

32. R.S. Sharma (*APIAI*, p. 41) draws the attention of scholars to almost a similar idea, expressed by Plato in his *Republic* to the effect that ‘Any meddlesome interchange between the three classes would be most mischievous to the state and would properly be described as the height of villainy.’ (Ibid.)

33. X 27.

34. .42.

35. .10.18.1.

36. .10.18.14.

37. Edited by Bühler, p. 200.

38. .10.18 15.

39. Candragupta is called a *Vṛṣala* in the drama entitled *Muddrākṣasa*. H.C. Seth (*IHQ*, XIII, pp. 64ff) has taken it as a kingly title, being the Sanskritised form of Greek *Basileus*. But the word generally means one belonging to a non-Brahmanical and heretical sect and subsequently it came to signify a Śūdra.

40. In Babylon, however, the title ‘favourite of the gods’ is found as early as the age of Hammurabi (*IC*, 1946, p. 241).

41. Luders’ List, No. 954-6.

42. VI.3.21.

43. *AIU*, p. 63.

44. *AI*, p. 119.

45. The date of the *Arthaśāstra* is a moot question among Indologists. Some scholars assign this work to the early centuries of the Christian era. It is argued on the other hand, on the basis of its references to *Cinabhāmi* and *Cinapaṭṭa* and the bhaśya style of its composition, that the *Kauṭiliya Arthaśāstra* was finally composed by Viṣṇugupta in c. A.D. 600 (*Prācī-Jyoti*, VII, p. 101).


47. III.1.39-40.


49. I.19.6.

50. I.19.9.

52. GBI, pp. 37, 157-8.
54. The real meaning of the term yavuga is far from being certain. D.C. Sircar (SI, p. 110) takes it to be a Turkish word meaning a 'prince'. J.N. Banerjea and Jagannath (CHI, II, p. 230) interpret the term to mean a chief. S.N. Ghosal (Prachi-Jyoti, 1967 (December), pp. 361-2) interprets it as standing for Sanskrit yuvaka to mean a 'young man'.
55. While commenting on the titles, borne by the Kuśāṇa kings, R.S. Sharma (The Quarterly Review of Historical Studies, IV, p. 180) points out that they 'demonstrate some kind of decentralisation which began during this period. The Kuśāṇas called themselves the king of kings and the chief of chiefs, which presupposes that they ruled over lesser kings and lesser chiefs. As a conquering minority, they naturally had to build this type of feudal organisation.'
57. CHI, II, p. 345.
58. B.C. Law Volume, II, pp. 314-5, 318. It is interesting to note that the Suvarṇaprabhāśottamasūtra, a Mahāyānist Buddhist text of the third century A.D., justifies the divine origin of kings on the grounds that, first, before being born as a man, the king was living in the company of the gods, and second, the thirty-three gods had contributed to his substance (Apī vai deva-sambhūto deva-patrah sa ucyate/ Trayas triṁśat hā rājendrār = bāgo datto nṛpasya hi/ putrāvam sarva-devōnāṁ nirmito manuḥ = ēśvarah/). B.C. Law Volume, II, p. 314; The Quarterly Review of Historical Studies, IV, p. 180).
59. Cunningham (B.C. Law Volume, II, p. 307) reads the title Devaputra on a coin of Kuyula Kara Kaphsa, identified with Kadphises II, although Thomas does not accept the reading as correct.
60. APIIAI, p. 177.
61. The custom of enshrining royal images in temples for worshipping them regularly was also followed by the Cola kings as well as by some Hinduised rulers of South-East Asia (Sastri, K.A.N.—The Cholas, II, p. 223).
62. APIIAI, p. 178.
63. IA, XXXII, pp. 427-32.
64. AIU, p. 148.
66. The name of king Mahādeva is known to us from some coins bearing the legend bh(a)gavata Mahādevasa rājārājas. The legend on these coins has generally been interpreted to refer to a king named Mahādeva. S.K. Chakrabortty (A Study of Indian Numismatics, Mymensingh, 1931, pp. 161ff) takes this legend as applicable to god Mahādeva.
67. VII.35.
68. VII.16.
69. VII.129.
70. VII.130.
71. VII.133.
72. VII.4.
74. VII.9.
72. The independent rulers of some kingdoms like the Licchavis, the Maghas, the Bhāraśivas and the Vākāṭakas, on the other hand, still preferred to be called Mahārāja.
75. In the Mankuwar stone inscription, Kumāragupta I is given the subordinate title of Mahārāja instead of the paramount title of Mahārājādhārāja.
67. PHAI, p. 559.
77. The term daivataḥ is interpreted by Amara in the sense of a god (devatā ity=Amaraḥ). V.S. Apte (Sanskrit-English Dictionary, p. 261) thinks that the term may mean (i) a god, deity, divinity, (ii) a number of gods, the whole class of gods and (iii) an idol.
78. Viṣṇu, 1.13-14.
79. VII.19.
80. On above.
81. Administration And Social Life Under Vījayanagara, Madras, 1940, p. 22.
83. Act II.
84. S.A. Sabnis, Kālidāsa, His Style And His Times, 1966, p. 207; Raghuvainā, I.18.
85. The Asirgarh copper seal inscription (CII, III, No. 47) testifies to the fact that the preservation of the Vṛgyaṛṣa-dharma constituted an important duty of the Maukhari kings.
86. Harṣa ascended the throne of Thanesar according to the rule of hereditary descent but was offered the crown of the Maukhari kingdom of Kanauj to which he had no claim. Since there was no competent heir to succeed Grahavarman, the Maukhari ministers offered the crown to the brother of their widowed queen. This instance, therefore, does not show that kingship was normally elective in the Maukhari kingdom but proves that in the event of the absence of a legitimate heir, the ministers, along with other high functionaries, used to elect a suitable successor from among the relations of the deceased king.
87. CA, p. 350.
88. Ibid., p. 118.
89. C.M. Ridding, The Kādambarī Of Bāhu, London, 1896, p. 82.
90. Like Viṣṇu.
91. As is the case with Śiva.
92. RTA, p. 306.
93. EI, IV, p. 248.
94. PIA, p. 34. There is, however, a definite reference to an election in the Rājatarangini which informs us how at the end of the Utpala dynasty in Kashmir in A.D. 939 the assembly of the Brāhmaṇas elected a Brāhmaṇa named Yaśaskara as king. Kalhaṇa (V.454-60) pooh-poohs the election as a foolish procedure.
95. EI, XVIII, p. 95.
96. Chapter 223.
97. Ibid., 226.
98. *PAP*, pp. 55-56.
99. The Kalacuri kings Karpa and his successors described themselves in their own records as *śrī-śāmpama-pād=ānudhṛtyā*, implying thereby that they regarded their dominions as belonging to the saint Vāma-
şāmbhu and themselves as the latter’s deputies, just as the Guhilots of Chitor and the kings of Travancore looked upon themselves as viceroy, respectively, of the gods Ekaliṅga and Padmanābhasvāmin.
100. *EI*, XXX, p. 79.
102. *PIA*, p. 36.
104. Ibid., XI, p. 142.
108. Ibid., p. 1109.
110. Ibid., p. 131.
111. *PIA*, p. 46; *EI*, I, p. 195.
114. Ibid., V, p. 18.
117. Ibid.
120. *EI*, XII, p. 205.
121. 8, 5, 20.
122. VIII, 54-57; 106-08.
123. *PIA*, p. 68.
124. I.143-44.
125. 1.245-48.
127. Ibid., p. 187.
128. Ibid., p. 138.
129. Ibid., p. 139.
130. Somadeva (*Nātivākyāmṛta*, p. 114) points out that the king, who does not pay any heed to the advice of the council of ministers, would cease to be king (*Sa khalu na rājā yo mantrī=otikramya varṣeta*).
131. *Śantiparvan*, XCIII.
132. VII.4.
133. II.7-8.
134. Benoy Kumar Sarkar (*The Śukraniti*, Allahabad, 1914, p. 54) observes, ‘Ancient Hindu statesmen and philosophers placed restraints upon the king not simply by devising rules of morality and
social etiquette to be strictly followed by him as by all other men but
also by prescribing regular courses of instruction and training as well
as by imposing what may be regarded as the positive and direct
checks of a constitutional government."

135. The title Rājan was sometimes borne by subordinate rulers as was
the case with Vāsiśṭhiputra Vilivāyakura of Kolhapur.


137. Khāravela who ruled in Kaliṅga in the second half of the first century
B.C. assumed the title of Mahārāja. He seems to be the first Indian
king to adopt this title.

138. SSAAMI, I, p. 208.

139. EI, VIII, p. 91.

140. EHD, p. 141.

141. EI, VIII, p. 60.

142. EHD, p. 131.

143. 388.

144. 386.

145. 385.

146. 471.

147. TSELT, p. 579.

148. V.1.1.13.

149. EI, VIII, p. 234; IA, V, p. 15.

150. EI, V, p. 163.

151. Ibid., XXIV, p. 140.

152. CA, p. 272.

153. Ibid., p. 215.

154. Ibid., p. 237.

155. SII, IV.

156. ASLUP, p. 38.

157. Ibid., p. 39.

158. RT, p. 151.

159. Ibid., p. 153.

160. Ibid., p. 157.

161. SE. p. 284.

162. EHD, p. 671.

163. South Indian Paleography, p. 112.

164. TSELT, p. 92.

165. II, 3, 163.

166. Of the system of land revenue, as in vogue in the ancient South
Indian kingdoms, Kanakasubbai Pillai (Tamils Eighteen Hundred
Years Ago, p. 112) writes, ‘One-sixth of the produce on land was the
legitimate share of the king, and for water supplied by the state a
water cess was levied from the farmers.’

167. The word praṭâ etymologically means both subjects and children.
APPENDIX I

THE CASTE OF THE KING

Invaluable information in regard to the problem of the caste of kings is supplied to us by the Dharmaśāstra and the epic literature, while epigraphs, no doubt, supplement our knowledge with stray information. In referring to the time-honoured duties of the four castes Manu observes that teaching (adhyāpanam), study (adhyayanam), performance of sacrifices (yajanaṁ), officiating as priests at others’ sacrifices (yājanam), charity (dānam) and acceptance of gifts (pratigrahaṁ = c = aiva) are the duties of the Brāhmaṇas; protection of the people (prajānaṁ rakṣaṇaṁ), gift-making (dānam), performance of sacrifices (iṣyā), study (adhyayanam = eva ca) and abstention from luxury (viṣayasy aprasaktiṁ = ca) are the concerns of the Kṣatriyas; rearing of cattle (paśūnaṁ rakṣaṇaṁ), charitable deeds (dānam), performance of sacrifices (iṣyā), study (adhyayanam = eva), trade and commerce (vaṇik-pathaṁ), money-lending (kusīdaṁ = ca) and agriculture (kṛṣīm = eva) are the duties of the Vaiśyas and an ungrudging service to the upper castes is the sole job of the Śūdras (Ekam = eva tu Śūdrasya prabhū karma sam = adīśat eteśām = eva varṇaṇāṁ śuśrūṣāṁ = anasūyayā/). As is evident from the foregoing enumeration of the respective duties of the four social orders, as envisaged by the Varnāśrama scheme, the duty of protecting the subjects, which is the corner-stone of kingship and denied to the members of the other castes, was the prerogative of the Kṣatriyas.

