CHAPTER TWENTY-NINE

SOCIAL LIFE AND ECONOMIC CONDITION

A. NORTHERN INDIA

I. SOCIAL LIFE

1. Caste System

The old division of the people into four *varṇas* or social grades was merely theoretical, and a number of *jātis* or castes were included in each of the *varṇas*, at least in the period under review. The word *varṇa* (colour) is found in the oldest literature of the Indo-Aryans to indicate the social and cultural distinction between the Aryans and non-Aryans; but the expressions *ārya-varṇa* (colour of the Aryans) and *dāsa-varṇa* (colour of the non-Aryans) must have originally pointed to the fair complexion of the Aryans and the dark or brown skin colour of the aboriginal peoples of India. In later days, the connotation of the term *varṇa* expanded so as to signify the four conventional grades of the Indo-Aryan society in which non-Aryan elements were gradually being absorbed. The units comprising the social grades called *varṇa* came to be known as *jāti*; but in later literature this word is often also used in the sense of *varṇa* itself. The primary significance of the term *jāti* is birth; but we know that the early *chātur-varṇa* division of the Indo-Aryan society was not strictly dependent on birth. The word *jāti* must therefore have originally indicated tribal groups whose membership depended rigidly on birth. Numerous non-Aryan tribes of different grades of civilization were gradually imbibing, in various degrees, the culture and blood of the Aryans; but most of them must have still retained their tribal names and also certain social customs and prejudices. These elements of the mixed society of the Aryan and non-Aryan peoples of India had many characteristics dependent on birth and were *jātis* in the real sense of the term. The incorporation of these tribes in the Indo-Aryan social system seems to have popularised the word *jāti* in the sense of a caste and later also of a *varṇa*.

The formation of castes from tribal groups is a characteristic of
all periods of Indian history, and the period under survey is no exception. We know how the Manu-smriti (which in its present form is not much earlier than A.D. 300) and other works on law are eager to include all Aryan, non-Aryan, and foreign tribes and communities of various grades of culture in the theoretical scheme of the chatur-varna. The attempt was chiefly to represent a tribe or class of non-Aryan of foreign origin, and even the various professional groups, as a vrātya or degraded class of Brāhmaṇa, Kshatriya, or Vaishya, or as originated from an admixture of the blood of two or more of the four conventional varṇas. This was usually done with due regard to the primary occupation, position in the contemporary Indo-Aryan society, and the degree of Aryanisation of particular tribes or groups. There is a general agreement on this arbitrary scheme amongst authorities on law; but in many particulars there is difference. The Māhishyas, a tribal people apparently deriving their name from the land called Mahisha, are not recognised in the Manu-smriti; but they find a place in the social scheme of later writers like Yājñavalkya. The Yavanas (Greeks) and Saṅgas (Scythians), who came to India and settled in this country, are regarded by Patañjali, author of the Mahābhāṣya, as aniravasita (pure) Śūdra, but they are included by Manu in the list of degraded Kshatriyas along with such non-Aryan peoples as the Chīnas, Lichchhavis, and Dravīḍas: the social position of the ‘pure Śūdra’ and the ‘degraded Kshatriya’ appears to have been practically the same. The son of a Brāhmaṇa father and Kshatriya mother is called Mūrdhakhishikta by some, and Kshatriya by others, the second view being supported by several inscriptions. During the period under survey, the Hūnas, Gurjaras and other foreign tribes were absorbed in Indian society. The Hūnas became ultimately recognised as one of the thirty-six respectable Rājput clans. A number of other Rājput clans such as the Paramāra, Pratihāra, Chāhamāna, Chālukya (Solākī), Kalachuri, etc., were also very probably of foreign origin. The Pratihāras were probably a branch of the Gurjara people. The people called Kalachuri (from the Turkish title Kulchur) appear to have been of Turkish origin. The case of these peoples was similar to that of the Greeks, Scythians and Parthians of an earlier age. As they were fighting and ruling races, they naturally claimed, after Indianisation, the status of the Kshatriya and ultimately came to be called Rājput. The word Rājput (Sanskrit Rāja-putra) literally means ‘a prince’; but ultimately it came to mean ‘a cavalier’ and was applied to indicate a member of the foreign (and in some cases indigenous)

1 Cf. Ch. XXV, Section I.
ruling clans settled in Western India. The same word is also found in the corrupt form of Rāvat which is a title of noblemen and subordinate rulers. The change in the meaning of the word is comparable to that of the word Rāval (Sanskrit Rāja-kula) which originally meant the king's family, then a member of the royal family, and ultimately became a title of noblemen.

The formation of castes out of professional communities is also in evidence from works like the Manu-smriti. But there is a more interesting historical instance in the period under review. The office of the Kāyastha (accountant-scribe) seems to have been instituted about the beginning of the Gupta period. This, like some other professions, was not restricted to any particular varṇa and could be followed by people of different varṇas including the Brāhmaṇas. But references such as that to the Vālabha-Kāyastha-vañā in the Sañjan plates of A.D. 871 and the Śrīvāstava-kul-odbhūta-Kāyastha in the records of the Gāhaḍavālas, and certain other evidences appear to suggest that the Kāyasthas lost their original official and professional character and became a social class or community before the end of the period under survey, at least in some parts of the country. The crystallization of the community into a caste may have been influenced by the adoption of the clerical profession by most members of an old tribe called Karanā, just as the organization of the professional community of the Vaidyas or physicians of Bengal into a caste at a later date seems to have been influenced by their association with a tribal people called the Ambashthas. Brahmanical personal names with a large number of modern Bengali Kāyastha cognomens (e.g., Datta, Ghosh, Vasu, Dama and the like) occur in several early epigraphs discovered in the Bengali-speaking area, and it has been suggested by some scholars that there is a considerable Brāhmaṇa element in the present-day Kāyastha population of Bengal. In this connection, the evidence of the Nidhanpur inscriptions is very interesting although it can be supported by earlier epigraphs of the time of the Imperial Guptas; in this record, persons belong-

2 The Kāyasthas served kings, feudatory chiefs, petty landlords, rulers of provinces or districts, judges, etc., in various capacities such as scribe, secretary, accountant and revenue-collector. An official, who usually sat beside his master and was often the chief intermediary between his master and the latter's clients or subjects, may have been naturally called kāyastha 'as if staying in the person of his master', by reason of his intimacy with or influence on the master, of his position often next to that of his master, and of his seat beside that of his master, at least when the latter was a petty landlord or the like, see BV, X, pp. 280-84. Some scholars believe that the word Kāyastha is the Sanskritised form of a non-Aryan word, while others take kāya in this case as indicating 'a department of administration'. See NIA, VI, pp. 180-82; also I, pp. 740-43; VI, p. 49.
ing to the same gotra under a particular śākhā of a Veda have usually the same name-endings which, moreover, are now found usually as cognomens among the Bengali Kāyasthas. It may be pointed out that cognomens, unknown in the earlier period of Indian history, gradually developed in many cases in the period under review. A large number of the cognomens now prevalent among the upper caste Hindus of Bengal is derived from the name-endings of the progenitors of particular families stereotyped at a certain date prior to the late mediaeval period. This process of a name-ending becoming a cognomen began to operate in the early centuries of the Christian era. It must, however, be remembered that the process was not completed even in Eastern India till much later times. The first known king of the Gupta dynasty was Gupta whose son was Ghaṭotkacha; but when the latter’s son Chandragupta founded an empire, his descendants always stuck to the name-ending gupta and soon the family came to be known as the Gupta dynasty. In the early part of the eighth century, there was a person named Dayitavishnu whose son was Vapyaṭa; but when the latter’s son Gopāla founded an empire, his descendants continued the use of the name-ending pāla and soon the family became known as the Pāla dynasty. The Kāyasthas and the Śrēśṭhins, Sārthavāhas and Kulikas were the most important classes in the population of North Bengal in the Gupta period, and the headmen of these classes often constituted the administrative board. Another important class was that of the Kūtumbins or agriculturist householders. The classification of the population based on profession, as suggested by this evidence, reminds one of a similar classification known to Megasthenes, and is possibly an index to the conventional and theoretical character of the traditional division of the Indian people into four varṇas.

According to later nibandha-kāras, such as Yama and Sātātapa, the names of Brāhmaṇas should end in words like śarman or deva, those of Kshatriyas in varman, trāṭi, etc., those of the Vaiśyas in gupta, datta, bhūti, etc., and those of the Śūdras in dāsa. A tendency towards such specification can be clearly traced even in the

2a The evidence of the Nidhanpur inscription is corroborated by the Paschimbhag copper-plate grant of Srichandra of the tenth century. The latter record also contains names of Brāhmaṇa donees with similar cognomens. Probably many of the donees of Srichandra’s grant were descendents of those mentioned in the Nidhanpur record. For the Paschimbhag copper-plate, see K. Gupta, Copper-Plates of Sylhet, (Sylhet. 1967), pp. 81 ff. Ed

3 Cf. Suc., Sat., pp. 197, 211. The Smṛiti-nibandhas are believed to have been written before the end of the tenth century.
Manu-smriti (II. 32), although in actual practice we find that the rule was not rigidly followed even down to the end of the period of our survey. To cite only one late instance, we may refer to the family of the Brāhmaṇa Pitavāsa-gupta-śarman, who was the son of Sumangala-gupta, grandson of Varāha-gupta, and great-grandson of Makkāla-gupta and received a gift from king Śrīchandra of Bengal in the tenth century.

The son usually adopted the profession of his father; but the conventional prescription of different professions for the four varṇas was often not followed in practice. The Smṛitis speak of Brāhmaṇas following non-Brāhmaṇical callings, and inscriptions testify to the existence of Brāhmaṇas who were agriculturists, traders, architects, and government servants. But the member of Brāhmaṇas devoted to religious and literary pursuits was not small. They were highly respected by the kings and commoners. Their position at the head of the society was fully established. There were also many Brāhmaṇas who adopted a military career and made themselves rulers of kingdoms. The Kṣatriyas were also a respectable class, although they sometimes took to the traditional professions of the Vaiśyas. The chief officers of a guild of oilmen at Indore in Madhya Pradesh were Kṣatriyas following the prescribed profession of the Vaiśyas. In an inscription of the time of Chandra-gupta II some Kṣatriyas are described as merchants. Still the Kṣatriyas were enjoying the status of the dvija or twice-born. There were no doubt caste-groups in the Brāhmaṇa and Kṣatriya communities even from early times; but this was more remarkable for the Vaiśyas and Śūdras who formed the majority of the population. Such communities as the smiths, cattle-rearers, carpenters, oil-mongers, weavers, garland-makers and others became full-fledged caste-groups. In certain areas some of these castes may have still enjoyed the status of dvija as Vaiśya; but in many regions they were gradually falling in line with the Śūdras and the term dvija came to be exclusively applied to the Brāhmaṇas. The members of such caste-groups usually took interest only in their own caste and not in the wider social group to which they belonged. Occasionally they could have changed their profession. A section of the silk-weavers of the Lāṭa country in Gujarat, after settling at Daśapura in Malwa, adopted such professions as that of an archer, a story-teller, an exponent of religious problems, an astrologer, a warrior and an ascetic.

An important feature of the caste system in our period was the gradual elevation in the social position of the Śūdras, although the process seems to have begun much earlier. The Smritis speaking of the dvijas, with special reference to the Brāhmaṇas, no doubt ob-
jected to their taking meals with a Śūdra; but an exception was made in regard to one's farmer, barber, milkman and family friend. Some writers like Yājñavalkya, moreover, permit the Śūdras to become traders and agriculturists. Hiuan Tsang refers to the Śūdras as an agriculturist class in the seventh century, while in the eleventh century Alberuni found no great difference between the Vaiṣyas and the Śūdras. According to this eleventh-century authority, members of the four varṇas lived 'together in the same towns and villages, mixed together in the same houses and lodgings', but commensality was not allowed. The low-caste peoples were in our period called antyajjas who represented the impure fifth social grade outside the chatur-varṇa, and followed various kinds of despised professions. Their social position was much lower than that of the Śūdras. They had often to live away from the area inhabited by the upper-caste peoples. The Chinese pilgrim Fa-hien, who visited India early in the fifth century, says that the Chaṇḍālas lived apart from other villagers. When they entered a city or market place they struck a piece of wood to make themselves known so that men might avoid coming into their contact. Hiuan Tsang says: 'Butchers, fishermen, public performers, executioners and scavengers have their habitations marked by a distinguishing sign. They are forced to live outside the city and sneak along on the left when going about in the hamlets.' According to Alberuni, the Hindus of north-western India regarded foreigners (meaning the Musalmans especially) as impure. The doctrine of impurity of the foreigner was no doubt very old; but, as we have seen, many foreign peoples were absorbed in the Indian social system after some sort of Indianisation. On the whole the attitude of the Indians towards foreigners was never extremely hostile. There is also evidence to show that the Musalmans were favourably received in some parts of India. The strong feeling of the Hindus of North-Western India against Musalmans seems to be the result of the atrocities perpetrated by the latter against the former.