It is in tune with the Varnāśrama system that we find so much insistence in the Śrauti literature on the Kṣatriyas for being entitled to rulership. ‘The protection of the kingdom in accordance with justice and law’, says Manu, ‘should be undertaken by the Kṣatriya who has been initiated with all the initiatory rites, inculcated in the Vedas (Brāhmaṁ prōptena saṁskāram Kṣatriyaṇa yathā-vidhi sarvasya = āsyā yathā-nyāyaṁ kar-tavyaṁ paritakṣaṇaṁ/). Manu and, following him, Harita and Kāmandaka have used the terms rājā and kṣatriya as synonyms. Manu is not unaware of the existence of the Śūdra kings of his times but he interdicts residence in their dominions (na Śūd-
Gifts from such a king as is not born of the Kṣatriya lineage are banned (Na rājāḥ pratigrhniyād = arājanya-prasūtītah), because a non-Kṣatriya king is equal to ten brothels (Daśa-veśa-samo nrpaḥ) and would adequately compare with a butcher who maintains ten thousand slaughterhouses (Daśa-sūnā-sahasrāṇi yo vāhayati saunikaḥ | tena tulyaḥ śmṛto rājā ghoras = tasya pratigrahaḥ)."

The Mahābhārata prefers the Kṣatriyas to men of the other communities for the royal office, although it does not altogether rule out the possibility of non-Kṣatriya kingship, particularly in times of storm and stress. On being enquired by Yudhiṣṭhira about the legitimacy of a non-Kṣatriya man for being anointed a king, consequent upon his success in protecting the people righteously from the insurrection of robbers (Brāhmaṇo yadi vā Vaishya Śūdro vā rāja-sattama | dasyubhy = utha praṇā raksed = daṇḍam dharmena dhārayaḥ), Bhīma replies that any person, irrespective of the caste he may belong to, who gives evidence of his indispensability in the hour of need, richly deserves the crown (Apāre yo bhavet pāram = apline yah plavo bhavet | Śūdro vā yadi v = ṣpy = anyaḥ sarvathā māṇam = arhati)."

It cannot escape notice that some of the commentators of the Manu-saṁhitā do not agree with their master on the issue of the eligibility of individuals to the royal title, as they could not overlook the undoubted existence of the non-Kṣatriya kings of early and contemporary times. Medhātithi, for instance, points out that the term rājā does not refer exclusively to a Kṣatriya but is used in the sense of any territorial ruler, blessed with consecration (Rājā-śabdas = tu n = eha Kṣatriya-jāti-vacanah kim tarhi abhiṣek = ādi-guṇa-yogini-puruṣaṁ vartate?). Medhātithi’s view about the wider connotation of the term rājā finds favour with Kullūka who points out that the word is seldom used in the sense of the Kṣatriyas alone but signifies such consecrated persons as are in possession of rural and urban units (Rāja-śabd = opi n = ātra kṣatriya-jāti-vacanah kinv = abhiṣikta-janapada-purāṇa-vacanah). It is the profession that determines kingship (yatāḥ vṛttō bhaven = nrpa iti). Viśvarūpa is, likewise, of opinion that the royal title belongs to one who possesses a kingdom, and not to a Kṣatriya alone.

Nilakanṭha Bhaṭṭa accepts the early Smṛti tradition that the expression rājā is applicable to the Kṣatriyas but not to a de
facto king (Rāja-śabdaḥ Kṣatriya-mātre śakto na rājya-yogini). The same view is expressed by Mitramiśra16 (Rāja-śabdaḥ Kṣatriya-jāti-vacanaḥ). Caṇḍeśvara16 holds a contrary view as he points out that the Rājā is he who is the overlord of subjects by virtue of his protection to the latter and consecration (Vastutas=tu prajāpālana-pravrtyty=abhisek=āday=osya kāraṇamā-trām prajā-svāmitve rājatvena prasiddho rājā). Thus Caṇḍeśvara, unlike Nilakaṇṭha Bhaṭṭa and Mitramiśra, calls a de facto king Rājā. Lakṣmīdhara does not raise the problem of the caste of the king at all, ‘but the drift of his treatment is to confine lawful kingship to men of the Kṣatriya caste’.17 The commentator Mādhavācārya,18 who flourished in the fourteenth century A.D., maintains that one is not entitled to kingship by virtue of one’s possession of a kingdom; rājā, in the principal meaning of the term, means the Kṣatriyas. He adds that in those cases where the Brāhmaṇa or Vaiśya crown-holders are called Rājā, the term is employed figuratively, and not in its literal sense (Na rājya-yogād rājatvatam kṣatriyatvam tu tattvataḥ/ Rāja-śabdaḥ kṣatriya-jātau rūḍhaḥ na tu rājya-yogas=tasya pravrtti-nimittani/).

But whatever view the framers of Indian society might have taken, there is no doubt that the Brāhmaṇas, Vaiśyas and Śūdras sometimes founded kingdoms and assumed rulership. A number of such cases are cited below:

Mahāpadma,19 the founder of the Nanda dynasty, was a man of low origin, being born, according to the Purāṇas, of a Śūdra mother, and described in Greek accounts as the son of a Śūdra father. Candragupta Maurya is represented in Brahmanical traditions as base-born, while Buddhist traditions describe him as a Kṣatriya. Puṣyamitra, who founded a new line of rulers by bringing about the downfall of the Mauryas, belonged to the Śuṅga family of the Brāhmaṇa clan of the Bhāradvāja lineage. Vasudeva, who founded a new dynasty after having supplanted the Śuṅgas, was a Kāṇva Brāhmaṇa. The Śātavāhana kings were Brāhmaṇas with a little admixture of Nāga blood. Gautamiputra Śatakarnī of this royal family is called in the Nasik inscription an eka Bāmhaṇa, i.e., the unique Brāhmaṇa. Vindhyāsaṅkī, the founder of the Vākṣṭaka dynasty, was a Brāhmaṇa (dvīja) of the Viṣṇuvṛddha or Bhāradvāja gotra. Mayūraśarman, the progenitor of the
Kadamba dynasty, was an orthodox Brāhmaṇa of the Mānava-gotra. The Pallavas, who are referred to as Kṣatriyas in the Talagunda inscription of the fifth century A.D., had probably in their veins an admixture of the blood of a Brāhmaṇa family of the Bhāradvāja gotra. *Mahārāja Mātriśīnu*, who flourished during the time of the Gupta emperor Budāgupta, is described in the Eran stone pillar inscription of A.D. 484 as a great grandson of a Brāhmaṇa saint named Indraviśīnu. *Mahāsāmanita Pradoṣaśarman* was likewise a scion of an orthodox Brāhmaṇa family. The kings of the Puṣyabhūti dynasty of Thanesar belonged to the Vaiśya caste. The Chinese pilgrim Hiuen Tsang refers to the Brāhmaṇa kings of Ujjayini, Jijhoti and Maheśvarapura, the Vaiśya king of Pāryātra and the Śūdra rulers of Matipura and Sindh. The Pratihāra dynasty was founded by a Brāhmaṇa named Hari-candra. Kallar, who founded the Hindu Śāhi dynasty in the ancient Gandhāra country in the ninth century A.D., was a Brāhmaṇa. Bappa, the founder of the Guhila dynasty of Mewar, is mentioned in the Chitorgarh and Achaḷeswar inscriptions as a Brāhmaṇa. The Cāhamānas were likewise originally Brāhmaṇas, as Sāmanta, an early member of the house of Śākambhari is called in the Bijolia inscription a Brāhmaṇa of the *Vatsa* gotra. Almost all these rulers assumed full regal titles, as befitted independent sovereigns, thus demonstrating their strong disapproval of the view of the orthodox school of social thinkers in favour of the limitation of rulership to members of the Kṣatriya caste. But the case was entirely different with a few kings like Puṣyamitra and Vindhyaśakti who, notwithstanding their independent status, seem to have adhered to the traditional view by refraining from adopting any royal title.

*References and Notes*

1. I.88.
2. The commentator Kullūka interprets *vīṣayēṣu* to mean non-attachment to music, women, dancing and articles of luxury (*gīta-nṛtya-vanit = opabhog = adīśu*).
3. I.89.
4. I.90.
5. I.91.
6. VII.2.
7. II.2. Rājayasthāh kṣatriyaḥ = cāpi prajā-dharmena pālayan.
8. IV.61. In commenting on this passage, Kullūka says, ‘one should not live in a country where the king belongs to the Śūdra caste’ (Yatra dese Śūdro rājā, tatra na vasati). The Viṣṇu Purāṇa (72, 64), likewise, lays down that a Brāhmaṇa should not live in the kingdom of a Śūdra.
9. IV.84.
10. Ibid., 85.
11. Ibid., 86.
12. Śāntiparvan, 76, 36.
13. Ibid., 76, 38.
15. Rājanitiprakāśa, p. 11.
19. The Saccaṁkira Jātaka (I, pp. 324-26) speaks of a Brāhmaṇa having been anointed king. The Padakulamāṇava Jātaka (III, pp. 313-14) tells us how a Brāhmaṇa was placed on the throne by the people. Another Jātaka (PBI, p. 104) refers to a Brāhmaṇa as being installed on the throne that was lying vacant consequent upon the death of a king. A son of a woodgatherer is made a king in the Kattahārit Jātaka (I, pp. 134-36). But all these references are not historical.
22. CA, p. 271.
23. AIK, p. 111.
24. IHQ, XXVIII, p. 83.
The Queen

I

The Queen in the Vedic Period

In the absence of any worthwhile information about her in the Rgveda, it is wellnigh impossible to ascertain the status of the queen in Rgvedic times. The queen, however, finds prominent mention in the later Vedic texts. It seems that in this period the king was usually allowed to have four\(^1\) queens, the Mahiśī,\(^2\) the Parīvrkṣī,\(^3\) the Vāvātā and the Pālāgalī. Sāyaṇa, while commenting on a passage of the Aitareya Brāhmaṇa,\(^4\) observes that the king had three wives, comprising the Mahiśī, the Vāvātā and the Parīvrkṣī. This observation can hardly be taken as authentic, on the ground that it does not take any notice of the Pālāgalī, whose existence as one of the royal consorts is indubitably vouchsafed by several texts. We cannot similarly agree with Sāyaṇa when he says that the Mahiśī, the Vāvātā and the Parīvrkṣī came from the higher, middle and lower castes, respectively (Rājñāṁ hi trividhāḥ striyāḥ tatr = ottama-jāter = Mahiśī = iī nāma madhyama-jāter = Vāvāt = aiti adhama-jāteḥ parīvrkṣīr = iti). A passage of the Satapatha Brāhmaṇa\(^5\) implies that the lady who was married to the king first was called the Mahiśī, chief queen. The Parīvrkṣī was the discarded wife, being relegated to ignominy on account of her barrenness.\(^6\) Whereas, the Vāvātā\(^7\) was the favourite wife, the Pālāgalī was the daughter of the last of the court officials.

The Mahiśī was superior in power and position to the other queens. This is suggested, in the first place, by the fact that while the Mahiśī is assigned the third position in almost all the lists of the Ratnins, the Parīvrkṣī is usually accorded the fourth position and the Vāvātā figures as a Ratnin only in the Tal-
ttirīya Brāhmaṇa. Again, the description of the royal consecration and the Aśvamedha sacrifice, as given in the Satapatha Brāhmaṇa, would indicate a higher status of the Mahiṣī, as compared with the other wives of the king. The Mahiṣī had an active part to play in the Rājasūya sacrifice. As soon as the chariot race was over, the king, along with the Mahiṣī, used to ascend the sacrificial post, saying, 'We have become the children of Prajāpati' (Prajāpateḥ prajā ahūma). Owing to her participation in Rājasūya, the Mahiṣī came to be vested with divinity. The Satapatha Brāhmaṇa tells us that at the time of the Aśvamedha sacrifice the chief queen was attended by one hundred princesses (tasyai śatam rāja-putryāḥ anucaryo bhavanti), the favourite queen was accompanied by a hundred women of royal descent (tasyai śatam rājanyā anucaryo bhavanti), the Pārīṇkti was followed by one hundred daughters of heralds and village headmen (tasyai śatam sūta-grāmāṇyā duhitaro = 'nucaryo bhavanti) and the Pālīgalī was escorted by one hundred daughters of chamberlains and charioteers (tasyai śatam kṣātra-samgrahṛṇāṁ duhitaro = 'nucaryo bhavanti). This clearly shows the respective positions of the different queens.

Referring to the functions of the queens, K.P. Jayaswal observes that the queens had seldom any functions other than religious. In the Vedic period, women had to perform sacrifices jointly with their husbands. The Aitareya Brāhmaṇa declares that spiritually, a man cannot be considered complete unless he is accompanied by his wife (tasmād puruṣo jāyāṁ vittvā krīṣnataram = iv = ātmānam manyate). The Satapatha Brāhmaṇa echoes the same feeling when it forbids a bachelor to offer oblations (a-yajñīyo v = aīṣa yo = 'patnikhā). The queen then as a life-long partner of her husband co-operated with the latter in religious rites and ceremonies. The presence of the queen was obligatory even at the time of the Aśvamedha sacrifice. When the horse would return from its journey, queens washed the horse and decorated its body. The horse was next killed and laid on a blanket. The chief queen would lie by its side and the priest would cover both the queen and the horse with a piece of cloth. While lying thus the queen used to catch the genital organ of the animal and get united with it at the time the priest uttered the verse, 'O horse, ejaculate your semen' (Aśvasya sīśnāṁ mahiṣī upasthe nidhatte vṛṣa 'vājī retodhā reto dadhātu iti').
When the chief queen performed her rites, different priests indulged in conversing in abusive dialogue with different female characters; the Brahman conversed with the chief queen, the Adhvarju with the attendants of the Mahishi, the Udgat with the Vavatra, the Hotr with the Parivrtti and the Ksatr with the Palagali.\textsuperscript{17}

But it would not be correct to hold that the activities of the queens did not transcend the limits of the religious arena. Jogiraj Basu\textsuperscript{18} observes that the queens, particularly the favourite one, ‘enjoyed an important position as a go-between between the king and his officers or the king and the people’. But in Vedic literature there is hardly any evidence which is in agreement with this contention. Further, it is quite unlikely that the people, particularly the commoners, had developed such intimate relations with the queens as to influence them to persuade the king to redress the grievances of the aggrieved. As Ratin of the kingdom, the queens were undoubtedly entrusted with some administrative functions, the details of which are, unfortunately, not known.

II

The Queen in Buddhist and Classical Accounts

The Buddhist sources preserve interesting accounts about queens of the post-Vedic period, although the authenticity of some of these accounts may justifiably be called in question. That polygamy was in vogue in the vast majority of the royal houses during this period is unmistakably revealed by the Jataka texts which tell us how kings’ harems were always overcrowded with glamorous girls. The Culasatasoma Jataka\textsuperscript{20} speaks of a king who had 700 wives, while another\textsuperscript{21} refers to another claiming as many as 84,000 queens. The figures, as mentioned in these texts, are, however, conventional and not actual. It is of interest to note that kings like Bimbisara, Prasenajit, Udayana and Ajatasatru were all polygamists. The chief queen is called Aggamahe\textsuperscript{22} who ‘commanded a respectable status both in and out of the palace, being presumably the mother of the heir-apparent’.\textsuperscript{23} The post of the chief queen does not seem to have been permanently reserved for one and the same lady only; the final say in the selection for such a post rested with the king.
The Jātakas record numerous cases of infidelity of queens. We are told in a Jātaka text how a wicked queen was granted pardon by her husband at the instance of the chaplain; the queen Kinnara is reported in another text to have been discarded by her lord due to her misconduct and the examples of queens, misbehaving themselves—Kañhā, Kākāti and Karungavi—may be met with in the Kuṇāla Jātaka. But the Jātaka narratives, which vouchsafe the low standard of queenly morality, have to be carefully scrutinised, as they are primarily intended to caution the Bhikṣus against the danger of falling from the ideal of celibacy. One of the Jātakas refers to a queen of Kāśī who was entreated by the subjects to assume the reins of administration consequent upon the renunciation by her husband of the world.

The writings of the Classical authors appear to preserve some genuine traditions about queens. While referring to the Pāṇḍya kingdom, Megasthenes says, ‘Next come the Pandae, the only race in India ruled by women. They say that Hercules having but one daughter, who was on that account all the more beloved, endowed her with a noble kingdom. Her descendants rule over 300 cities and command an army of 150,000 foot and 500 elephants.’ It appears from Megasthenes’ accounts that during his time, the Pāṇḍya country was governed by a queen who exercised her authority over 300 villages and had at her command a powerful army. The use of the term women in plural by the Greek ambassador would further bring out the fact that the rule of the queens was quite commonplace in the history of this country.

The Classical authors tell us about Kleophis, the queen of the Assakenoi in the Punjab. When the king of the Assakenoi laid down his life in the course of his fight with Alexander the Great, Kleophis assumed the charge of the fortress of Massaga and offered a gallant resistance until she was overpowered and captured by the Macedonian army. Q. Curtius says that after the conclusion of the war she was reinstated in her own kingdom as a reward for her bravery, and she afterwards gave birth to a son, named Alexander. The queens of the Assakenoi, as is suggested by the example of Kleophis, were not mere consorts of their husbands, but, faced with an adverse situation,
they could rise to the occasion with display of administrative and martial skill.

III

The Maurya Queen

From Pillar Edict VII\textsuperscript{30} we learn that the Maurya queens were called *Deviś*. It says, *ete ca aṁhe ca bahukā mukhā dāna-visagasi vīyāpoṭā, se mama c=eva devinam ca*. R.G. Basak\textsuperscript{31} translates the passage thus, ‘These and many other mukhyas (chiefs or heads of departments) are engaged in the distribution of charities and this too on my own behalf and that of my queens.’ It is evident that Aśoka’s queens were not only designated as *Deviś* but they also had their private funds to make charities on their own account. In Pillar Edict VII\textsuperscript{32} we also read the following passage, *dālakānāṁ pi ca me kaṭe aṁnānam ca devi-kumālānāṁ*, which R.G. Basak\textsuperscript{33} renders into English as: ‘I have also ordered this to be done with regard to my sons, and other princes born of the queens.’ The interpretation of the expression *devi-kumālānāṁ* is, it must be admitted, baffling. Now, it is almost certain that *dālakānāṁ*\textsuperscript{34} refers to the sons of Aśoka himself, and the expression *devi-kumālānāṁ*, accordingly, cannot be taken as denoting the sons of Aśoka’s queens. Bühler rightly points out that the *devi-kumāḷās* were not the sons of Aśoka’s queens but were those born of the queens of his father. It may accordingly be concluded that during the period of the Maurya rule, the wives of both the reigning and deceased kings were called *Deviś*.

The Maurya emperors were polygamists.\textsuperscript{35} A study of the *Mahāvaṁśa*,\textsuperscript{36} *Divyāvadāna*\textsuperscript{37} and other texts\textsuperscript{38} shows that Aśoka had the following queens:

1. *Deviś*. She was married to Aśoka at Vidiśā, identified with Besnagar, and gave birth to Mahendra and Saṅghamitra. The *Samanta Pāsadikā*\textsuperscript{39} represents her as a Vaiśya, while she is described as *Vedisa-mahādevī* and *Śākyāni* (i.e., *Śākyā-Kumāri*) in the *Mahābodhivamsa*.\textsuperscript{40}

2. Āsandhimitrā. The *Mahāvaṁśa* represents her as Aśoka’s chief queen (*piṇā aggamahisī*) who died in the twenty-sixth year of Aśoka’s consecration.
3. Padmāvatī. She is mentioned in the Divyāvadāna as the mother of Dharmavivardhana who became famous as Kuṇāla in later years.

4. Tiṣyaraksitā. The Divyāvadāna states that she was raised to the position of Aśoka’s chief consort four years later than the death of Āsandhimitrā. If legends have any credence, she plucked out the eyes of prince Kuṇāla out of jealousy and was burnt to death as a punishment for this crime.

To the above list of queens may be added the name of Kāruvākī who is mentioned in one of Aśoka’s edicts as the second queen (dutiyāye deviye).

It is difficult to evaluate the veracity of the above details of Aśoka’s queens, as derived from several Buddhist texts, but if they be accepted as trustworthy, then the following facts emerge:

First, the senior wife of the king could not necessarily be anointed as the chief queen. Āsandhimitrā became the chief consort, though Aśoka married Devī first.