Slavery always existed in Indian society. But the social position of the slaves appears to have been better than that of the Antyajjas or despised castes. They were not regarded as a social grade as in some other parts of the world. Prisoners of war, debtors unable to pay their debts, and gamblers unable to pay off their stakes were often reduced to slavery. Poor persons sometimes sold themselves to the rich for food during famines. The children of slaves were also slaves. But debtor-slaves could regain their liberty by getting

4 Yaś., I, 168.  
5, HTW., I, p. 168.  
their dues paid either by themselves or by somebody else, while a prisoner of war had to supply a substitute for himself. A slave saving his master's life became free and was entitled to get a share of the latter's property. A female slave bearing a child to her master also attained freedom. Nārada deals in detail with slavery and refers to the procedure of emancipating a slave. The master took a jar from the shoulder of the slave and smashed it. He then sprinkled over the slave's head water containing grain and flowers and thrice declared him a free man.

The influence of the theory of chatur-varṇa was immense on the minds of the people. The kings of the periods claimed to have been 'employed in setting the system of varṇas and āśramas' (although the vānaprastha and sannyāsa āśramas were losing their popularity and coming to be regarded as kali-varjiya (i.e., 'not permitted in the present Kali age') and in 'keeping the varṇas confined to their respective spheres of duty'. But this was merely an ideal never fully realised.

2. Marriage and Family

The ideal form of marriage was that between a bride and bridegroom of the same caste, although it was rather inaccurately called savarna marriage. But a-savarna and inter-caste marriages were also known, especially in the royal families. It must, however, be remembered that early works on law appear to have interpreted marriage as including various types of union leading to the birth to children (cf. the gāndharva, rākshasa and paśācha forms of marriage).  

Of course some of the practices, prescribed in early works, gradually came to be obsolete and were ultimately called kali-varjiya. The Manu-smṛiti rather reluctantly admits the validity of marriages between a man of the higher varṇa and a woman of the lower, technically known as anuloma, while the Yājñavalkya-smṛiti (I. 93) does not regard even pratiloma marriages (those between woman of a higher varna and man of a lower) as entirely invalid. Marriage with a Śūdra girl is recognised, though generally condemned; Yājñavalkya (II. 134) allows the son of a Śūdra wife to inherit the property of his Brāhmaṇa father, although Bṛihṣpati recognises the right only in the case of movable property but not in regard to land.  

7 These have been described in Vol. II., but there is no reason to believe that inter-caste marriage was confined to these forms. Ed.  
8 The Kali-varjiya idea seems to have developed before the ninth century (cf. Medhātithi on Manu IX. 112), and fully established, at least in some parts of the country, by the twelfth century.  
9 Bṛihṣpati (COS Ed.) Ch. XVI, 42-43. [Bṛihṣpati admits it in one passage (XXV. 27) but rejects it in another (XXV. 32). Ed.]
The Smritis (cf. Yaj. I. 88) permit the wife of a lower varna to participate in religious ceremonies only if the husband had no wife of his own varna. It is clear from the attitude of the writers on law that inter-caste marriages often took place in society although they were disliked by the orthodox. The case seems to be analogous with that of the punarbhū to be discussed below. There is no doubt that marriages within one’s community had become the social ideal, and the description of the search of a merchant’s son for his bride in the Gomini story of the Daśakumāra-Charita suggests that the common people usually thought only of marrying a girl who was one’s savarnā.

As regards inter-caste marriages of both the pratiloma and anuloma types in royal families, we may refer to the marriage of a daughter of Kākusthavarman of the Brāhmaṇical Kadamba family with a bridegroom of the non-Brahmanical Gupta family, and to that of the Gupta princes Prabhāvati-guptā with Vākāṭaka Rudrasena II who was a Brāhmaṇa of the Vishnuruddha gotra. Prabhāvatī became the chief queen of her husband; but it is interesting to note that she still retained her father’s family name and gotra (cf. her name Prabhāvati-guptā and her epithet dhāraṇa-sagotrā). This shows that there was no sampradāna and the consequent gotrāntara (change of the wife’s gotra to that of her husband) in her marriage with the Vākāṭaka king. The marriage therefore could not have been of the brāhma, daīva, ārsha or prujāpatya categories, but was apparently one among the āsura, gāndharva, rākshasa or paśūcha types, although the āsura form seems to be possible in the present case. Prabhāvatī’s mother Kubera-nāgā also retained her father’s family name even after her marriage in the Gupta family. But marriages which were not based on sampradāna and did not involve a gotrāntara went gradually out of use, at least amongst the ordinary people.

The system of niyoga approved of by early writers like Manu became gradually extinct. Yājñavalkya and Nārada were not opposed to niyoga; but Bṛhaspati and others were not in its favour. The remarriage of widows was looked upon with disfavour, but its prevalence in society had to be admitted by Manu and other writers. Nārada and Parāśara (between the seventh and tenth centuries) permit remarriage of widows under certain conditions. Some authors like Vasiṣṭha make a distinction between a woman whose marriage was consummated and another whose marriage remained uncon-

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10 This is an ingenious deduction, but hardly convincing or even probable. The case of Kubera-nāgā, noted in the next sentence, takes away much of the force of the author’s argument. For other cases of similar marriage, cf. PIHC, 1945, pp. 48-52. Ed.
summated, and prescribe remarriage only in the case of the latter. But both *niyoga* and remarriage of widow or of married girl ultimately came to be regarded as *kali-varjya*. According to the story of the *Devi-Chandragupta*, Dhruva-devi or Dhruvasvāminī, chief queen of Chandra-gupta II Vikramāditya, was the widow of his deceased elder brother Rāma-gupta. Whatever be the historicity of this tradition, such marriages were apparently not regarded as abnormal in the days of the author of this work who seems to have flourished about the close of the sixth century. But the social position of the remarried widow called *punarbhū* seems to be clear from Vātsyāyana's *Kāmasūtra* which, in its present form, probably belongs to the Gupta age. It appears that there was no regular marriage for a widow or a married woman deserted by her husband, but that there was no bar for her to ally herself to a man of her choice. The position of a *punarbhū* was apparently nearer to that of a mistress than to that of a wedded wife. In the royal harem, where separate quarters were allotted to different types of women, the *punarbhūs* occupied a position midway between that of the *devīs* or queens who lived in the innermost apartments, and that of the *ganikās* or courtesans who were quartered in the outermost. This seems to be supported by Hiuan Tsang who says that in India 'a woman never contracts a second marriage'. Widows, who did not marry again, lived an ascetic life. The custom of *sati*, i.e., burning of the widow with her dead husband, was quite well known (cf. the *Kāmasūtra* reference to anumāraṇa and the evidence of the Eran inscription of A.D. 510), but was not popular.

The types of marriages and the categories of sons recognised by the *Smṛitis* show that public opinion was not particularly fastidious, at least in the earlier part of our period, about the establishment of sexual relation between man and woman. Such works as the *Mṛichechhakaṭika* show how a *ganikā* or courtesan could become a rather honoured mistress of a Brāhmaṇa. But the social position of the *punarbhū* and *ganikā* was no doubt normally lower than that of a wedded wife although in certain cases they might have wielded con-

11 This seems to have taken place after the period dealt with in this Volume. See n. 8 above. *Ed.*

12 This can be hardly accepted in view of the fact that Nārada discusses separately the case of *punarbhū* (XII. 45-48) and that of a wife or widow who is 'justified in taking another husband' (XII. 97). He clearly says that 'no offence is imputed to a woman' in the latter case (XII. 101). The writer thinks that more liberal views were probably held in the areas where Nārada and Parāśara Smṛitis were compiled. *Ed.*

13 *HTW*, I. 168. But such statements of a foreigner should not be taken literally. Both Hiuan Tsang and Megasthenes, for example, say, that no marriage took place between different castes, but this cannot be possibly true. *Ed.*
siderable influence on the husband. It is reasonable to hold that in a vast country like India society was not everywhere exactly the same, and changes also took place with the passage of time. Such differences, due to geographical and chronological factors, are noticeable also in the works on law compiled in different parts of the country and in different ages. This is specially to be remembered when one thinks of the position of women in society. The degree of freedom in their movement was probably different in different parts of the country, and in different ages, and also different with different classes of people. The upper class women enjoyed less freedom in our period. Vātsyāyana's Kāmasūtra depicts the life of a nāgaraka's wife as a round of duties in an atmosphere of control and restraint. Even greater restraint and seclusion of women are suggested for an earlier period by the Kauṭiliya Arthaśāstra. But we have also evidence of queens reigning by their own right in Orissa and Kashmir. The Bhauma-Kara queen Tribhuvanamahādevī is said to have ruled Orissa during the minority of her grandson just as an ancient queen named Gosvaminī. King Sivakara III was succeeded by his brother's wife Prithvīmahādevī, while Subhākara V of the same family was followed on the throne by his queen Gaurī, then by his daughter Daṇḍimahādevī, then by his other queen Vakulamahādevī and then by a queen of his elder brother. Prabhāvatīguptā ruled the Vākāṭaka kingdom at least for 13 years as 'the mother of the yuvarāja'. Rājyaśrī is known from Chinese sources to have administered the government in conjunction with her brother, King Harshavardhana. Girls, at least of the noble families, appear to have received liberal education. But, as Yājñavalkya says, women were ineligible for upanayana and Vedic studies.14 In some cases they also received training in various arts.

The theoretical nature of the Smritis seems to be demonstrated by their approach to the question of the marriageable age of girls.15 In earlier times post-puberty marriage of girls was general, although pre-puberty marriages also sometimes took place. The Manu-smṛiti denounces post-puberty marriage of girls, although it permits a person to keep his daughter unmarried up to any age in case a suitable bridegroom was not available. Later writers on law vehemently condemn marriage of girls after puberty. It must be admit-

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14 Manu and Vātsyāyana suggest that the husband usually appointed the wife to receive and spend money, to keep accounts and to pay servants' wages. Such duties no doubt required some amount of education on the part of women at least of the upper classes.

15 The same was probably true of other questions like nīyoga, remarriage of widows, marriage with a Śūdra etc. Ed.
tated that gradually this came to be the regular attitude of society; but there is evidence to show that post-puberty marriage of girls occasionally took place, at least in royal families. According to the Harsha-charitu, princess Rājyaśrī was already a yuvati (cf. yauschnaṁ=āruroha) or taruṇī (taruṇībhotā), before her marriage. The description of a girl’s developed bust before her marriage, as found in the story of Gomini in the Daśakumāra-charita, probably tells the same story for the southern part of India. Vātsyāyana says that a prāpta-yauvanā girl, placed in unfavourable circumstances, should try to arrange for her marriage herself. He also speaks of bālā, yuvati and vatsalā or prauḍhā virgins although the last category may refer actually to a punarbhū of the a-kshata-yoni class.

Polygamy seems to have been an established custom, at least among the kings and wealthy persons, whose houses had an antahpura or inner suit of apartments where the ladies resided in seclusion. Vātsyāyana speaks of a harem ‘with a thousand spouses’. Works like Vātsyāyana’s Kāmasūtra and the Mrichchhakātaṅka suggest that the antahpura was guarded against intrusion of strangers, and even a woman, who was not of approved character, was not admitted within. A lady of the antahpura, however, could join religious festivities and processions as well as social gatherings with the permission of her husband. The absence of a restraining guardian for women is condemned by writers like Manu and Vātsyāyana. Women of the poorer classes enjoyed more freedom as they had often to do various kinds of outdoor work.