Second, the chief queen was called Aggamahisī. Here we probably notice a discrepancy in the accounts between the epigraphic and literary evidence, for inscriptions imply that the chief queen was called Prathama-devī, as may be guessed from the expression dutiyāye deviye, applied to Kāruvākī.

Third, the post of the chief queen did not remain vacant for long. With the death of the occupant, another queen stepped into the post in no time.

Fourth, it seems that there were several family establishments for individual wives at different places. The Pāli texts tell us that Devī did not accompany the emperor to Pāṭaliputra but continued to stay at Vidiśā. The testimony of the Pāli texts regarding the separate establishment of different queens at different places appears to be corroborated by inscriptional evidence. The Queen’s Edict suggests that Kāruvākī had her residence at Kauśāmbī. That many of Aśoka’s queens did not live with him at Pāṭaliputra but resided at other places is conclusively proved by the following statement in P.E. VII, ‘In all my harems, they become acquainted in many ways with all the (proper) objects where satisfaction is to be arranged, here (in the capital) and in the (different) quarters (of the country).”
The information about the Maurya queens, supplied to us by the edicts of Aśoka and Buddhist legends, is, however, by no means complete, and for fuller details we may turn to the Arthasastra. Kauṭilya includes the queen mother and the chief queen in the list of the highest paid state officials who received 48,000 paṇas as their emolument. Kauṭilya warns the king not to confide in his queen greatly and advises him to visit her only ‘after she is cleared (of suspicion) by old women’. He cites a few cases of treachery on the part of queens. The Kāśi monarch was killed by his queen who served him poisonous fried grain under the guise of honey; the king Vairantya was killed by his queen by means of an anklet smeared with poison; Viduratha was murdered by his queen who kept a weapon concealed in the braid of her hair. Kauṭilya lays down that the king should keep the queens under strict vigil. He says, ‘He should forbid (the queen’s) contact with ascetics with shaven heads or matted hair and with jugglers as well as with female slaves from outside. No members of their families should visit these queens except in establishments for maternity and sickness.’ In the circumstances, the queen, as envisaged by Kauṭilya, hardly enjoyed any scope to participate in public life and administration. Even we are not sure whether the Maurya queens had any direct control over the ladies of the royal household; for, inscriptions speak of the Stryadhyakaśa Mahāmātras who were, in all probability, appointed to look after matters concerning the ladies of the palace.

Vasiṣṭha, who is generally believed to have flourished in an earlier epoch, points out that the queen mother should receive maintenance, and the other queens of the deceased king should be provided with food and raiment but they are at liberty to go elsewhere, according to their desire. An incidental reference to a queen, who being concealed from the public gaze, attended a sitting of the royal court, is to be met with in the Jaina Kalpasūtra, which was, in all probability, composed during the early days of Maurya rule. Here we read that when the king Siddhārtha summoned his ministers and courtiers for the interpretation of the queen’s dream, he took his seat on the throne in the hall of audience, whereas, the queen was seated behind a curtain. It is extremely difficult to deduce any conclusion on the evidence of this story the authenticity of which is not beyond dispute.
That the queens wielded enormous influence in the Indo-Greek principalities in the north-western part of India is evidenced by coins. Numismatic evidence implies that Menander considered himself to be the husband of the goddess Athena whose figure appears on some of his coins. But the goddess is represented in the form of his queen Agathocleia. This shows the great esteem in which Agathocleia was held by her husband. But it was after the death of her husband that she seized the opportunity to demonstrate her skill as an administrator. The so-called joint-issues of Agathocleia and her son Strato I, which bear the portrait of Agathocleia alone, show that they were issued at a time when Agathocleia assumed the reins of administration as regent for her minor son, consequent upon the death of her husband Menander. She assumed the title of 'god-like' on coins. The period of her regency proved to be of long duration, as may be inferred from her second series of coins which shows jugate busts of herself and Strato I.

The case of Laodice, who was the mother of Eu克拉ides, also deserves to be considered. Eu克拉ides struck a series of coins on which figure his parents Heliocles and Laodice. Laodice, to judge from her name, was a Seleucid princess, and if the theory of Tarn is accepted, she was a daughter of Seleucus II and sister of Antiochus III. It is of interest to note that on coins Laodice wears the diadem, while her husband is found bare-headed. The use of the diadem, the symbol of royal power, by Laodice may be regarded as a proof of her being the real mistress of the satrapy with which her husband was associated either as a general or a governor.

Attention may further be drawn to some silver pieces on which Hermaeus and Calliope appear side by side, both wearing the diadem. This shows that Calliope, who was related to Hippostratus of the Euthydemid family, as is upheld by Tarn, was a queen in her own right, and it seems quite likely that, although corroborative evidence is not forthcoming, she shouldered the administrative responsibilities jointly with her husband who was the last descendant of Eu克拉ides.
Our knowledge of the queens in the Scytho-Parthian and Kuśāṇa kingdoms is extremely meagre. When the Parthian king Mithridates I died in B.C. 138-7, his queen Ri...mu acted as regent for his young son Phraates II. But our sources do not disclose the existence of a Ri...mu in any Parthian kingdom in India proper. The Mathura lion capital inscriptions speak of Ayasi Kamua as the chief queen of the Mahākṣatrapa Rajula and daughter of the Yuvarāja Kharaosta. It was this Buddhist queen at whose behest some religious endowments (dharma-dāna) were made in a cave monastery (guhā-vihāra), as the records tell us. Some scholars are inclined to read the name of the queen as Nada Di(or Si)aka, taking her to be the mother of the Yuvarāja Kharaosta. According to this view, Arta, the father of Kharaosta, was the first husband of Rajula’s chief queen who married Rajula consequent upon Arta’s death. If this view be accepted, it would follow that remarriage of widow-queens was not entirely unknown in Scytho-Parthian ruling houses.

V

The Queen in Epics and Other Early Texts

The evidence of the Rāmāyaṇa and the Mahābhārata may be utilised as reflecting the condition of India for the period between the fourth century B.C. and the fourth century A.D., which witnessed the final composition of the epics, as well as for some earlier centuries. There are a few passages in the epics which show that at the time of emergency, women were allowed to ascend the throne. The Ayodhya-kāṇḍa of the Rāmāyaṇa states that there was a proposal to place Sītā on the throne when Rāma was banished to the forest (Ātmā hi dārā sarvesāṁ dāra-saṁgrahavartināṁ ātm-eyam = iti Rāmasya pālay-iṣyati medinīṁ//). But generally speaking, the Rāmāyaṇa would leave the impression that the royal ladies did not ordinarily move out of the precincts of the palace, and occasions were few and far between when they came under public gaze. When Sītā, along with her husband, set out for the forest through the public thoroughfares of Oudh, the people lamented that the lady, yet to be seen by the spirits of the sky, would be seen by the people walking on the road. There are also other indications
in the *Rāmāyaṇa* to show that women of a higher stratum avoided public eyes. Thus, after Rāvaṇa’s defeat, when Sītā was brought before Rāma, Vibhīṣaṇa tried to drive away the common soldiers, crowding the place but Rāma forbade him to do so, saying,69 ‘The public appearance of a woman does not spoil her in misery, in extraordinary circumstances, in war, in *svayamāra* and in marriage.’ Similarly, when, after the great battle at Kurukṣetra, the Kaurava queens appear on the battlefield, lamenting for their deceased husbands, a regret is expressed to the effect that ‘Those queens, whom even the gods could not see formerly, are now seen by common people, after the death of their husbands.’60

In regard to the prevalence of the *purdah* system in those days, it may be observed that no evidence is forthcoming from the *Rāmāyaṇa* about the prevalence of the system among the Ikṣvāku princesses. S.N. Vyas61 has shown on the basis of a statement62 of Manḍodarī, the wife of Rāvaṇa, that the observance of *purdah* or *avagunṭhana* was in vogue among the Rākṣasas. D.P. Vora63 points out that a sort of *purdah* must have been adopted by the royal ladies, while facing the general public, excluding, of course, high officials and ministers.

The *Śānti-parvan*64 of the *Mahābhārata* implies that in the event of the absence of any male heir, women were offered the throne (*Kumārī n=āsti yeṣāṁ kanyās=tatr=ābhiṣecaya*). It is to be remembered in this connection that the *Mahābhārata* in a different context decries the rule of women as the harbinger of misery65 (*Yatra strī yatāvā vālo yatr=ānuśāsitā| majjanti te=’vaśā rājan=nadyām=aplavā iva//*).

The epics envisage that the kings were reverential to their consorts. The king is enjoined to take care of his queen as his mother and respect her as his elder sister66 (*Iyam ca naḥ priyā bhāryā prānebhyo=’pi garīyasī| māt=eva paripālyā ca pūjyā jyeṣṭh=eva ca svasā//*). Still, the well known example of Yudhiṣṭhira staking Draupadi in the gambling hall may suggest that the husband was considered to have had a proprietary right in the wife. In the epics, there are also passages where some of the queens are treated with scorn. The *Rāmāyaṇa*67 brings to light in no uncertain manner the meanness of Kaikeyi’s nature and tells us how her mother was banished for preferring widowhood to the satisfaction of her curiosity. The
curse of Yudhiṣṭhira⁶⁸ to the women of the world for the folly of his mother is well known. The diversified opinion of the compilers of the epics towards the queens probably indicates the absence of a universally accepted status of women.

The Mahābhārata shows the prevalence of the custom of levirate in the royal harem. When the kings were physically incapable, the queens were urged by their husbands or relatives to procreate offspring with the help of other persons, according to the niyoga system. Dhṛtarāṣṭra and Pāṇḍu were born to Vicitravīrya as a result of such a union of his queens Ambikā and Ambālikā with Kṛṣṇa Dvaipāyana Veda Vyāsa. Mādrī gave birth to her sons through the grace of the twin Aśvinas. It, however, cannot be definitely said whether the niyoga marriage was current among any of the royal families in India during the period between the fourth century B.C. and the fourth century A.D.

The Mahābhārata refers to the self-immolation of Mādrī; it, likewise, speaks of four wives of Kṛṣṇa as burning themselves with their royal husband. There is, however, no definite indication in favour of the wide prevalence of Suttee in the royal houses with which the custom might have originated.

While referring to the qualifications of the queen, Manu⁶⁹ points out that she should be of equal caste (varṇa), be born in a great family, and be possessed of auspicious marks on her body, charms and many other excellent qualities. Manu scorns the idea of the queen being consulted by the king in matters of government, as would be clear from his following observations:⁷⁰ ‘At the time of consultation, let him cause to be removed idiots, the dumb, the blind and the deaf, animals, very aged men, women, the sick and those deficient in limbs. (Such) despicable (persons), likewise animals and particularly women betray secret counsel, for that reason he must be careful with respect to them.’ Although queens are denied participation in governmental matters as consorts of kings, they must have enjoyed an honoured position in the palace, being the custodians of household ceremonies and upbringers of the family⁷¹ (Yatra nāryas= tu pūjyante ramante tatra devatāḥ/ yatṛ=aitās= tu na pūjyante sarvās=tatr=āphalāḥ kriyāḥ!). Manu recommends women to inherit some kinds of property. If this right of inheritance, as suggested by Manu, applies to all
classes of women, then it may be held that queens had their own property which comprised the gifts offered by parents and brothers at any time, gifts of affection bestowed by husbands after marriage, and presents given by anybody either at the time of marriage or at the time they are taken to their new home. It may be mentioned that the above six varieties of strī-dhana are supplemented by Viṣṇu with the addition of three more categories, including the gifts given by the son or any other relative and the compensation paid to the wife at the time of her supersession on the occasion of her husband's second marriage.

But when we compare the evidence of the epics with that of the Arthaśāstra and the Manu-saṁhitā on the position of queens, we hardly meet with any appreciable discrepancy in them. Both Kauṭilya and Manu are unanimous in decrying the idea of investing queens with the right to assist kings in administrative matters; the movements and activities of queens, according to them, are strictly restricted within the bounds of the palace. Whereas, in some passages of the epics we, no doubt, find a more liberal attitude being adopted towards queens and women, as compared to the Arthaśāstra and the Manu-saṁhitā, views like t'o se of Kauṭilya and Manu and even more drastic ones are also reflected both in the Rāmāyaṇa and the Mahābhārata. It is interesting to note in this connection that Pāṇini, whose date is variously estimated between the seventh and fourth centuries B.C., in the Kṛd=anta-kṛtya-prakaraṇam section of his Aṣṭādhyāyī, has used the expression a-Sūrya-laḷā-ṭayor=ḍṛṣṭapoh. The commentators, including Patañjali and Bhaṭṭojī Dīkṣita, have interpreted it in the sense of queens (Sūryāṁ na paśyant=īty=asūryampaśyā rājadārāḥ). It may accordingly be safely presumed that the eminent grammarian knew of the royal ladies 'who lived in the seclusion of the palace where they could not see even the sun'.

VI

The Queen in the Gupta Age

We now come to the Gupta age. Dikshitar is of opinion that the Gupta queens were generally called Devīs and he cites, in support of his contention, the cases of Kumāradevī
and Dattadevi. But it may be argued that Kumāradevi and Dattadevi were the personal names of the chief queens of Candragupta I and Samudragupta, respectively, and that the official charters of the Gupta kings describe both of them as Mahādevīs.77 Dikshitar78 further opines that queens in the Gupta period held in administration an equally important status with their husbands, but this suggestion, likewise, cannot be definitely proved. It is true that the name and effigy of Kumāradevi appear on the so-called Candragupta I-Kumāradevi coins along with those of her husband, and this may indicate that Kumāradevi held a high position in the kingdom, but there is hardly any ground in support of the contention that queens of other kings rose to the same pinnacle of glory as did the Licchavi princess.

But how would we explain the presence of the name and the portrait of Kumāradevi on the Candragupta I-Kumāradevi coins? An answer to this question is not possible unless the issue of their authorship is resolved first. If it is conceded that they were issued by Samudragupta to commemorate the marriage of his parents, the presence of the queen’s portrait on coins then would not indicate any political or administrative significance. If, on the contrary, we assume that they were the joint issues of Candragupta I and Kumāradevi, then the conclusion becomes inevitable that ‘Kumāradevi was a queen by her own right, and the proud Licchavis, to whose stock she belonged, must have been anxious to retain their individuality in the new Imperial state’.79 But the absence of any reference to Samudragupta’s name on these coins proves that they were not commemorative medals but were issued by Candragupta I, and when it is remembered that the latter owed his rise to the imperial position to his marriage with the Licchavis, the appearance of Kumāradevi’s figure on his coins may be explained by suggesting that ‘the coins...bearing the joint names and portraits of Candragupta I and Kumāradevi were really issued when these two were ruling the Gupta empire’.80

Besides Kumāradevi, two other Gupta queens, viz., Dattadevi and Anantadevi, are found represented on coins. The Aśvamedha coins of Samudragupta show on the reverse ‘the crowned queen, standing on a circular pearl bordered mat, with chouri in r. hand and towel in l. hand’.81 The similar
coins of Kumāragupta I depict on the reverse his crowned queen, Anantadevi. But the chief queens of Samudragupta and Kumāragupta I appear on these two series of coins not because of any political reasons but for the fact that they, as wives, as laid down by the sacred literature, played an important role in the rituals of the horse-sacrifice, performed by their husbands.

Were the Gupta kings polygamists? The question has to be answered probably in the affirmative. That Samudragupta had his chief queen in Dattadevi is well known. The Allahabad inscription states that Samudragupta was presented maidens (*kanyā=opāyaṇa-dāna) by some foreign potentates. These maidens were either married to the Gupta ruler or stayed in the Gupta palace as opera girls. If the first suggestion is accepted, it would follow that Samudragupta had a plurality of queens. It is certain that Candragupta II had no fewer than two queens, Dhruvedevi or Dhruvsvāmini and Kuberaṇāga. The existence of the former is disclosed by the Devicandraguptam as well as by inscriptions, while the Poona plates of Prabhāvatigupta refer to Kuberaṇāga. The chief queen of Kumāragupta I was Anantadevi who gave birth to Purugupta. The mother of Skandagupta appears to have been different from Anantadevi and was probably named Devakī, as first suggested by Sewel and subsequently endorsed by H.C. Raychaudhuri. Kumāragupta I had evidently at least two wives. On the basis of the above evidence, it may be concluded that the Gupta kings were normally polygamists.

Turning to contemporary literature, we find that the great poet Kālidāsa refers to the prevalence of the custom of polygamy in royal families (*Bahu-vallabha rājānaḥ śrūyaṇte). Śakuntalā is advised by Kanva to be courteous to her co-wives (*Kuru priya-sakhi-vṛttiṁ sapatiṇijane). The husband is represented in Kālidāsa’s works as the absolute master of his wife’s destiny. This is indicated by the exile of Śītā by Rāma as well as by the statement of Sāradvata that authority over wives is admitted to be unlimited (*Upapannā hi dāreṣu prabhūtā sarvato-mukhi). There is a reference to a queen’s accession to the throne in Canto XIX of the *Raghuvarṇa.*
VII

The Queen in the Post-Gupta Period

We know very little about the queens of the Maitraka kings who succeeded the Imperial Guptas in parts of Western India. Princess (rāja-duhiṭr) Bhūpā or Bhūvā acted as the dūtaka for both the Alina and Kaira plates of Dharasena IV. It is clear from her role in these records that she ‘accompanied the king in his tour or march of war and was entrusted with considerable responsibilities’. When a daughter of a Maitraka king played a significant role in the kingdom, it is not unlikely that their queens were also granted similar, if not greater, prerogatives.

There is an inscriptive evidence in favor of the assumption that some of the queens of contemporary Nepal were more powerful than those in other North Indian kingdoms. One of the Nepal inscriptions tells us that queen Rājayavatī, the widow of Dharmadeva, on the death of her husband, directed her son Mānadeva to reign so that she would follow her deceased husband. The inscription, in question, then recognises the right of the widow of a deceased king to decide the issue of succession to the throne.

The Harṣacarita seems to imply that at the time of coronation, both the king and the chief queen were consecrated. When Yaśomatī was consecrated, ‘wives of hundreds of Prabhākara- vardhana’s feudatories poured on her water from gold pitchers and her forehead was adorned with a tiara indicative of her august position’. But the Harṣacarita does not portray queens as playing any important part in administration. In this connection we may note the following statement by Patralatā on behalf of Rājyaśri, ‘A husband or a son is a woman’s true support; but to those who are deprived of both, it is immodesty even to continue to live.’ The statement appears to contain a veiled allusion to the custom of Suttee in the days of Bāṇa who refers in unambiguous terms to Yaśomatī as ascending the funeral pyre of her husband. The earliest epigraphical reference to the self-immolation of widows is to be found in the Eran inscription of Bhānugupta dated A.D. 510, which tells us how Goparājā’s wife became a Suttee at the death of her husband in the battle of Eran. In the accounts of Bāṇa, there is no evidence which would show that queens of his times actively
participated in administration. Bāṇa speaks of Rājyaśrī as an intelligent and accomplished lady, but whether she had any role to play in the government is nowhere mentioned in the Harṣa-carita. The Chinese text Fang-chih²⁵ states that Rājyaśrī administered the government in conjunction with her brother Harṣavardhana. It must be admitted that there is no evidence to corroborate the Chinese account in regard to Rājyaśrī’s role in Harṣavardhana’s administration.

The writings of Hiuen Tsang⁹³ prove the existence of a couple of Strī-rājyas in the seventh century A.D. One of them was called ‘the Eastern Women’s Country’, being located in the present Kumaon-Garhwal region in the Himalayas. The other Strī-rājya, known as ‘the Western Women’s Country’, was situated in the present Baluchistan region. Unfortunately, Hiuen Tsang does not give us any precise information about the administrative and political activities of the queens of the above two Strī-rājyas.

Some of the Later Gupta queens are described as Mahādevī, Paramabhaṭṭārikā and Rājñī in contemporary epigraphs like the Mandar hill⁹⁴ and the Deo-Baranark⁹⁵ inscriptions of Ādityasena and Jīvita-gupta II, respectively, although we are hardly provided with any information concerning the rights and responsibilities that they may have enjoyed.