The family was sometimes large, as the patriarchs appear to have lived often jointly with their grown-up sons and grandsons, and as brothers sometimes lived together even after their father’s death. Partition of the family in the lifetime of the father was discouraged by the early writers on law. A ninth-century inscription of Assam records the grant of a village to the eldest of three brothers who were living jointly, and who did not separate themselves for fear of the loss of dharma. There are, however, cases in the land-grants of shares being allotted to the father and sons separately by kings. Manu favoured partition of the property among the brothers after the death of the parents. This apparently shows that partition of the family was also not unknown. The father was the owner of the family property, although the right of his sons to their respective shares was recognised. The so-called Mitākṣharā system of inheritance was prevailing in wide regions of the country. The Smritis denounce a Brāhmana forcing partition against his father’s will. But the so-called Daniyabhāga system of inheritance was apparently not unknown in certain areas of the country. Earlier works like the
Manu-smriti recognised twelve categories of sons including those who were begotten on one’s wife by someone else and were technically classified as kshetraja, kānina, kunda, gola, etc.; but with the exception of aurasa (begotten by one’s own self) and dattaka (adopted), the ten other categories of sons gradually lost recognition and came to be regarded ultimately as kali-varjya.\(^{16}\) The old custom of the eldest son getting a larger share of the father’s property was not unknown in the earlier part of the period,\(^{17}\) but it was becoming unpopular and obsolete, and sons were getting equal shares of the family property. The widow of a husband belonging to a joint family got only a maintenance. In case the husband was separately enjoying his property at the time of death, his widow could enjoy her husband’s share as a life estate according to some writers like Yājñavalkya and Brīhaspati, although others like Nārada were opposed to it. This difference of opinion, as already indicated was no doubt based on the difference of time and place, more probably the latter. Kālidāsa’s Sakuntalā speaks of the property of a childless widow of a merchant being confiscated by the Crown. A girl who had a brother was not allowed a share of the father’s property, although the brother had to spend at the time of her marriage to the extent of one-fourth of his share.

3. Luxury, Amusements, Food and Dress

Vātsyāyana’s Kāmasūtra gives a vivid picture of the life of a nāgaraka or city-bred wealthy man of fashion. He lived in a harmya or prāsāda with a pleasure-garden attached to it.\(^{18}\) Various kinds of flowers and vegetables were grown in the garden under the care of the nāgaraka’s wife. It contained a samudra-griha or summer house surrounded by water, and also rooms having secret passages for water in the walls in order to take away heat. The inner apartment of the house was occupied by the ladies of the family, the nāgaraka passing most of his time in the outer chambers. In the nāgaraka’s room there were two couches with soft and white beds.

\(^{16}\) But not probably during the period treated in this volume. See n. 8 above. Ed. III, III. 199.

\(^{17}\) Cf. SII, III. 199.

\(^{18}\) Hiuan Tsang gives us some idea about the cities and houses, HTW. I, p. 147. According to him, the quadrangular walls of the cities were broad and high; but the thoroughfares were narrow tortuous passages. Most of the city walls were built of bricks, while walls of houses and enclosures were wattled bamboo or wood. The halls and terraced belvederes had wooden flat-roofed rooms and were coated with lime and covered with burnt and unburnt tiles. They were of extraordinary height. The houses thatched with coarse or common grass were of bricks or boards; their walls were ornamented with lime and the floor was purified with cow-dung and strewn with fl-wers of the season.
low in the middle and having rests for head and feet at the two ends. At the head of the bed was the kūrchastrāna for placing the image of the deity he worshipped. There was also a shelf for keeping articles of toilet such as sandal paste, flower garlands, sweet perfumes, skin of the citron fruit for perfuming the mouth, and betel leaves prepared with spices. On the floor was a spittoon and on brackets on the wall a viṇā, which he played, and a casket containing a poetical work, requisites for painting, flowers, etc. On the floor was spread a carpet on which there were cushions as well as boards for playing chess and dice. Outside the room were hung birds for game and sport. There was a room where the nāgaraka amused himself by working at the lathe or the chisel.

The nāgaraka got up early in the morning, attended to his morning duties including cleansing his mouth and teeth and proceeded to his toilet. He rubbed a moderate quantity of sandalwood or other sweet smelling paste on his person, scented his clothes with the smoke of incense and wore a garland on his head or neck. He applied collyrium to his eyes and a red dye to his lips which were then rubbed over with wax. Then he chewed betel, attended to his hair and went to his business. He wore rings on his fingers and other ornaments, and generally two garments, a vāsas or vastra and an uttariya which was properly scented. After attending to his morning business, he took his bath. Occasionally he got his limbs massaged and also cleaned with a soap-like substance called phenuaka. He shaved his beard every fourth day and dressed his nails specially, particularly those of the left hand. He often carried a karpata or napkin for removing perspiration. He took two meals, one in the forenoon and the other in the afternoon. Among his articles of diet were rice, wheat, barley, pulses, a large number of vegetables, milk and its preparations like ghee, meat, sweets including molasses, sugar and sweetmeats, salt and oil. Meat, boiled as soup as well as dry or roasted, was taken, though it was not favoured by all.19 His drinks included, besides water and milk, fresh juice of fruits, extracts of meat, rice-gruel, sharbats and stronger drinks like surā, madhu, maireya and āsava which were taken from a vessel of wood or metal often mixed with sweets and savouries in order to impart a relish.

19 Hiuan Tsang says: 'Milk, ghee, granulated sugar, sugar-candy, cakes and parched grain with mustard-seed oil are the common food; and fish, mutton, venison are occasional dainties. The flesh of oxen, asses, elephants, horses, pigs, dogs, foxes, wolves, lions, monkeys, apes is forbidden, and those who eat such food become pariahs; onions and garlic are little used and people who eat them are ostracised'. (HTW, 1. p. 178).
After midday meal, the nāgaraka enjoyed his siesta and viewed fights between cocks, quails or rams, or was engaged in some artistic amusement. He kept cuckoos, peacocks and monkeys for this purpose. At the king’s palace there were also lions and tigers in cages. In the afternoon the nāgaraka attended the gos̄ṭhi or social gathering where he engaged himself in intellectual diversions with his friends and in tests of skill in the arts. At night he enjoyed in his own room vocal and instrumental music often attended with dance.

The above picture of the life of a wealthy and cultured citizen is no doubt conventional, but it certainly gives us a general idea which may be regarded as more or less true for the whole of our period. Vātsyāyana also refers to several kinds of occasional festivities. There were festivals connected with the worship of different deities (sāmāja, yātra, and ghata) often attended with processions. There were gos̄ṭhis or social gatherings of both sexes, āpānakas or drinking parties, and udyāna-yātrās or garden parties including picnic and water sports. Another class of social diversion in which many persons took part was known as the samasyā-krīḍā. Samājas were occasionally held in honour of deities like Sarasvatī and were accompanied by the performances of musicians, dancers and other artists who were often permanently appointed for periodical performances. Sometimes itinerant parties of artists were also employed to show their skill in the samājas. In the gos̄ṭhis the nāgarakas showed their skill in the literary arts, such as extempore composition of verses, completion of a stanza of which only a part was given, expounding passages written in a secret code and the like. Besides literary competitions, they also showed their skill in painting, singing, instrumental music, etc., and also in such practical arts as the making of garlands. The cultured people of the Gupta age, when the Kāmasūtra of Vātsyāyana seems to have been recast, spoke a language that was a mixture of Sanskrit and Prākrit. The gos̄ṭhi was also held by women in the antahpura, and sometimes by persons with a view to doing mischief to others. Ganiḳās often played an important part in the gos̄ṭhis. The samasyā-krīḍā or sambhayā-krīḍā of the Kāmasūtra were religious festivals like the Kaumudijāgara, Holākā (modern Holī), Hallisaka (like the rās-otsava described in the Bhāgavatapurāṇa), Suvasantaka and the like. Besides the lute, damaru or mṛdaṅga, udaka-vādyā (playing on cups filled with water in varying proportions), concert, etc., were popular; so were dramatrical performances by trained men and women.

Playing with dolls and games of chance with dice and cards, games like odd-and-even, closed-first, hide and seek, blind-man’s-
buff, etc., were common among girls. Wrestling and hunting occupied a section of the males, and ball games children and women.

Gambling with dice required authorisation from the king. The master of the gaming house arranged for such games as gambling with dice, small slices of leather, little staves of ivory, etc., and betting on birds employed in fighting, and paid the stakes which were won. The Mitākṣharā, commenting on a statement of Nārada to this effect, says that such games included chess and races of elephants, horses, chariots, etc., and that the birds were cocks, pigeons and others, although wrestlers, rams, buffaloes, etc., were also engaged in similar fighting. Bṛhaspati adds deer to the list of animals. The profit of the conductor of games amounted to ten per cent according to Nārada. No gambler was allowed to enter into another gambling house before having paid his debt to the master of the gaming house. Gamblers could also play elsewhere in public, but they had to pay to the king the share due to him. Bṛhaspati says that although gambling was prohibited by Manu, it was permitted by other legislators so as to allow the king a share of every stake. He also says that in a prize-fight between two animals, the wager which had been laid was to be paid by the owner of the defeated animal. The keeper of the gaming house, according to Bṛhaspati, received the stakes and paid the shares of the victorious gamblers and the king.

As regards eating of meat and drinking of wine, the attitude of society was gradually stiffening at least with reference to the Brāhmaṇas; they were, however, popular with the other castes. Hiuan Tsang says: 'The wines from the vine and sugarcane are the drink of the Kshatriyas; the Vaiśyas drink a strong distilled spirit; the Buddhist monks and Brāhmaṇas drink syrup of grapes and of sugarcane; the low mixed castes are without any distinguishing drink.'

Water-clocks were used by wealthy persons, government offices, and religious establishments to ascertain time. A bowl with a small hole at the bottom was kept floating in a larger vessel filled with water so that it was filled by water coming into it through the hole in 24 minutes. Attendants were necessary to empty the bowl out and float it again the moment it was filled and drowned, and to announce the time by striking a gong.

The nāgaraka's dress, referred to above, was in general use among gentlemen in Northern India; but the kings often used coats and trousers introduced by foreigners. The Gupta Emperors, as known

20 HTW, I, p. 178.
from their coins, used both the traditional as well as the foreign dress. The Arab writer Istakhrī speaks of the trousers and tunic that were worn by the kings of Hind. Turbans and shoes (rarely worn, according to Hsiian Tsang) were also often used. In the north-western part of the country, the people adopted the dress introduced by foreign settlers. With reference to the cold regions of North India, Hsiian Tsang says: 'Closely fitting jackets are worn somewhat like those of the Tartars', although, generally speaking, 'the inner clothing and outward attire of the people have no tailoring; as to colour a fresh white is esteemed, and motley is of no account. The men wind a strip of cloth round the waist and up to the armpits and leave the right shoulder bare. The women wear a long robe which covers both shoulders and falls down loose.'21 This also seems to refer to the north-western districts of India. Alberuni says: 'They use turbans for trousers. Those who want little dress are content to dress in a rag of two fingers' breadth, which they bind over their loins with two cords; but those who like much dress, wear trousers lined with so much cotton as would suffice to make a number of counterpanes and saddle-rugs. These trousers have no visible openings, and they are so huge that the feet are not visible. The string by which the trousers are fastened is at the back. Their sidār (a piece of dress covering the head and the upper part of breast and neck) is similar to the trousers, being also fastened to the back by buttons. The lappets of the kurțakas (short shirts for females from the shoulders to the middle to the body with sleeves), have slashes both on the right and left sides.'21a

The dress of women was not exactly the same in the different parts of the country. In some areas, and amongst certain classes, petticoat and sādī were used, although the sādī alone was popular elsewhere. The use of bodice below the sādī in order to cover the bust was known and becoming gradually popular; but the practice of leaving the bust uncovered was widely prevalent in earlier times.22 Foreigners introduced the use of jackets, blouses and frocks which was spreading gradually, although some sections, e.g., the dancing girls, appear to have adopted them quite early. Cotton garments were generally used; but silk was popular with the ladies of the fashionable and wealthy class.

Women dressed their hair in a large number of graceful fashions. The use of false hair to increase the volume of the braid was not

21 Ibid., p. 148.
unknown. Regarding the people of both sexes, Hiuan Tsang says: "The hair on the crown of the head is made into a coil, all the rest of the hair hanging down. Some (men) clip their mustaches or have other fantastic fashions." Both men and women were fond of using various sorts of ornaments. Rings, bangles, armlets, anklets, girdles, necklaces and ear-rings were the most popular ornaments all of which had a great variety of designs. Necklaces with a number of strings covering parts of the bust were often used by the rich. A similar ornament was occasionally used to adorn the thighs. The nose-ring was not in use. Precious stones of various colours were embedded in the golden ornaments worn by rich people. The poorer section of the population remained satisfied with ornaments made of cheap metals such as silver, brass and lead. According to Hiuan Tsang, 'the dress and ornaments of the kings and grandees are very extraordinary. Garlands and tiaras with precious stones are their head-ornaments and their bodies are adorned with rings, bracelets and necklaces. Wealthy mercantile people have only bracelets'.

4. Education, Moral Ideas, General Beliefs and Superstitions

The kings and the high officials as well as the cultured and wealthy citizens usually patronised literary men. Indeed, most of the celebrated authors are known to have enjoyed the patronage of royal courts. The styles of Sanskrit poetical composition, known as Vādarbhitī and Gauḍī, must have developed under the patronage of the rulers of Berar (Vidarbhā) and West Bengal (Gauḍa), some time before the seventh century. Pāṭaliputra and Ujjayini were great centres of learning in the Gupta age. The astronomer Āryabhaṭa, who was born in A.D. 476 and wrote his Āryabhaṭīya in A.D. 499, belonged to Kusumapura (Pāṭaliputra) and was probably attached to the imperial court of the Guptas. The immortal Kālidāsa (fourth-fifth century), author of such masterpieces of classical Sanskrit literature as the Kumārasambhava, Rāghuvaiśa, Meghadūta and Abhijñāna-Sakuntalam, is traditionally associated with the Gupta Vikramaditya. The Prākṛit grammarian Vararuci and a number of other notables are also similarly associated. The age of the Guptas was characterised by great activity in all the spheres of literature and the sciences. The Buddhist philosophers Asaṅga, Vasubandhu and Diṅguṭa, the lexicographer Amara, and the grammarian Chandragomin flourished in the same age. Varahamihira, who belonged to a family of Maga-Brāhmaṇas (i.e., Persian Magi priests settled and naturalised in India) and probably to the Ujjain school of astronomy, wrote the Brihatsamhitā and a number of works on astronomy

23 HTW, i, p. 148. 23a Ibid., p. 151.
and astrology in the sixth century. Another great astronomer and mathematician of the post-Gupta period was Brahmagupta (born A.D. 628) of Bhillamāla (Bhinmal in the old Jodhpur State). Kanauj and Valabhi became famous at a later date. The celebrated Bāna, author of the Harsha-charita and Kādambari, as well as Mayūra and others enjoyed the patronage of the Kanauj court under Harshvardhana (606-47). The great dramatist Bhavabhūti, author of the Uttara-Ramacharita, Viracharita and Mālatīmādhava, flourished at the court of king Yaśovarman (730-53) of Kanauj. His dramas were staged on the occasion of the annual festival of the god Kālapriyanātha in modern Kalpi in the Jalaun district of Uttarpradesh. Vākpatirāja, author of the Prākrit poem Gaudavahō, was another protégé of Yaśovarman. Rājaśekhara wrote numerous works about the end of the ninth and the first part of the tenth century at the courts of the Kanauj kings Mahendrapāla I and his son Mahipāla, of the Gurjara-Pratihāra dynasty, as well as that of king Yuvarāja I of Ṛāhula. The poet-grammarians Bhartṛihari (sixth-seventh century) flourished at the court of the Maithukas of Valabhi. The kings of Kashmir are known to have patronised scholars. In the eighth century Udbhata, the chief Paṇḍit at the court of king Jayāpīda of Kashmir, is said to have enjoyed a daily pay of one lakh dināras (i.e., cowries or the value of that sum in khāris of grain, corresponding to about 28½ rupees in Stein’s calculation). A famous Kashmirian critic was Ānandavardhana (ninth century), author of the Dhvanyāloka. Some holy places like Benares were also regarded as centres of learning. The celebrated Arab astronomer Abu Ma’shar of Balkh who died in A.D. 985 is said to have studied for ten years at Benares. Buddhist monasteries like the vihāras of Nālandā and Vikramaśīla (or Vikramaśilā) in Bihar were also famous centres of education and attracted students of distant countries like China. The Nālandā monastery was founded in the age of the Imperial Guptas, while the Vikramaśīla vihāra was established in the eighth or ninth century by the Pāla king Dharmapāla or Devapāla. The Chinese pilgrim Hsuan Tsang received part of his religious education at Nālandā under the guidance of the great Buddhist teacher Śalabhadra. According to I-tsing, Chinese students learnt Sanskrit with the help of the grammatical work, Kāśikāvīrtti, by Jayādiya and Vāmana (sixth-seventh century). Buddhist scholars attached to the monasteries of Bihar are known to have laid the foundation of Buddhism in Tibet. In the

23b Varāhamihira, who describes himself as Āvantyaka, was born and received his education at Sankṣiṣṭapura (modem Sankṣiṣṭa in the Farrukhabad district, U.P.) and migrated to Ujjain later on. Ajay Mitra Shastri, Indra as seen in the Brihašṭarāhātī [Delhi, 1969], pp. 18 ff. [KKDG]
eighteenth century, Padmasambhava and Sāntiraksita established the
first regular Buddhist monastery of Bsam-ye in Tibet on the
model of the Odantapuri vihāra in Magadha. Mathas or colleges
were attached to the important Brahmanical temples in different
parts of India. Private teachers who trained students for a small
honorarium lived in cities and towns as well as villages. Learned
Brāhmaṇas received gifts for their maintenance from kings and
wealthy persons. The Brāhmaṇas of some localities, such as those of
Tarkārya in Śrāvasti, appear to have been famous for their learning
throughout the country. Hiuán Tsang says that in India there is
honour in having wisdom and no disgrace in being destitute but
learned. Of all subjects of higher education, the study of scriptures was
the most popular, and most of the highly educated persons were
Brāhmaṇas. The advice of persons proficient in the sacred lore was
sought by the people on ceremonial occasions. The study of logic
and philosophy was also esteemed. But all students of Sanskrit
learnt grammar which was considered as the ‘gate’ of Sanskrit learning.
The Buddhists and Jainas, who originally preferred to write in Prākrit,
now inclined to Sanskrit. Among the sciences that were studied, the
most popular appear to have been those of medicine and astronomy
and astrology. The number of professional astrologers, astronomers
and physicians in all parts of the country must have been high.
The Ashtāṅgahṛdaya of Vāghhaṭa (seventh-eighth century) and the
Rudraviniśchaya of Mādhavakara (eighth-ninth century) were
composed during the period under review. The study of politi-

cal science was popular with the nobility. A notable contribu-
tion to this branch of study was Kāmandaka’s Nītisāra (seventh
century). For the primary education of ordinary people there must
have been a large number of smaller educational institutions, every-
where in the country, not probably always under a teacher of the
Brahmana Community. The Kāyasthas or clerks, who were employed
by the rulers and merchants, apparently learnt how to keep accounts
and to draw up documents in such primary schools. People of
several communities, including the Brāhmaṇas and Karanās, took to
the profession of the scribe. Teachers of primary schools, sometimes
called liṭiśāla, were usually known as dārakāchārya (children’s tea-
cher). The alphabets were learnt by writing them by fingers on the

24 Grants of land were made by kings in favour of gods and Brāhmaṇas for the sake
of merit. Granting lands and protecting the gifts made by former rulers were regarded
as equally meritorious. Confiscation of the gift-lands by a later ruler of the country
was regarded as especially unworthy of kings. Charters of the post-Gupta period often
mention that a king made a particular grant on realising the transitoriness of life and
prosperity,
ground covered by sand or fine dust. Children of rich men often used to write on wooden boards with some kind of coloured pencil. As already pointed out, Vātsyāyana’s Kāmasūtra suggests a high standard of general education at least amongst the wealthy men and women of the city. Rich and cultured families often employed special tutors for the education of boys and girls.

Since most of the professions had become hereditary, technical education was usually imparted in the family. Sometimes, however, young students attached themselves as apprentices to master artisans for an agreed sum of money and an agreed number of years. According to Nārada (v. 16-21) apprentices, after learning particular arts and crafts, had to work gratis for some years for the master as compensation.

The life of the people, at least of the upper classes, was dominated by ceremonies, important and unimportant. The ideal of moral standard was high. It was believed that, unlike the contemporary iron age which was regarded as full of sin, there had been a golden age in olden times when there was no sin on earth, and the kings are often described as making particular efforts to restore the moral standard of the golden age. The Smṛiti writers such as Yājñavalkya prescribed the following virtues to be observed by all classes of the people: non-injury to living beings, truthfulness, non-stealing, purity, restraint of senses, charity, self-control, kindness and forgiveness. Unfortunately this was actually an ideal, and it was admitted that the percentages of sin and virtue among the people were respectively seventy-five and twenty-five. It should, however, be admitted that the people were conscious of the ideal. Kings are often found to have granted lands to Brāhmaṇa householders to help them in performing the five daily maḥāyajñas which were (1) lecturing on sacred knowledge, (2) presenting libations of water to the manes of deceased ancestors, (3) offering oblations to gods by throwing clarified butter into the consecrated fire, (4) offering a portion of the daily meal to all creatures, and (5) reception of guests. But, as indicated by the forms of marriage and the classes of sons recognised by the early law-givers, the standard of sexual morality does not appear to have been high, at least in the earlier part of the period under survey. According to Hiuan Tsang, the Indians ‘are of hasty and irresolute temperaments, but of pure moral principles. They will not take any thing wrongfully and they yield more than fairness requires. They fear the retribution for sins in other lives and make light of what conduct produces in this life. They do not practise deceit and keep their sworn obligations.’

This is a general estimate, as he often notices peculiar charac-

25 HTW, i, p. 171.
teristics of the people of a particular area. The people of the northwest, from Laghman to Rajauri, e.g., are described as ‘coarse and plain in personal appearance, of rude violent dispositions, with vulgar dialects and of scant courtesy and little fairness; they do not belong to India proper but are inferior peoples of frontier stocks’.26

Pilgrimage to holy places such as Prayāga, Gaṅgāsāgara-saṅgama, Varāhakshetra (on the Kauśikī in Nepal), Gaya, Benares, Prabhāsā (in Kāthiāwār), Pushkara (near Ajmer), Kedāra (in the Himalayas) became popular. Sometimes persons (usually those suffering from incurable diseases or extreme old age) voluntarily immolated themselves in the holy waters of a tīttha. Sūdēlha of departed ancestors was considered more effective if it was performed at a holy place. Gifts were regarded as more meritorious if made on auspicious occasions such as a solar or lunar eclipse, vernal or autumnal equinox, and the sun’s entry into a zodiac. The conception of the auspiciousness of particular days for the performance of ceremonies gradually gained great popularity. The importance attached to auspicious moments and signs in regard to marriage may be traced as early as the days of the Grīhyasūtras; but its growing popularity in later times is testified to by Vātsyāyana and Varāhamihira. Vātsyāyana favoured marriage when signs, omens, portents and upāśrutis (supernatural voices heard as a result of mystic invocations of gods or occult utterances heard especially at night) were favourable. Varāhamihira gives details of a developed sākunasāstra or ‘the science of omens’. Signs observed at the time of varana (the selection of the bride) were considered important for the selection or rejection of a girl. Some of the vratas such as the ekādaśīvrata seem to have become popular with the upper classes. Such popular ceremonies, many of which appear to have been non-Aryan in origin27 and were gradually adopted by the upper classes, were coming to be a dominant factor in the life of the people. Some of the early festivals referred to by Vātsyāyana have been mentioned before. The autumnal worship of Durgā, which was perhaps originally a non-Aryan cult, is mentioned by Hinan Tsang, Alberuni and Sandhyākara Nandi, and was becoming popular with the upper strata of society.