VIII

The Queen in the Pāla and Pratihāra Kingdoms

We possess meagre information about the queens in the Pāla kingdom. It is worth noting that queens are not mentioned in the long list of officers, appearing in the official charters of the Pāla kings from the time of Dharmapāla onwards. This may reasonably imply that the queens of the Pāla kings did not occupy an important position.⁹⁶ But the condition of the Pratihāra queens may be said to have been somewhat better, as may be suggested by the fact that the seals of the Imperial Pratihāras invariably mention the Mahādevīs of whom they were born. Śilabhaṭṭārikā, many of whose verses are found quoted in the anthologies, was probably a queen of king Bhoja I.
IX

The Queen in Other Contemporary and Later Kingdoms

But more enviable was the status of the Cāhamāna queens. Śomaladevi, the queen of Ajayarāja, is known to have issued coins in her own name. Her silver coins,⁹⁷ which are very rare, bear the crude representation of the king’s head on the obverse, and the legend Śrī-Somaladevi in Nāgarī on the reverse. Her copper coins, which are more numerous than the silver pieces, contain the figure of a Chauhan horseman on their obverse and the legend, giving her own name, on the reverse. Someśvara’s queen Karpūrādevi⁹⁸ assumed the reins of government during the minority of her grandson Prthvīrāja III. Of the queens of this dynasty, performing benevolent acts, mention may be made of the wife of king Candana,⁹⁹ who is known to have laid the foundation of some religious buildings at Puṣkara. Epigraphs suggest that the queens in the Cāhamāna kingdom were sometimes granted assignments of land as pin-money. Thus, an inscription,¹⁰⁰ dated A.D. 1143, describes queen Tihunaka as being in enjoyment of a village as her girāsa (e.g., grāsa), while another record¹⁰¹ of A.D. 1179 refers to the bhukti of queen Jālhanadevi. P.B. Udgaonkar¹⁰² is of opinion that sometimes taxes were assigned to the queens as part of their income, probably in addition to the Grāsa-bhūmi lands, but others may not agree with this view.

The queens of the Gāhaḍavāla kings¹⁰³ were generally designated as Rājīti and Mahiṣī, while the chief among them were called Agramahiṣī, Paṭṭamahiṣī, Paṭṭamahādevī and Mahārājī. The Hatiyadah pillar inscription¹⁰⁴ of V.S. 1207 mentions one Bellana who was the Bhāṇḍāgarīka of queen Gosalladevi. It is evident from the above record that some of the Gāhaḍavāla queens had their own personal bhāṇḍa-āgāra or treasury which, as has already been observed, consisted of the different categories of strī-dhana. P.B. Udgaonkar¹⁰⁵ has shown that the Gāhaḍavāla queens were often granted land allotments, known as Rājakīyu-bhoga, for their personal expenditure but it is not possible to say definitely whether they enjoyed full proprietary rights over these lands. The Gāhaḍavāla queens are mentioned in the copper-plate grants as making land grants. Queen Prthvīśrīkā donated the village of Bahuvarā
to the *Purohita* Devavarman and other Brāhmaṇas with the consent of the emperor Madanapāla;¹⁰⁶ the Kamauli copper-plate inscription¹⁰⁷ speaks of Nayanakelidevī, the queen of Govindacandra, as supplicating for the king’s permission while granting a village to the *Mahāpurohita* Jāguśarman; and Gosalladevī, another queen of Govindacandra, as known from the Bangavan copper-plate inscription,¹⁰⁸ secured her husband’s approval while granting the village of Ghātiyārā to a donee, named Kulhe. All this evidence would clearly indicate that the Gāhaḍavāla queens were hardly empowered to grant land in their own right; whenever a queen desired to make a grant, she had to obtain the prior approval of the ruling monarch.¹⁰⁹ Kumāradevī, the Buddhist queen of Govindacandra, is reputed in her Sarnath inscription¹¹⁰ to have repaired the Dharmacakra-Jina, originally set up by Dharmāśoka, and placed it in a newly-built *vihāra* at Sarnath.

It is not definitely known whether the Gāhaḍavāla queens had ever played any important part in administration. In two of the records¹¹¹ of Madanapāla, the crown-prince Govindacandra is stated to have taken the consent of a few persons, including the ministers, the *Purohita* and the queen mother Rālhaṇadevī at the time of the land grant (*Eteṣām sammatim prāpya samyag=likhitavān=idam/ nāmnā Vijayadās=ākhyāk śāsanāṁ rāja-śāsanam||); but it is difficult to say whether the permission of the queen was a mere formality or it was due to her being a member of the government.¹¹²

Queens, in particular, and women, in general, are held in great distrust by the contemporary or nearly contemporary writers, including the authors of the *Agni Purāṇa* and the *Nītīvākyānta* who, being too much obsessed with the patriarchal conception, have denounced the right of women in the case of succession to the throne. The *Agni Purāṇa*¹¹³ advises the king not to repose trust in queens, especially those who are blessed with sons (*Na c=āsām viśvāset=ājātu putra-mātār= viśeṣataḥ/ na svapet stṛī-gṛhe rātrau viśvāsaḥ kṛtrimo bhavet||*). It, however, admits that the nomination of the chief queen is a prerequisite for the king’s coronation¹¹⁴ (*Rājā bhṛti-rarako devah s=ābhīṣekā devy=api*), but this would only imply the importance of queens for religious purposes, since no sacrifice was considered complete without the wife’s participation in it. The
idea of placing implicit faith in women is likewise deprecated by Somadeva Sūri,¹¹⁸ who, however, urges the king against antagonising the queen. 'He is so distrustful of women that he asks the king neither to appoint any women to look after things used by him nor to partake of anything sent from his wife's apartment.'¹¹⁶

But the Rājatarāṅgini, the chronicle of Kashmir, composed by Kalhana about the middle of the twelfth century A.D., reveals that the queens of Kashmir assumed enormous power. They sometimes helped their husbands in administration and some of them are known to have ruled the country either in their own name or as regents on behalf of minor kings. A passage of the Rājatarāṅgini¹¹⁷ implies that some queens were authorised to issue written orders to ministers who were subjected to punishment for the transgression of such orders. Sugandhā, for instance, dominated the political stage of Kashmir in the first quarter of the tenth century A.D. She held the reins of administration during the minority of her son Gopālavarmā who ascended the throne after the death of king Saṅkaravarmā shortly before A.D. 900.¹¹⁸ Gopālavarmā was later on treacherously murdered and the throne passed on to an alleged son of Saṅkaravarmā named Saṅkaṭa whose rule lasted a few days only. Sugandhā, who was responsible, in no small measure, for these palace intrigues, finally assumed royalty, though Kalhana states that she did so at the behest of the people. She was, however, not destined to reign for long, being overthrown and killed by the Tantrins.

Sugandhā was not the lone queen to guide the political destiny of Kashmir in the tenth century A.D. Diddā, the queen of Kṣemagupta, too, is known to have played a decisive role in the history of the province during the second half of the same century. Kalhana states that Diddā exercised considerable influence upon her husband who 'became known by the humiliating appellation Diddā-Kṣema'.¹¹⁹ Attention may be drawn to some of the copper coins of Kṣemagupta which bear the legend Di-Kṣema, apparently a contraction of Diddā-Kṣemagupta. It is interesting to note that while the coins of the above type are quite numerous, those containing the name of Kṣemagupta alone are rare. This unmistakably points to the prominent position held by the queen in the government of her
husband (A.D. 950-A.D. 958). Kṣemagupta was succeeded by his young son Abhimanyu who ruled for fourteen years. Abhimanyu was followed, respectively, by his three sons, Nandigupta, Tribhuvanagupta and Bhīmagupta, all of whom were mere puppets in the hands of Diddā who finally killed Bhīmagupta by a stratagem and herself ascended the throne of Kashmir in A.D. 980. She governed the kingdom with extraordinary ability till her death in A.D. 1003.\(^{120}\)

The other queen who is reputed to have exercised no mean influence upon the history of Kashmir is Sūryamatī. She was in reality the *de facto* ruler of the kingdom during the rule of her husband, the Lohara king Ananta and even persuaded the latter, notwithstanding the opposition of the wisest counsellors, to abdicate the throne in favour of her unworthy son Kalāsa. In VII.197 of the *Rājatarāṇī*\(^{121}\) we have the expression, ‘by giving up the accumulation in her own treasury’, which is used with reference to the queen Sūryamatī. This implies that, like their Gāhadavāla sisters, the queens of Kashmir sometimes owned private treasuries. The *Rājatarāṇī* speaks of another lady named Koṭādevī, who adorned the throne of Kashmir for a short while about A.D. 1338.\(^{122}\)

If the queens of any royal family matched the prestigious position of their Kashmiri sisters, then it was the queens of the Bhauma-Kara royal house of Orissa. To start with, Tribhuvanamahādevī I *alias* Sindagarī whose Dhenkanal plate,\(^{123}\) issued in the Bhauma year 120, states that she assumed the reins of government on the persuasion of her feudatories. According to the testimony of one of the Talcher grants,\(^{124}\) she subsequently abdicated the throne in favour of her grandson Śāntikara II *alias* Gayāḍa II or Loṇabhāra (Lavaṇabhāra) when the latter became sufficiently grown up. A similar role on the political stage of Orissa was played by Prthvīmahādevī, the widowed queen of Śubhākara IV. She informs us in her Baud plates\(^{125}\) of the Bhauma year 158 that since both her husband and the latter’s younger brother Śivakara III died without leaving any male issue, she ascended the Bhauma throne. But as Śivakara III had at least a couple of sons, viz., Śāntikara III *alias* Lavaṇabhāra II and Śubhākara V, as is disclosed by inscriptions, Prthvīmahādevī was evidently lukewarm to recognise the sons of Śivakara III as rightful heirs and successfully occupied the
throne for some time. Tribhuvanamahādevī and Pṛthvīmahādevī were not the only Bhauma-Kara queens to shoulder the administrative responsibilities; some other queens are known to have discharged administrative functions. Queen Gaurīmahādevī succeeded her husband Śubhākara V who probably left no male heir and she was followed by her daughter Daṇḍimahādevī who issued charters in the years 180 and 187. The Taltali plates128 of Dharmamahādevī tell us that Daṇḍimahādevī was followed by her step-mother Vakulamahādevī127 who, in her turn, was succeeded by Dharmamahādevī,128 the wife of Śāntikara III. It is, therefore, evident that the last four rulers of the Bhauma-Kara family were all women who reigned in the capacity of de facto and de jure rulers. The ruling queens of the Kara dynasty generally assumed all the imperial titles in accordance with their power and position. Queen Daṇḍimahādevī, for instance, called herself Paramabhaṭṭārikā, Mahārājādhirāja and Paramesvarī.

The queens in the Bhañja kingdom are represented in inscriptions as being entrusted with the important task of maintaining the royal seal and scrutinising the genuineness of documents. Some grants of king Vidyādharabhañja Amoghakalaśa are known to have been registered with the royal seal by his own queen Jayamahādevi. A charter129 of king Netṭabhañja III Tribhuvanakalaśa was similarly registered by queen Jivalokamahādevī. The queens of the Gaṅga kings of Śvetaka are known to have discharged similar functions. A grant of Pṛthvīvarman was registered by his queen; a charter of Anantavarman was likewise registered by his queen Śrīvāsabhaṭṭārikā.

The Brahmeśvara inscription speaks of Kolāvatī, the queen of the Somavāṃśī king Yayāti III Caṇḍihara and mother of Udyotakesarin, as erecting the temple of Brahmeśvara (Śiva) at Ekāmra. The Ratnagiri charter registers a grant in favour of Rāṇī Śrī-Karpūraśrī. Karpūraśrī is generally supposed to have been a Devadāsti, attached to the Buddhist Mahāvihāra of Salaṇapura130 but her designation suggests that she might have been a queen of the last Somavāṃśī king Karṇadeva.

Rajasthan has produced a galaxy of valiant queens who not only actively participated in administration, but also joined hands with their husbands to fight the enemies. The Pṛthvirāja-rāso of Cand Bardāl speaks of the Caulukya princess Karma-
devī who governed the kingdom of Mevāḍa following the death of her son Samarasiṁha at the hands of Muhammad Ghūrī. Tod⁴³¹ observes, ‘She headed her Rājputs and gave battle to Qutbuddin near Ambar, when the viceroy was defeated and wounded. Nine Rājas and eleven chiefs of inferior dignity with the title of Rāvat followed the mother of their prince.’ Modern scholars are, however, loath to accept most of these traditions as historically genuine.

X

The Queen in the Pre-Vākāṭaka Period

Having surveyed the position of queens in different North Indian kingdoms in different periods, we may now turn our attention to South India. Some useful information about the queens in the Śatavāhana kingdom may be derived by a careful study of the inscriptions of the family. Nāgānikā or Nāyanikā,¹³² queen of Śātakarni I, who flourished about the close of the first century B.C., is called Devī, while another queen of the same dynasty, flourishing a few generations later, is styled as Mahādevī. It would then follow that the Śatavāhana queens were generally called Devī and Mahādevī. Notwithstanding her less pretentious title of Devī, Nāgānikā played an important part in the annals of the Śatavāhana house by acting as regent during the minority of her son Vedaśri. The Nanaghat record would tend to suggest that it was during the period of her regency that she performed a number of Vedic sacrifices and made liberal donations to learned Brāhmaṇas. It has to be noted that Jaimini, a contemporary of Nāgānikā, declares that women are incompetent to perform a sacrifice for the reason that ‘the woman is inferior to man. The sacrificer is learned, his wife is ignorant (atulyā hi strī puṁsā/ yajamānah pumān vidvāṁś- ca/ patnī strī c-āvidyā ca/). Nāyanikā’s performance of Vedic sacrifices at a time when women were discouraged to do so demonstrates how the cry of social reformers in ancient India often went unheeded by the mighty. T.V. Mahalingam¹³⁴ opines that the Śatavāhana kings often ruled their kingdom in association with their queen mothers. This contention is based on the evidence of a Nasik cave inscription¹³⁵ which, according to him, shows that ‘Gautamiputra Śātakarni and his
mother Gautami Balaśrī made a joint order in the 24th year of the former’s reign to an officer who was in charge of Govardhanāhāra. But it may be pointed out that the Nasik inscription only proves that the queen-mother Balaśrī was associated with her son Gautamīputra in a gift in favour of certain Buddhist monks, but we have no positive evidence to ascertain that she helped her son in administration.\textsuperscript{136}

The Ikṣvākus were not far removed from the later Śātavāhanas in point of time but their queens could stand no comparison with those of the Śātavāhanas. Inscriptions do not associate them with any administrative duty. The mention of the Antahpura-mahattarikā in an inscription\textsuperscript{137} of Ehuvula Cāntamūla would seem to indicate that the Ikṣvāku queens were even relieved of the charge of the harem. Some of the Ikṣvāku queens like Mahādevī Rudradhara-bhaṭṭirikā, Bāpi Sirinikā, Mahādevī Cāṃthisiri and Bhaṭidevā are, however, known to have pooled their donations in favour of the Buddhist establishments at Nagarjunakonda.

XI

The Queen in the Vākāṭaka Kingdom

The Vākāṭaka queens were generally known as Devīs, while the chief ones among them were called Mahādevīs. Prabhāvatīguptā, who was the Agra-mahiṣī of king Rudrasena II (Mahārāja-śrī Rudrasenasya=a-grahahīṣī), bore the designation of Mahādevī (Jīva-putra-paurā śrī-mahādevī Prabhāvatīguptā). Her Poona plates\textsuperscript{138} seem to imply that Prabhāvatī, following the death of her husband, assumed the reins of administration as regent, first on behalf of the minor king Divākaranasa, and later, with the death of the former, for her young son Dāmolarasena. A.S. Altekar\textsuperscript{139} points out that the period of her regency lasted for a term of about twenty years. Prabhāvatī, however, lived for a few years more as we find her mentioned in the Tirodi plates, issued in the twenty-third year of the reign of her son Pravarasena II.\textsuperscript{110} D.C. Sircar\textsuperscript{142} has advanced the view that Prabhāvatīguptā ruled the Vākāṭaka kingdom as a de jure ruler and not as regent. The factor that contributed to her assumption of power was either ‘her love of power or some unknown reason that might have prevented Divākaranasa from
occupying the throne as in the case of the Pallava Yuvamahārāja Viṣṇugopavarmān.\textsuperscript{142} This theory, it must be admitted, does not appear to be unlikely, as there are reasons to believe that the Poona plates were dated in her own regnal year. In any case, there is hardly any doubt that Prabhāvatīgupta was a dominating personality in the Vākāṭaka kingdom for a few years about the beginning of the fifth century A.D.

XII

The Queen in the Cālukya and Pallava Kingdoms

That the queens of the Cālukya kings of Badami were no less powerful is evidenced by inscriptions which represent them as issuing records, administering divisions, making generous gifts and installing images of gods and goddesses. Vijayabhaṭṭārikā, the senior queen of Candrāditya Prthivīvallaṭha Mahārāja, the elder brother of Vikramāditya I, was ruling over, as may be inferred from one of her charters,\textsuperscript{143} which is dated in the fifth year of her reign, a portion of the Cālukya kingdom by the middle of the 7th century A.D. Her records extol her as a poetess, who ‘won high rank in the esteem of literary critics’. She has been identified with Vijayāṅkā who is extolled as ‘Sarasvatī incarnate and as a peer of Kālidāsa in the Vaidarbhī style of composition’ in some verses attributed to Rājaśekhara in Jalhaṇa’s Sukanīrāvali (A.D. 1258). The cultivation of literature was evidently one of the hobbies of the queens. Among other Cālukya queens to attain glorious heights, mention may be made of Vikramāditya II’s wife Lokamahādevī who built a temple at Paṭṭadakal.\textsuperscript{144} The Kuntakoti inscription\textsuperscript{145} of Vijayāditya refers to one Lokatinimmadi as administering the Kuruttakunṣṭa region. If Lokatinimmadi was identical with Lokamahādevī, which does not appear to be improbable, it would follow that she wielded great power during the reign of her father-in-law. The queen-mother Vinayavatī\textsuperscript{146} is known to have set up the images of Brahmā, Viṣṇu and Maheśvara in the capital city of Vāṭāpi. The Kundur plates\textsuperscript{147} of Kīrtivarmān II, which speak of the presence of the chief queen (Mahādevī) of the said Cālukya monarch in the military camp at Raktapura, leave the impression that queens sometimes accompanied their husbands during their military operations. We are reminded
of the Turk-Mongol royal ladies of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries A.D. who used to accompany their husbands to the war-fields and took an active part in the actual fight.\textsuperscript{148}

We know very little about the Pallava queens, barring, of course, their religious endowment and the foundation of monuments in honour of their favourite deities. Čarudevi, the queen of the heir-apparent Vijayabuddhavarman, issued an inscription\textsuperscript{149} recording the grant of a piece of land in favour of a Viṣṇu temple at Dalūra. The inscription does not take notice of either her husband or her father-in-law whose sanction was necessary in normal cases. The omission of their approval was probably due to some carelessness on the part of the writer of the grant. It is sometimes held that Čarudevi held such an influential position in the kingdom that she hardly required the permission of the reigning king to make an endowment\textsuperscript{150} but this, in the absence of any corroborative evidence, does not seem to be a reasonable presumption. Raṅgapatākā, the queen of Narasiṁhavīṣṇu, is mentioned in a Pallava charter\textsuperscript{151} as being the beloved of her husband as Pārvatī was to Śiva and as having obtained the everlasting favour of her husband. This shows that it was the affection of the husband and not a voice in administration, that the Pallava queen prized most. Indeed, we have hardly any evidence at our disposal which would disclose that the queens participated in administration. Mādevī Adigal, the queen of Aparājita, is known to have ‘endowed 30 Kalañjus of gold for lamps to the Śiva temple at Tiruvorriyūr’.\textsuperscript{152} It may be remembered that though like their Čālukya sisters the Pallava queens made various endowments, they did not claim the same status as the former. No inscriptions associate any Pallava queen with administrative responsibility, while a few Čālukya queens were definitely entrusted with administration of at least parts of the kingdom.

XIII

The Queen in the Rāṣṭrakūta Kingdom

The queens did not claim any special privilege in the Rāṣṭrakūta realm. We do not see them occupying administrative posts\textsuperscript{153} or running the government during the minority of the king. An inscription\textsuperscript{154} of A.D. 786 mentions Āḷiramahādevi,
the crowned queen of Dhruva, as making a grant of land ‘without any express mention of her husband, Dhruva, as permitting the transaction’. This has led A.S. Altekar to surmise that Śīlamahādevī ‘felt that being the crowned queen, she had an inherent right to issue routine administrative orders without any reference to her husband; or, the latter may have expressly invested her with certain ruling powers, including the important power of making land grants’. It is difficult to agree with A.S. Altekar, since we are inclined to treat the omission of her husband’s sanction more as accidental than as deliberate.

XIV

*The Queen in the Western Cālukya Kingdom*

When we come to the time of the Cālukyas of Kalyāṇī, we find that the kings were usually polygamists. Someśvara I had, for instance, at least six queens, viz., Candalakabbe or Candrikādevī, Mailaladevī, Līlādevī, Hoysaladevī, Ketaladevī and Bācaladevī. Of the wives of Vikramāditya VI, mention may be made of Ketaladevī II, Lakṣmīmahādevī, Jekkaladevī, Paṭṭamahādevī Mailalamahādevī, Padmaladevī, Candaladevī, Mālaladevī, Bhāgalamahādevī and Sāvaladevī. Most of the Cālukya queens were entrusted with administrative responsibilities. Mailaladevī was ruling in A.D. 1053 Banavāsi 12,000; Ketaladevī II was administering in A.D. 1054 the Ponnavaḍa-agrahāra; another queen was the ruler of Siruguppe and Kolanuru in Bellary district in the sixteenth regnal year of her husband Vikramāditya VI; Lakṣmīmahādevī governed first eighteen agrahāras along with Dharmapuram and subsequently Niṭṭasingi; Jekkaladevī ruled the village of Inguṇige; Mailalamahādevī was in charge of Kāṇṇavalle in A.D. 1095 and Padmaladevī held sway over the Mamgoli-agrahāra in A.D. 1116. It is far from being definitely known whether these queens ruled over their respective divisions from the capital city of Kalyāṇī or were stationed in the areas of their jurisdiction. It is more likely that they lived in Kalyāṇī in the constant company of their husbands and governed their territories with the help of some trusted officers.