II. ECONOMIC CONDITION

The materials available for the reconstruction of the economic history of Northern India for the period in question are meagre. Some

26 Ibld., p. 284.
27 (This is at best an assumption, not supported by any positive evidence—Ed.)
Information may be gathered from stray references in literary works as well as technical treatises like those on Arthaśāstra, Dharmaśāstra and Kāmaśāstra. Kalhana's chronicle of Kashmir also gives some valuable information for our period. But contemporary documents dealing with economic data are not available. This is all the more strange and regrettable, as we definitely know that the kings of the age had a record office styled akṣhapāṭala and even district officers had pustupālas or record-keepers attached to them. The officer in charge of the akṣhapāṭala department was a very important person in the state, who had a number of subordinate officers under him. From some Bengal records of the Gupta age it is learnt that the pustupālas kept a record of the state lands and, on applications for the purchase of such lands for religious purposes by private persons, were asked to report whether land of the price, quality and measurement quoted by the parties was available or not. This no doubt suggests the prevalence of some sort of survey. Later records sometimes mention pieces of land as belonging to particular persons and yielding particular amounts of revenue or measures of grain. This also points to the existence of survey-records. Unfortunately no such records of ancient times have come down to us.

1. Land and Land-tenure

The largest part of the population lived in compact groups in villages which were mostly dependent on agriculture, although some of them were exclusively inhabited by people of other professions. The villages usually consisted of three parts, viz., residential area, arable land, and pasture land. Reference is sometimes made to barren tracts, forests, pits, canals, tanks, temples, roads, and cattle-tracks pertaining to the villages. There were numerous cities and towns in all parts of the country. They were usually developed round the residences of rulers, places of pilgrimage and centres of trade. While the villagers were chiefly dependent on the produce of the soil, and only partly on industry and commerce, the people of cities and towns followed mainly commercial and industrial pursuits, although some of them engaged themselves in agricultural, political, judicial and military activities. Cities were characterised by wealth and luxury while the villagers were mostly poor. There was also a marked distinction between the culture of the polished and clever citizens and that of the simple village folk.

The copper-plate grants usually refer to the free gift of pieces of land (sometimes cultivated, but often waste) or of entire villages made by kings in favour of Brāhmaṇas or religious institutions. Sometimes state lands were sold to particular parties, occasionally for the
latter's perpetual enjoyment, but usually to enable them to make free gifts. Most of the free gifts of land were regarded as aprada, sāsana, chūturvaiayagrāma, brahmadeva etc., and their perpetual enjoyment by the persons (and their heirs), or institutions, in whose favour they were made, was ensured, although they were often without any right of alienation by sale or mortgage. They were governed by the custom regarding permanent endowments of money called mūlya, nivī or akshayanīcī of which only the interest was to be enjoyed by the donees. In many cases the donated lands were delimited by artificial devices such as chaff and charcoal or pegs. Sometimes the cultivators were asked to delimit a piece of land (apparently waste land) of the required measure outside their own fields. Gifts of land were usually rent-free; but in some cases a fixed rent is also mentioned in connection with gifts, while in others there is no specific mention that the land was made rent-free. The loss of the royal charter registering a rent-free gift involved the loss of immunity from taxation, and a fresh charter was required for the renewal of the privilege.

Free gifts of land usually carried with them certain immunities and privileges which were not exactly the same in all cases and in all localities; one of these was the immunity from the entry of chātra and bhata (substituted by the word chhātra in some Vākāṭaka inscriptions), which are often explained as regular and irregular troops respectively, but may actually signify policemen and peons. According to some inscriptions of Western India, the gift land was made a holding 'not to be even pointed at with the hand by any of the royal officers'. In many cases, the gift land is clearly exempted from all taxes and burdens. The grant of rent-free villages usually carried with it the assignment of all kinds of income accruing to the Crown. In some cases, the donees of villages, who were to receive all the taxes in kind and cash that the cultivators had till then paid to the king, are known to have been allowed the right of enjoying the fines for 'the ten offences' committed in the villages. But sometimes a village was granted without the right of enjoying the fines for theft and other offences (cf. chora-danda-varjita, chora-drohaka-varja, sa-chaur-oddharana, etc.) Often the privilege of enjoying the upari-kara or the rent from temporary tenants also accompanied the gift of a village. This possibly shows that in some cases the donees

28 These ten minor offences were possibly theft, killing of living beings not in accordance with the precept, pursuit of the wives of others, harshness of languages, untruthfulness, slandering others, incoherent conversation, coveting the property of others, thinking of harming others and tenacity in doing wrong (CH, iii, p. 189, n.)
were allowed to enjoy the dues from the permanent tenants only (cl. *mukt-oparikara* in certain charters).

It seems that when the free gift was that of a piece of arable land belonging to the state, it practically became a freehold in most cases; but, in regard to the free gift of villages, merely the state-share of the produce and other dues from the inhabitants were conveyed to the donees. The villagers are often specifically ordered to be obedient to the commands of the donees and to pay them regularly the royal share of the produce (*bhāga*), periodical supplies of fruits, firewood, flowers, etc., which they had to furnish to the king (*bhoga*), the tax to be paid besides the grain share (*kara*), the king's share of certain crops payable in cash (*hirunya*), duties (*pratyaya*), etc., while the future kings are requested not to collect their dues from the villages in question.29 It was the custom not to confiscate such gift-lands; but sometimes it is clearly stated that a village granted to Brāhmaṇas could be confiscated in case the donees were guilty of heinous crimes such as rebellion against the Crown.30 Unscrupulous rulers like the Kashmirian Sañkaravarman often resumed lands in the possession of free-holders.

The *sānasas* of ancient Indian rulers were of several categories. In many cases, land was granted as a free gift of a rent-free holding.31 Sometimes a piece of land was sold at a specified price but was made a perpetually rent-free holding.32 In some other cases, the land is said to have been 'given' but a specified rent was fixed for it.33 There were other cases34 in which land was given without any clear specification whether it was made a free gift or a rent-free holding. There is little doubt that in many cases the word 'given' actually meant 'sold', and silence about making the land rent-free is an indication that it was revenue-paying, although certain concessions varying in different cases may have often been allowed to the holders. In ancient India the sale of land was sometimes theoretically represented as a gift. This is definitely suggested by the *Mitāksharā* on the Yājñavalkya-smṛti, (ii. 114).35 It is also supported by the quotation of the imprecatory verses, usually found in charters re-

29 *Sl.*, p. 372.
34 *Cf*. the Parbatiya plates of Vanamūla of Prāgjyotisha.
35 *Cf*. *sthāvāraṇayā vikraya-pratisheardhitam...dāna-prāśaṇśachha vikraye = pi kur-
cording free gifts of land, in a deed of sale recorded in the Madras Museum Plates of the time of king Narendra-dhavala of Orissa.

Besides those who enjoyed the rent-free (possibly partial in some cases) holdings of different classes referred to above, which covered only a small portion of the agricultural land of the country, there was the large number of common cultivators. Little is known about their rights in the soil. The fact that some inscriptions speak of a piece of land as belonging to one but under the cultivation of a different person shows that some of the cultivators were non-proprietary or ex-proprietary tenants. The specification of immunities and privileges in the land-grants clearly shows that ordinary tenants had not only to pay many kinds of taxes and cesses, but had also a number of other obligations. Privileges of the holders of rent-free villages are specified as follows: 'together with the mango and mahūṇa trees', 'together with the ground and the space above it', 'together with land and water', 'together with treasures hidden underground' (sa-nidhi; s-opanidhi); 'together with fish and grass' (sa-matsya; sa-trīna). These and other similar expressions show that the ordinary tenants enjoyed none of these rights. They had to provide for the food and other articles of necessity to the royal officials visiting their localities, and also to pay the perquisites on such occasions as the birth of a prince or the marriage of a princess. This is suggested not only by the inscriptions but also by the Dharmāṣṭras and other literary works. Such proprietary rights were only enjoyed by the kings, by the freeholders of landed properties, and apparently also by the various categories of subordinate chiefs or landlords mentioned in inscription as rājan, sāmanta, rājānaka (or rāṇaka), etc. According to Hiuan Tsang, 'ministers of state and common officials have all their portions of land and are maintained by the cities assigned to them'. But the officers had no right of alienation.36

Uncultivated land belonged to the state, while the ownership of cultivated land, often claimed theoretically on the king's behalf, lay actually with the tenants (with the exception of non-proprietary cultivators) who were bound to pay to the state a share of the produce but could not be easily dispossessed of their fields.36a Brihaspati and others speak of particular classes of people like the Śūdra who could not possess the lands of a Brāhmaṇa by sale, partition, or in lieu of

36 Arthasāstra, ii, 1; Sukranātiśāra, i, 211.
36a According to Manu (ix, 44) a person who made a piece of fallow land arable by felling the trees became the owner of the soil, although the exact nature of the ownership is difficult to determine. Enjoyment of a field by three generations is said to have caused proprietary right; but such a field also, as well as a house inherited from ancestors, could be estranged from the owner by the king's will (Nārada, i, 90.
wages'. They further say that when the land is for sale, there is a right of pre-emption in favour of full brothers and other relations, neighbours, creditors, and co-villagers in order. This points to the right of transfer of land exercised by ordinary occupants. An early authority quoted in the Mitākṣarā (Y., ii. 114) says that land is transferred with the asset of villagers, relations, neighbours and co-sharers, but does not refer to the king or his officials. 37

2. Agriculture

The agriculturist householders played a very important part in the economic life of India. Although the inscriptions of the period under survey show that large areas of land were uncultivated or covered with jungle, they also point to the gradual expansion of cultivation. This may have been due mainly to the increase in population. Riparian regions of the country were densely populated and were almost fully under cultivation. The Chinese pilgrim Hiuan Tsang bears testimony to the fact that almost in every part of Northern India, from the borders of Afghanistan to those of Burma, fields were regularly cultivated and produced grains, fruits and flowers in great abundance, but 'as the districts vary in their natural qualities they differ also in their natural products'. He makes a general mention of mango, tamarind, madhuca, jujube, wood-apple, myrobalan, tīnduka, udumbara, plantain, cocoanut and jack-fruit among fruits, of rice and wheat, ginger, mustard, melons, pumpkins and olibanus as the pro-

xi, 27), although the king was requested not to upset a householder's house or field (xi, 42). Normally therefore agriculturists were not dispossessed of their fields.

According to many writers, a person earned a certain right even merely by cultivating a field which had been falling fallow for five or three years, or only one year, and was technically known as atacī, khila and ardha-khila respectively, but its legitimate owner could reclaim it from the cultivator, who, however, could keep his profit and had to be indemnified by the owner for his labours (Nārada, xi, 23-27). Many inscriptions speak of a village or a piece of land being granted according to the custom governing bhūmi-chhidra (i.e., 'land unfit for cultivation'; kṛṣṇa-avagya bhūḥ of the Vaiśnavas, Vaiśya, 18; cf. bhūmi-chhidra-varāhama of the Kaṇṭhīya Arthasastra), which endowed the donee with the right of a person who makes the fallow land arable for the first time. See EI, i, p. 74 (where however kṛṣṇa-avagya bhūḥ has been wrongly taken to mean 'land fit for cultivation') see Jolly. Hindu Law and Custom, pp. 196-97. The bhūmi-chhidra-nyāya is called in some inscriptions bhūmi-chhidra-apidhāna-nyāya (i.e., the custom governing the reclamation of land unfit for cultivation). In the Kānauj plates of Vaidyadeva, the gift land is said to have been bhū-chhidra-nācha aikīśītā-karagrāhyam (i.e., a bhū-chhidra from which no kara, was to be levied) and sarv-aṅga-sainyaktaṃ karapakara-carītām (i.e., endowed with all āya and up-āya but free from kara and upakara). This, supported by other epigraphic records, suggests that land granted according to the bhūmi-chhidra-nyāya was free from the dues styled kara.

ducts of the fields, and of gold, silver, white jade and crystal lenses among other products of the country. Special mention has often been made of the produce of particular areas, e.g., the sugar-cane and sugar candy of Gandhāra; grapes and saffron of Uḍḍiyāna; pulse and wheat of Bolor; sugar-cane, grapes, mango, udumbara and plantain of Parṇotsa; upland rice and spring wheat of Takka; upland rice of Jullundur; upland rice and sugar-cane of Kaunšambi; jackfruit of Puṇḍavardhana; and jack-fruit and cocoa of Kāmarūpa. According to the pilgrim, Magadhā produced a kind of rice with large grain of extraordinary savour and fragrance called by the people 'the rice of the grandee', while the country about the Pārśīvātra mountain produced, besides spring wheat, a peculiar kind of rice which became ready for cutting in 60 days. The most important crop of Bengal was paddy, and Kālidāsa's Rāghūvaīśā (iv. 39) incidentally speaks of the popular method of rice cultivation in that country. The reference is to the system of transplanting paddy plants in the fields from a seed-bed where paddy had been sown broadcast. The other two methods of rice cultivation, as now prevalent, are sowing by drill and by broadcast which must have been also known in ancient times. The processes of reaping and thrashing, which were not exactly the same in different parts of the country, appear to have been similar to those practised in various regions today. Irrigation of the fields was regarded necessary in many parts of the country and cultivators often combined in excavating irrigational canals. Sometimes artificial lakes were created by the rulers for irrigational purposes and measures were adopted for the prevention of floods. Interesting in this connection is the history of the Sudarśana lake and the activities of the engineer Suyya during the reign of king Avantivarman of Kashmir. The Sudarśana lake was constructed by Maurya Chandragupta's viceroy in Kāthiāwār by drawing the water of several hill streams into a natural hollow, and then blocking their combined course with a dam. Irrigation canals from the lake were dug by the Yavana governor of the country during the reign of Maurya Aśoka. The importance of this lake in the economic life of local agriculturists is proved by the fact that the dam was repaired at a great cost at the interval of centuries by the local governors during the reigns of Saka Rudradāman of Western India and the Gupta Emperor Skanda-gupta. For the want of proper regulation of the waters of the Vitastā and also of any system of drainage and irrigation in its valley, Kashmir was often overtaken by disastrous floods and the price of a Khārī (about 2½ Bengal maunds) of paddy rose to 1050 dināras (apparently cowries). Suyya changed the confluence of the Sindhu and the Vitastā to a new place
and diverted the combined waters of the two streams into the deepest part of the Wular lake. He then constructed stone embankments along this course for seven Yojanas (about 42 miles) and thus reclaimed a vast marshy area where he founded flourishing villages protected by circular dikes. The results of these operations are described by Kalhana (v. 116-17) as follows: 'There where previously from the beginning of things the purchase price of a Khārī of paddy was 200 dināras in times of great abundance, in that very land of Kashmiri henceforth—O wonder!—a khārī of paddy came to be brought for 36 dināras.' This incidentally shows that ordinarily the price of about 2½ Bengal maunds of paddy was 290 cowries; but its famine price rose up to 1050 cowries, while in times of abundance it was only 36 cowries. Usually, in ancient India, the produce of the field was very cheap and the purchasing power of coins was great.

According to Hsuan Tsang, taxation was light and forced service sparingly used, while the king’s tenants paid one-sixth of the produce as rent. According to Smriti writers, the king could demand one-third or one-fourth of the crops in times of distress. Manu (vii. 130) and others permit the king to take one-sixth, one-eighth or one-twelfth of the yield of grain, while Brihaspati and others prescribe one-sixth of awned or bearded grain, one-eighth of grain in pods, one-tenth of crops grown on recently cultivated fallow land, one-eighth from lands sown in the rainy season and one-sixth from those that had spring crops. Manu also allows one-fiftieth of cattle and gold and one-sixth of trees, flesh, honey, ghee, perfumes, herbs, liquids, flowers, roots, fruits and other things. It seems that the rates varied according to the locality and time; but the general rate was one-sixth. The revenue was paid once a year or once in six months according to the custom prevailing in the area. As regards minerals, Hsuan Tsang has often made special mention of them in respect of particular countries, e.g., gold and iron of Udāvāna; gold of Darel; gold and silver of Bolor; gold, silver, bell-metal, copper and iron of Takka; and gold, silver, redcopper, crystal lenses and bell-metal of Kulūta.

Besides the above, literary and epigraphic records mention a variety of other products of different parts of the country such as betel-nut, betel vines, date, cotton, citron, pomegranate, etc.

Various land-measures were used in different parts of the country. Unfortunately the area of a particular unit was not the same everywhere. This was partially due to the fact that measuring rods of different length were in use in different localities. The cubit also varied according to the length of the hands of different persons.
Often kings introduced special length of the measuring rod. Some of the most popular land-measures were the *nivartana, pāṭṭikāhāla, kedāra, bhūmi, khaṇḍukāvāpa, pāṭaka, gocharma, khārivāpa, kulyavāpa, dronavāpa, ādharavāpa, nālikāvāpa*, etc.

Originally *go-charman* may have indicated that area of land which could be covered by the hides of cows slaughtered at a sacrifice and which was granted to the priests as sacrificial fee. But the expression was differently interpreted by later authorities. According to Nīlakaṇṭha’s commentary on the *Mahābhārata*, it indicated a piece of land large enough to be encompassed by straps of leather from a single cow’s hide. The *parāśara-sanhitā* and *Bṛhaspatisanhitā* appear to suggest that *go-charman* was that area of land where one thousand cows could freely graze in the company of one hundred bulls. According to the *Vishnu-saṃhitā*, the area of land that was sufficient to maintain a person for a whole year with its produce was called *go-charman*. There is a more specific determination of the area of the *go-charman* in the *saṃhitās* of Sātītapa and Bṛhaspati, according to which it was ten times a *nivartana* which was the area of 390 square cubits (about 4.2/3 acres). Unfortunately the area of the *nivartana* is differently given by different writers. Even according to a variant reading of Bṛhaspati’s text the *nivartana*, which was one-tenth of the *go-charman*, was the area of 210 × 210 square cubits (about 2½ acres). Bhāskarāchārya’s *Liitavatī* speaks of the *nivartana* as 200 × 200 square cubits in area.

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38 Vaṅgāvāsi ed., i. 30, 23; caudhi eka-taṇṭukā charma-raja...eka go-charmanā kṛitaya rajāḥ ākṛitvā-bhūḥ = go-charma-mātrā.
39 Calcutta edition, xii, 43: gavāni śata...s-aika-vrīshāṁ yatra tishṭhante = u-yonitram| tat kṣetram daśaṇītum go-charman paraśkritītanam||
40 Vaṅgāvāsi ed. (Unaviṣeṣati-sanhitāḥ), Verse 9: sa-vrīshāṁ go-saharṣāṁ tu yatra tishṭhate = a-tandritam | bāla-catsa-prasūtānāṁ tad go-charma iti smṛtām||
41 Vaṅgāvāsi ed., v, 179; eko śnyād yad-utpannaṁ nāraśa saṃvatsaraṁ phalam | go-charma-mātrā sa kṣaṇaṁ stokā vā yadi vā bahu||
42 Vaṅgāvāsi ed. (Unaviṣeṣati-sanhitāḥ): aasa-hastena dandena triṁśād-dandam nivartanam | dāsa tān = eva go-charma dattvā svargē mahāyate||
43 Loc. cit., verse 8: dāsa-hastena dandena triṁśād-dandā nivartanam | dāsa tān = eva viśātō go-charma-aṁu-mahā-phalam||
44 Cf. Vījāñēśvara’s *Mitākṣhara* on the *Yājnavalkya-smrīti*, i. 210: saptā-hastena dandena triṁśād-dandatā-nivartanam |
See also: Sabakalpadrumā-parāśikā, p. 160. The *Prāpattoṣṇi Tantra*, Vasumati ed., p. 106, ascribes the same verse to the *Śecodayaśa-fikākāra*.
45 Calcutta ed., i, 6: ... tathā karaṇāṁ daśakane vāṇīkhaṇ | nivartanam vīnāśati-vanśa-saṃkhyātih kṣetram ca tathābhāṣīt ca bhuvār-mahādhaṁ||
(about 2 acres). Elsewhere\textsuperscript{46} we have pointed out that the \textit{nivartana} was $240 \times 240$ square cubits (about 3 acres) according to the \textit{Kaut\-tiliya Artha\-\v{s}\-stra} (ii. 20), but only $120 \times 120$ square cubits (about 3% acre) according to its commentator. These differences were due mainly to the varying length of the cubit and the measuring rod, of which there were no recognised standards.\textsuperscript{47} But the very basis of the measurement of the \textit{go-charman} was, in many parts of the country, apparently vague and uncertain.

\textit{Hala} originally meant that area of land which could be annually cultivated by one plough, i.e., about 5 acres. According to the epigraphic records of ancient Bengal $4 \textit{\=advap\=a} = 1 \textit{drona\=v\=apa}$; $8 \textit{drona\=v\=apas} = 1 \textit{kula\=v\=apa}$; and $5 \textit{kula\=v\=apas} = 1 \textit{p\=\=aka}$. A \textit{kh\=a\=v\=apa} was very probably sixteen times a \textit{drona\=v\=apa}, as 16 \textit{dron\=as} = 1 \textit{kh\=a\=ri} of grains. Some of these are popular land-measures in some parts of Bengal and the adjoining area even today; but the difficulty is that, the \textit{don} (\textit{drona\=v\=apa}) as recognised in one district is not the same in area as the \textit{don} of a different locality. We may, however, form a rough idea about the area of the \textit{drona\=v\=apa}, at least of ancient Bengal. \textit{Drona\=v\=apa} really indicates an area of land requiring one \textit{drona} measure of grains (apparently paddy in the case of Bengal) for being sown with. According to the Bengal school of Sm\-\=rita, 256 handfuls of paddy make one \textit{\=adhaka} and 1024 handfuls one \textit{drona}. One \textit{drona} of paddy would thus be between 1 \textit{maund} 24 \textit{seers} and 2 \textit{maunds}, and would sow $1\frac{1}{2}$ acres to 2 acres of land in broadcast sowing, although the transplantation of the seedlings of this quantity of paddy would require between 5½ and 6½ acres of land. Following this calculation, a \textit{kula\=v\=apa}, which is 8 times a \textit{drona\=v\=apa}, would be between 12 and 16 acres or between 42 and 54 acres. That the \textit{kula\=v\=apa} was a rather large area of land is indicated by its price. Bengal inscriptions of the Gupta age show that state lands were sold at the rate of 4 \textit{din\=\=aras} a \textit{kula\=v\=apa} of cultivated land, and 2 or 3 \textit{din\=\=aras} a \textit{kula\=v\=apa} of fallow land and that 1 \textit{din\=\=ara} of gold was equal to 16 \textit{ru\=pak\=as} of silver. Considering the present price of arable and fallow land in the rural areas of Bengal and also the fact that a Gupta silver coin must have had far greater purchasing power than our rupee, the \textit{kula\=v\=apa} seems to have indicated a considerably wide area of land. The suggestion seems to be further supported by its subdivisions. \textit{N\=\=li\=ka} is the same as \textit{prast\=\=ha} which is usually regarded as one-sixteenth of a \textit{drona}. A \textit{n\=\=li\=ka\=v\=apa} would thus appear to the smaller

\textsuperscript{46} \textit{Successors of the S\=\=al\=a\=v\=ahanas}, p. 380, note.
\textsuperscript{47} See my paper on the \textit{Kula\=v\=apa}, etc., in the \textit{Bh\=\=arata-Kaumudi}, Part II, pp. 943-48.
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than one-hundredth of a kulyavāpa. The fact that a few nālikāvāpas of land are sometimes found to have been granted by ancient Indian kings shows that it was also not a quite inconsiderable unit.