Inscriptions also refer to queens making handsome donations on appropriate occasions. Hoysaladevī is known to
have made a grant in A.D. 1055; Ketaladevi II,\(^{166}\) likewise, made a gift to the shrine of Caṇḍēśvara at Kumbittige in Bijapur district; Mālaladevi constructed a Maheśvara\(^{167}\) temple and Bhāgalamahādevi\(^{167}\) made a gift of gold in Sirur. G.H. Khare\(^{168}\) has brought to light a few coins that bear the legend Śrī-Laṅkumā. He has attributed these pieces to the queen Lakṣmīmahādevi, although A.S. Altekar\(^{169}\) holds a contrary view. We thus see that queens played a prominent role in the Western Cāluṇya kingdom. They patronised the learned, championed the cause of their religion and governed, either personally or through their agents, several divisions of their husbands' kingdom. Indeed, Indian queens reached the pinnacle of their glory in the Cāluṇya age.

XV

*The Queen in the Post-Cāluṇya Period*

The history of the Kākatīya royal family provides us with one of the very few instances of a female ruler exercising royal authority over the entire kingdom in her own right. She was Rudramadevi or Rudrāmbā, being nominated by her father Gaṇapatideva as his successor. On her accession to the throne, she took the masculine name of Rudradeva Mahārāja and ruled the kingdom for nearly four decades with such ability as to win the admiration of the contemporary Venetian traveller Marco Polo.\(^{170}\)

As would appear from the study of their records, the queens of the Āḷūpa kings of South Canara held an honoured position in their husbands' kingdom. T.V. Mahalingam observes that the chief queens of the Āḷūpa kings were allowed to rule jointly with their husbands. Mahalingam, in support of his contention, cites the case of Vira Pāṇḍya-deva Āḷūpendradeva who 'is said to have jointly ruled with his senior queen Paṭṭadevi from his capital (rājadhāni) Bārahakanyāpura'. But this epigraphic statement, which may aptly be compared with a statement in the Sudi record\(^{172}\) that Lakṣmīdevi ruled the Western Cāluṇya kingdom along with her husband Vikramāditya VI from Kalyāṇi, should not be taken seriously, particularly in view of the fact that no other chief queen of the dynasty is represented as playing the role of a joint ruler in the Āḷūpa inscriptions,
hitherto discovered. The inscription of A.D. 1261-62 only shows that Paṭṭadevī was held in high esteem by her husband. One Āḷūpā queen, viz., Ballamahādevī,173 is known to have held the reins of government for at least fourteen years from Śaka 1201 to Śaka 1214. Like the Kākatiya queen Rudramadevī, she assumed masculine titles like Mahārājādhirāja, Para-bala-sādhaka, etc. The adoption of male titles by a reigning queen demonstrates that the people, in general, were averse to the rule of women.

We have no means to ascertain whether it was a usual practice with a queen in ancient India to undergo a ceremony for being invested with chief queenhood, as was the case with Harṣavardhana’s mother Yaśomati. This, however, appears to have been a regular feature in the Vijayanagar kingdom, for, we find at least two kings, viz., Kṛṣṇadeva Rāya and Acyuta Rāya, being crowned, respectively, along with their wives, Tirumalādevī and Varadāmbikā, at the time of their coronation.174

XVI

Epilogue

It is evident from the foregoing discussion that whereas, among the queens in ancient India only a few were destined to play an active role in administration, and fewer still assumed rulership of kingdoms, the activities of the vast majority remained confined to the precincts of the palace. The reason why the number of the ruling queens was so limited in ancient India, as in all other countries in the contemporary world, is a fascinating subject for investigation. Polygamy which was the usual practice with men in those days and ineligibility of women to family property must have adversely affected the social and economic status of women in general. The society in those days was absolutely predominated by men, and the people were so much obsessed with the patriarchal concept that they were hardly prepared to accept an eve as the supreme head of government. The patriarchal tempo of the people has been clearly reflected in early Indian literature, which, generally speaking, decries women’s participation in matters concerning state policies. The commonly accepted belief in the superiority of men to women
has so profoundly prejudiced the vision of the Niti-writers in India that they have strongly denounced the claim of the queen to the throne of her deceased childless husband in favour of the latter’s uncle, younger brother, nephew and even the sister’s son. Furthermore, it should be noted that the circumstances in those primeval days were hardly conducive to the rule of women. Women, who could not match the military skill and physical hardship of their male counterparts, were seldom expected to provide a stable government in those days of political uncertainty and instability when the issue of leadership was dependent more on brute force than on diplomatic manoeuvres.

References and Notes

1. VI, I, p. 478. It, however, seems that the number of queens varied from kingdom to kingdom. In order to safeguard the continuity and honour of the family, a king might have been induced to practise polygamy but the number of his queens undoubtedly depended on his attitude towards life.

2. The term mahis$i$, which literally means the chief queen, proves that the king had a plurality of wives.

3. She is called *Parivṛktā* in the *Ṛgveda* (X.102.11), *Athrva Veda* (VII.113.2; XX.128.10-11) and *Ṣatapatha Brāhmaṇa* (XIII.2.6.6; 4.1.8; 5.2.7).

4. 12.11.

5. VI 5.3.1.

6. Jogiraj Basu (*IAB*, p. 120) quotes from the *Ṣatapatha Brāhmaṇa* the following passage, *a-putṛā vai patnī Parivṛktā*.

7. VI, I, p. 478.

8. *Ṣatapatha Brāhmaṇa*, V.2.1.11.

9. Ibid., XIII.5.2.5.

10. Ibid., XIII.5.2.6.

11. Ibid., XIII.5.2.7.

12. Ibid., XIII.5.2.8.


14. 1.2.5.

15. V.1.16.10.

16. *Ṣatapatha Brāhmaṇa*, XIII.5.2.2.

17. For a detailed account of the *Aṣvamedha* sacrifice, see *IAB*, pp. 207-08.

18. *IAB*, p. 121.

19. The *Ratnins*, who comprised royal relatives, ministers, courtiers and departmental heads, were the high functionaries of the state, forming the king’s council. The *Tattvīrya Brāhmaṇa* (I.7.3) expressly describes them as the bestowers of the kingdom (*Ete vai rāṣṭrasya praddhārāḥ*).
20. V.178.
22. PBI, p. 117.
24. V.437-40.
26. IV.487.
27. AIDMA, pp. 150-51.
28. VIII.10.
29. EHI, p. 55.
30. AI, pp. 107ff.
31. Ibid., p. 112.
32. Ibid., p. 108.
33. Ibid., p. 112.
34. AAHI, p. 52.
35. Ibid., pp. 51ff.
38. This has been elaborately discussed by B.M. Barua in his Asoka
   And His Inscriptions (pp. 51-54).
39. AAHI, p. 51.
41. XXVII.
42. Ibid.
44. AI, pp. 151ff.
45. AI, p. 112. The original text reads, savasi ca me olodhanasi te bahu-
   vidhena â kâl ña tâni tâni tuñhâyatanâni pañipâdayanîti hida c=eva
disasu ca.
46. I.XXX.18.
47. They may be identified with the Antarvamishkas, Antahpurâdhvâkṣas,
   Åbhyantarikas, Antahpurikas and Antahpuravargades, mentioned in
   contemporary and later documents, as officers, connected with the
   harem of the king. B.M Barua (AI, p. 183) is of opinion that the
   Stryadhyakṣa Mahāmāras were instituted to guard the interests of
   women, in general, not excluding courtesans, prostitutes, actresses
   and the like.
48. XIX, 30; XIX, 33; G. Bühler, The Sacred Laws of the Âryas, II
   (1965), p. 100.
49. Several Greek and Roman rulers claim to have wedded goddesses.
   Antiochus IV wedded Atargatis, Antony married Isis (GBI, p. 265),
   and so on.
51. Ibid., p. 245; CHI, I, p. 553. It has been suggested by some scholars
   that Agathoclea was the queen of Strato I. Agathoclea is shown on
   the left side of Strato I and it is suggested that the convention was
   to represent the wife on the left of the husband. But the example of
   the Candragupta I-Kumâradevi type of gold coins, representing
queen Kumāradevi on the right side of king Candragupta, goes against this presumption. The similarity of names and coin-types indicates that Agathocleia was the sister or daughter of the Indo-Greek king Agathocles (AIU, pp. 113-14).

52. GBI, p. 177.
53. Ibid., p. 337.
55. CHI, II, p. 270.
56. JRAS (1894), pp. 451ff; EI, IX, pp. 135ff.
57. II.37.38.
58. II.33.8.
63. Evolution Of Morals In The Epics, p. 122.
64. XXIII.32.33.
65. V.38.92. The Mahābhārata (III.51.25) refers to a women's kingdom.
68. Mahābhārata, XII.6.10.
69. VII.77.
70. G. Bühler, Laws of Manu, p. 239.
71. III.56.
72. Adhyagny-ādhyāvähanikain dattaṁ=ca prīti-karmaṇi/ bhṛatr-māitr-pitr-pṛptam saś-viḍham strī-dhanāṁ śṛṇtvani/ (Manu, IX.194). The commentator Kulluka interprets adhyagni and adhyāvähanikāin in the sense of the gifts at the time of marriage (vivāha-kāle agni-sannidhau yat pitṛ-ādi-dattam tad=adhyagni) and departure for the husband's home (yat=tu pitṛ-grhāṁ=bhartṛ-grham niyamānayā labdhāṁ tad=adhyāvähanikain) respectively.
73. XVII.18.
74. Yājñāvalkya gives a more extended list of strīdhanā- pitṛ-mātṝ-pati- bhṛatr-dattam=adhyagny=upōgatam/ ādhivedanikādyaṁ=ca strī-dhanāṁ parikṛttati (II. 114); Bandhu-dattam tathā śulkam= anvadvheyakam=eva vā/ atitāyāṁ=aprajasi bändhavāṁ=tad=avāpnuvuk (II.144).
75. IKP, p. 405.
76. GP, p. 124.
77. Mahādevi, which literally means a 'great goddess', appears to have been always a technical title of the principal wives of paramount sovereigns from about this period onwards. It cannot escape notice that junior queens were sometimes called Mahādevis. Kuberanāgā,