3. Industries and Trade

The artisans formed an important section of the population. Amongst the people following particular arts and crafts, that were associated with the life of a city-bred man of wealth, Vātsyāyana’s Kāmasūtra makes special mention of the goldsmith, jeweller, diamond-cutter, dyer of clothes, florist or garland-maker, perfumer, washerman, barber and wine-seller. This work also suggests that while vessels made of gold and silver were used by rich people, those of baser metals, such as copper, bell-metal or iron were used by the ordinary, and those made of earth, split bamboo, wood and skins were in use among the poor people. These arts and crafts, especially the professions of the potter, carpenter blacksmith and cobbler, had therefore an important place in the life of the people. The potters not only made various kinds of pots, but also dolls, images and other things. Making wooden pots was only a small part of the carpenter’s job: because he was responsible for all wooden things required by the people, e.g., carriages, boats, ships, house-frames, furniture, images, dolls, etc. The blacksmith’s services were required for the manufacture and repair of agricultural implements as well as various kinds of iron instruments and tools. The chief work of the cobbler was of course shoe-making. The work of the ivory-worker and stone-cutter should also be mentioned in this connection. The evidence of the flourishing business of the stone-cutters is scattered all over the country in the shape of stone inscriptions and images and the remnants of stone-buildings. Goldsmiths also made metal images. Conch-shell workers had a flourishing business at least in some parts of the country. There were tailors especially in the north-western districts. Other interesting professions include those of the weavers, scribes, bankers and fishermen. Hiuan Tsang speaks of the popularity of the silk called kauśeua, the linen called kṣauma, the texture of fine wool called kambala, and muslin and calico, which were produced by weavers probably belonging to different classes. The manufacture of textiles was an important industry. Cloth was manufactured all over the country; but Bengal and Gujarat were famous for their textile products. Bengal produced silk cloth as well as muslin, a cotton fabric of the finest quality, from very ancient times.

People following a particular industry or trade were usually organised in corporate groups. Such trade and craft guilds of mer-
chants, bankers, weavers, oil-men, stone-cutters and others are often mentioned in inscriptions. Yājñavalkya (ii. 265) suggests that husbandmen and artisans could be paid their wages by a guild or corporation of which they were members. The affairs of the guilds were managed by 2, 3 or 5 members who formed the executive committee. But not much is known about the relation between the labourer and the employer. According to Brihaspati, hired persons could be paid in cash or by a share of the crops of the fields they attended to or of the milk of the cattle they tended. Nārada says that an employer had to pay regularly wages to the hired servant at the commencement, middle or end of the work, just as he had promised to do. Where the amount of wages had not been fixed, the servant of a trader, a herdsman and an agricultural servant used to get a tenth part respectively of the profit of the business, the milk of the cows and the produce of the fields. But a carrier who failed to transport the goods forfeited his wages. He was also required to make good every loss excepting that caused by fate or the king. If a man did not perform such work as he had promised to do even after taking wages, he had to pay twice the amount of the wages.

Inland and foreign trade were both in a flourishing condition. Partnership in trade was not unknown. The people of some regions were specially inclined to trade. According to Hiuan Tsang, the majority of the people of Thāneśvar (in Haryana) pursued trade and few were given to farming. Development of trade in a particular area was largely due to the industrial productions being good in quality and large in quantity, as well as the facilities of movement of goods.

The principal centres of internal trade were the cities and towns which were connected with other places by land and water routes. The mention of royal officers in charge of markets, customs, tolls, and ferries, in literary and epigraphic records, points to brisk internal trade from which the state derived considerable revenue. There were also many markets in the rural areas and, although the business activity of such markets was less than that of the towns individually, collectively they must have carried on a very great amount of business. Kings often granted villages together with the market dues to be enjoyed by the donees. A considerable amount of trade was no doubt carried on through the land routes, but the volume of trade passing through the river routes must have been greater. All the important cities and ports were connected by roads, and merchandise was carried in carts or on the back of horses, asses, camels and elephants.
There were several routes between North and South India. One of them passed through Kājañigala in East Bihar, South-West Bengal and Orissa. Another passed through Malwa and Gujarat, or Malwa and Berar, while a third one passed through Kalpi (in the Jalaun district of Uttar Pradesh) and Berar. These routes were also followed by the kings in their military expeditions.

Foreign trade was in an exceptionally flourishing state in the period under review. Epigraphic references to the relation of Samudra-gupta with Ceylon and other islands of the Indian ocean and of Devapāla with the Sailendra rulers of Malaysia point to the close connection of East India and the lands beyond the southern seas. The greatest East Indian sea-port was Tāmralipti near the mouth of the Ganges. It was the home of rich merchants who carried maritime trade with such distant lands as Laiikā and Suvarnadvīpa. The Chinese pilgrim Fa-hien embarked at Tāmralipti on board a great merchant vessel and sailed to Ceylon and Java en route to China. Many other Chinese pilgrims also took this route at a later date; but some of them made a direct voyage from the Malay Peninsula to Tāmralipti. The flourishing state of East India's trade with these distant countries is further suggested by the inscription of Mahānāvika Buddhagupta of Raktamārttikā near the capital of Gauda found in the Wellesley district of the Malay Peninsula. Big ships were often built to carry no less than 500 men on high seas. Maritime trade with the countries of the West was carried on by the West Indian ports especially those in the Gujarat-Kāthiāwār region. The trade with these ports was carried on chiefly by Indian and Arab merchants. West Indian ports like Daibul (Devala, not far from modern Karachi), Barwas (Bharoch or Bhīrgukachha), Valabhī, and Tana (Thana, to the north of Bombay) are mentioned in Arabic sources. After the Arab conquest of Sindh, the Arab merchants are said to have brought the produce of China and Ceylon to the sea-ports of Sindh and from there conveyed them by way of Multan to Turkestan and Khurasan.

From very early times there was a land-route eastwards to South China passing through North Bengal, Assam, Manipur and Upper Burma. Another route for overland foreign trade passed through Sikkim and the Chumbi valley to Tibet and China. Silk and horses appear to have reached Bengal by this route. Tibet could also be reached through Nepal and through Kashmir and Ladakh. There was a much frequented trade route from Northern India to Central Asia through Kābul and Balkh. According to Arab writers, 'caravans were often passing and repassing' between Sindh and Khurasan 'most commonly by the route of Kābul and Bamian'. Another
Central Asian trade-route lay across Kashmir and Ladakh. Kālidāsa’s account of Rāghu’s digvijaya in Persia suggests that, besides a sea-route between Aparānta and the Persian gulf, there was a land route to Persia, still in use, through the Lower Sindhu Valley, Balūchīstan and Makran.

Some of the items of export were precious stones, pearls, cloths, perfumes, incense, spices, drugs, indigo, cocoanuts, ivory, etc., while the items of import were various metals, silk, camphor, corals, horses, etc.

As regards the medium of exchange, coins of gold, silver and copper, often alloyed with other metals, were in use in all parts of the country. Hiuan Tsang says: ‘Rare precious stones of various kinds from the sea-ports are bartered for merchandise. But in the commerce in the country, gold and silver coins, cowries and small pearls are the media of exchange’. Fa-hien also refers to the use of cowries. An inscription of A.D. 448 shows that the Gupta gold coin called dināra was equal to sixteen of the Gupta silver coins styled rūpaka.

About this time, the Gupta gold coins weighed, like their Kushāna prototypes, about 122 grains (actually varying between 117.8 and 127.8 grains), although the Guptas adopted soon after the ancient Indian Suvarṇa standard of 146.4 grains. They appear to have received much of the gold for their coinage from the older coins of the Kushānas and from the influx of gold as a result of the foreign trade with the north-western countries as well as that passing through the East and West Indian ports of their Empire. But the later coins of the Guptas and their imitations often contained an amount of base metal and this may have been due to the scarcity of gold. Some of the powerful kings and important ruling families of the post-Gupta period did not mint any coins at all, or minted them only in a very limited scale. This not only shows that they were using the coins of the earlier ages still in circulation and private punch-marked coins and cowries in exceptionally large quantities, but also that foreign metal was not available as in the earlier ages, possibly owing to adverse balance of trade or a lessening of the volume of foreign trade.

When the Gupta gold coin weighed about 122 grains the weight of the silver coin was about 30 grains (actually varying from 22.8 to 36.2 grains). As therefore about 480 grains of silver (weight of 16 rūpakas which were equal to a dināra) were equivalent to about 122 grains of gold, the ratio between silver and gold was approximately 4 to 1. But there is some evidence to show that the ratio was about 9 to 1 in the second century A.D. This ratio thus indicates the extraordinary cheapness of gold and dearth of silver in the age of the Guptas which can hardly be satisfactorily explained in the present
state of our knowledge. Some scholars suggest that it was due to
the stoppage of the silver importation due to the break-up of the
Roman empire, while others think that the dināra in question actu-
ally meant not the Gupta gold coin weighing about 122 grains but
the so-called imitation Gupta coins of debased gold varying in
weight between 75 and 92.5 grains. But the comparative scarcity
of silver seems to be a better explanation. Sometimes when the
state did not mint any metallic money at all, the couries were linked
up with silver money by counting them in Kapardaka-purāṇa, i.e.,
the value of an ancient silver coin called purāṇa (usually a private
issue weighing 32 ratis) counted in courie-shells. Sometimes the
principal food grain of a locality was used as money. In ancient
Kashmir often the salaries of royal officials were paid in paddy col-
clected in the king's store-houses.

The authorities are not unanimous in regard to the rate of śulka to
be levied on articles of merchandise, possibly because the rates
varied owing to the difference of the article, the place and the time.
According to Vishnū (III. 29-30), the king took one-tenth in the mer-
chandise produced in his territory, but one-twentieth on goods im-
ported from a foreign country, while Yājñavalkya (II. 261) allowed
one-twentieth of the prices of goods. The Arthaśāstra (II. 22), how-
ever, prescribes one-fifth of the price of the commodities as a gen-
eral rule and varying rates of one-sixth, one-tenth, one-fifteenth, one-
twentieth and one-twentyfifth on different kinds of articles. The
Baudhāyana Dharmasūtra (I. 10, 15-16) prescribes one-twelfth of the
cargo brought by sea. No tax was levied on goods carried on the
shoulders. According to Śukra (IV. 2, 109-111) śulka was to be levi-
ed on a particular commodity in a particular country (kingdom or
district) only for once.

According to a rule, attributed to Vasishṭha, the interest payable
by the debtor was one-eightieth per month of the money borrowed
when something was mortgaged by way of security. Another rule
was two, three, four, and five per cent per month respectively from
Brāhmaṇa, Kshatriya, Vaiśya or Śūdra debtors, when nothing was
pledged as security. Vvāsa prescribes the monthly rates of one-
eightieth of the principal in case of a mortgage, one-sixtieth in case
of a surety and 2 per cent in case of personal security. According
to Yājñavalkya (II. 38), merchants carrying on trade by traversing
dense forests and sea-faring traders had respectively to pay 10 and
20 per cent per month. The creditor could not recover from the
debtor at one time, for interest and principal, more than double of
the money lent. There is difference of opinion as regards the inter-
ests on articles lent; but according to Yājñavalkya (II. 39), in case of the loan of cattle and female slaves their progeny was the interest while in the cases of liquids, clothes and grains the maximum recoverable was respectively eight, four and three times.

 Guilds often received permanent deposits of money on interest to be utilized for some charitable objects.

4. General Condition of the People

The country was rich in agricultural and mineral resources and acquired immense wealth as a result of extensive foreign trade. This is suggested by such facts as that the province of Sindh paid to the Caliphs' exchequer no less than 11,500,000 dirhams annually. According to Elliot, 1,000,000 dirhams were equivalent to about £23,000. The accumulation of precious metals in the temples is also worth noticing in this connection. Muhammad ibn Qasim is said to have looted 13200 mans (between 330 and 1320 maunds) of gold from a single temple of Multan. But it has to be remembered that the prosperity of a particular area was sometimes affected by bad government, war, pestilence, failure of crops and famine. Under benevolent rulers, however, the people lived a comparatively happy life, and this condition seems to have prevailed during the rule of the early Imperial Guptas and many of their successors. A study of the early history of Kashmir, the only territory for which considerable details are available, shows that, at least in that country, the chance of happiness in the life of the common people came only occasionally, and that, even under a good government, the people were not properly protected against the harassment of petty royal officials like the kāyasthas who were responsible for the collection of taxes and other works affecting the people. Yājñavalkya gives a prominent place, amongst the king's duties, to the protection of the subjects from the oppressions of the swindlers, thieves, rogues, dangerous persons and others and especially from those of the kāyasthas. This was no doubt the ideal of honest kings whose number was not small in different parts of India. The standard of the king's duty towards the subjects, as laid down by various ancient writers (cf. Mbh., II, 5 Rām., II. 100), was very high and rulers falling short of this standard were denounced as sinners. This attitude must have influenced, generally speaking, an Indian king's relations with his subjects. That the general impression of the foreigners in this respect was good is suggested by Hsuan Tsang's statements: 'as the government is honestly administered and the people live together on good terms, the criminal class is small';
as the government is generous, official requirements are few; families are not registered and individuals are not subject to forced labour contributions,

taxation being light and forced service being sparingly used, every one keeps to his hereditary occupation and attends to his patrimony;

tradesmen go to and fro bartering their merchandise after paying light duties at ferries and barrier stations'.

All this, coming from the pen of a traveller who was several times attacked by robbers in his journeys, no doubt suggests that the people of India, generally speaking, lived more happily than those of other parts of the ancient world. This is further suggested by the artistic, literary and scientific activities, which presuppose a peaceful and prosperous condition of the country. During the period under review Indians made remarkable progress in many spheres of human activity. Reference may be made to the literary productions of Kālidāsa, Bāna, and Bhavabhūti, to the astronomical and mathematical works of Āryabhaṭa, Varāhamihira and Brahmagupta, and to the achievements of the sculptors, architects and artisans of the period.

The economic and material condition of the people living in cities was more satisfactory than of those residing in villages. The ruling class and rich men lived in considerable luxury. The agriculturists, artisans and small traders of the villages were also not in want of food and clothing. They, however, lived simple lives and their wants were few. It was a recognised duty of the king to keep the agriculturists contented as well as to be helpful to the cultivators, artisans and traders. The policy of some kings like the great Lalitāditya of Kashmir (cf. Rājatarāṅgiṇī, IV, 344 ff.) was, however, against the accumulation of much wealth in the hands of the villagers lest they might grow powerful enough to flout the authority of the king and rise in rebellion against him. But the history of Kashmir shows that, in spite of this attitude of the kings, the rise of formidable Dāmaras (landed rural aristocracy) from amongst the village agriculturists could hardly be prevented. The landless labourers and the antyājās who did not follow any paying profession appear to have lived from hand to mouth.

The order of social precedence was fairly fixed among the upper classes and there seems to have been little rivalry among the various castes. The birth of an individual in a particular caste, high or low, was regarded as a result of good or bad deeds performed by him in his previous birth. This belief also usually induced the people to follow the path of righteousness as laid down in the scriptures. Brāhmaṇas and recluses were respected by all classes. Old men
and women commanded respect of the younger people especially of their own caste. People normally pursued their hereditary professions peacefully. They tried to perform the duties of householders prescribed by the śāstras. Entertainment of guests was regarded as an important duty of the householders. Charity, especially in favour of Brāhmaṇas and religious establishments, was considered a great virtue. Considerable importance was attached to the faithful performance of recognised ceremonies, including the offering of worship to various local deities. The social life of the people was hardly disturbed by communal conflict and different religious sects lived side by side peacefully in all parts of the country.

Normally family life was peaceful. Respect to parents and elders was the established custom. When the son became the head of the family during the old age of the father, he and his wife were respectful towards his parents. The protection of the honour of women was considered a duty of men, especially of husbands and sons.

The general outlook of the people in regard to the problems of life was greatly dominated by the belief in fate and in the effects of karma (deeds).

B. SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC CONDITIONS IN SOUTH INDIA: A.D. 300—900

The country was divided into well-marked territorial divisions like Kuntala, Andhra, Teṇḍaināḍ, Chola, Pāṇḍya and Chera, and the people of every division tended to develop and cherish separate traditions and mores of their own. These local patriotism did not, however, prove a hindrance to the temporary formation of larger political units, as happened under the early Pallavas, and later under the Chāluukiyas of Bādāmi and Vēngi, the Rāṣṭrakūtas, and the Cholas; and they played a considerable part in mitigating the damage to culture likely to ensue on the break up of larger political units.

There is no means of forming a reliable estimate of the population at any time during the centuries under study here; though there is evidence of records of property in land being maintained and sometimes running into minute details, they seem never to have thought of taking a census of the population. In the ports on the sea coast and in the capitals of kingdoms there were undoubtedly considerable numbers of foreigners including Arabs, Jews, Persians, Chinese and Malays; and the Parsis must have come and settled in the north west of the Deccan towards the close of our period. The Sanskrit romance Acantisundarī kathā opens with an eloquent description of Kānchipuram in the seventh century A.D. in which great stress is laid on the
riches and trade and on the learning and practice of fine arts that were the most notable features of life in the city. It is, however, difficult to decide how far such descriptions follow facts and how much is imaginary. The same doubt enjoins caution in the historian’s use of other literary evidences such as the accounts of the citizen (nāgaraka) and his daily life, and of the rules of the social code that we find in works like the Kāmasūtra, the Kuṭṭanāmata, and the Nāgar-asarvasva, the last perhaps slightly later than our period, or the volume or smṛiti literature that can be assigned to it. These accounts are mostly conventional and stereotyped, and we are seldom certain of their date and provenance. It may, therefore, be stated once and for all that while the presence of this literature must be noticed by the historian, he should draw sparingly on it in his reconstructions of the picture of social and economic life of the times.

The bulk of the population was everywhere and at all times Hindus organized in hierarchical castes. There was a tangible connection between caste and occupation, but it was by no means rigid and unalterable. The pressure of new situations and forces was always necessitating changes, though there was no lack of protest from conservatives and even occasional attempts on the part of the political power to stop the changes.

In the early part of our period Buddhism and Jainism had a much larger vogue in South India than at any other time, and this seems to have caused some unsettlement of the Brahmanical social order; but after the Hindu revival of the Pallava period the Hindu tradition gained in clarity and strength, and definite standards of orthodoxy were established all over. But speaking generally, departures from the code were tolerated when expediency demanded it, and numerous instances occur of the upper classes taking to lower occupations, and the lower following those of the classes above them. We hear of Mayūraśarman abandoning his career of learning when he felt that he was insulted by a Pallava cavalier in Kāñchipuram and taking to that of a warrior and founding the Kadamba dynasty of Banavasi. The Daśakumāracharita refers to a colony of Brahmin robbers settled in the Vindhyan forests and turned into Kirātas, by occupation. But the generality of Brahmīns were, as noted by I-ting, regarded as the most honourable caste and held themselves somewhat aloof from the rest. ‘They do not, when they meet in a place, associate with the other three castes, and the mixed classes have still less intercourse with them’.48

What Abu Zaid records in A.D. 916 of the different classes in India

48 Foreign Notices, p. 113.
and their habits may well be accepted as typical of virtually the whole of our period in the South: "The kings of India wear ear-rings of precious stones mounted on gold. They wear round the neck collars of great value made of precious stones, red and green; but pearls have the greatest value and they are used in most cases. In fact pearls constitute the treasure of kings and their financial reserve.

"The generals and high functionaries wear equally collars of pearls. The Indian chiefs are carried in palanquins; they are clothed in a waist-cloth; they hold in the hand an object called chhatra—it is a parasol of peacock feathers; they hold it in the hand to keep off the sun. They are surrounded (when they go out) by their servants.

"There is, in India, a caste the members of which will not eat two from the same plate or even at the same table; they find this a pollution and an abomination. When these persons come to Siraf and one of the principal merchants invites them to a banquet in his house, at which about 100 persons are present, the host should cause to be set before each one of them a plate exclusively reserved for him.

"As to the kings and nobles in India they prepare for them each day eating tables with cocoanot leaves excellenty plaited; they manufacture with these same leaves of cocoanot all sorts of plates and small dishes. When the meal is served they eat the food in these plates and dishes of plaited leaves. When the repast is ended, they throw in the water these tables, plates and dishes of plaited leaves with what remains of the aliments. And they recommence it the next day".49

An early Sanskrit Pallava copper-plate inscription gives some ideas of the diversification of occupations and castes that had come about by the fourth or fifth century A.D.; it means metal and leather workers, dealers in cloth shops, makers of garments and blankets, rope makers, shop-keepers (general), makers of ploughs and other agricultural implements, supervisors of water sources (for agriculture), weavers, and barbers and adds for the sake of completeness all (other) artisans.50 Some of the Vākāṭaka inscriptions contain the express provision that Brahman donees of agrahāras and their descendants were to be loyal to the state and to offer the fullest cooperation in apprehending persons guilty of treason, theft and immorality.51 The caste system was still fluid to some extent and inter-caste marriages, especially among the royalty and nobility, were fairly

51 Early History of the Deccan, p. 106.
frequent. Marriage of young immature girls was coming into vogue, especially among Brahmins, and this led to the discontinuance of the education and upanayana of girls.\textsuperscript{52} The custom of dedicating maidsens to serve in temples as devadāsis, an age-long inheritance, was continued throughout our period. No satisfactory explanation has been found of the relation between the gotras and metronymics of kings mentioned in their charters; the Kadambas, for instance, were Haritiputas of the Mānavya gotra.

Changes in the social conditions of the period of Rāshtrakūṭa rule are reflected in contemporary literature including the writings of the Arabs. Royalty was counted as a separate sub-caste among Kshatriyas, Satkshatriyas (the subkufrias of the Arab writers),\textsuperscript{53} who were even more respected than the Brahmanas. The ordinary Kshatriyas continued to observe the rituals of the twice-born, though Vedic studies were not much in vogue among them, or among the Vaiśyas who were hardly distinguishable from Śūdras. Inter-caste marriages and dinners were condemned in smṛitis and came to be more or less given up by Hindu society as a whole. A section of the Brahmins kept up their original duties and ideals of learning and poverty depending for sustenance on voluntary gifts of land, house and cash from kings and merchants, the land paying lower taxes than usual. Others availed themselves of the concessions the smṛitis allowed to Brahmins in distress and took to agriculture or trade. The position of the Śūdras seems to have improved, and though they could not study the Veda, they became eligible for smārta rituals. They often found employment in the army and rose to relatively high positions. Some classes of workers like shoe-makers, fishermen and washermen were looked upon as semi-untouchables while chandālas and sweepers were completely so and had to live at a distance from cities and villages. Aboriginal tribes like Sabaras and Kirātas lived in the hills and forests and practised strange customs like the offering of human flesh to their deities. Sati and purdāh were practically unknown; the widow's right to inherit the property of her husband was being gradually recognized. Slavery was known, and we find Kātyāyana laying down the rule that a free woman degrades herself into slavery by marrying a slave, though a female slave bearing a child by her master attains freedom thereby. Temples often acquired slaves by purchase or voluntary surrender to escape famine conditions.

There is an increasing stress on the privileges of Brahmins, Medhātithi, for instance, writing towards the close of our period, forbids the infliction of corporal punishment and even money fines on guilty

\textsuperscript{52} Ibid. p. 199.
\textsuperscript{53} Elliot and Dowson, I, 16; Yazdani, I, pp. 309 ff.
Brahmins (on Manu VIII. 124), though following the letter of Manu's
text he permits banishment. The social and religious disabilities of
the Sūdras are also emphasized in the later Puranic and Smṛiti litera-
ture of the period, though there is a relaxation of the originally or-
dained duty of perpetual servitude for the Sūdra, and Medhātithi
(on Manu VIII. 415) allows that the Sūdra of means does no wrong
if he lives an independent life, but denies him the right to perform
smārta rites as a householder, particularly those of marriage—a set-
back on the rule of the preceding age noted above. But if the
rights of the Sūdra are limited, so, at least according to Medhātithi,
are his duties and obligations; he incurs no sin for any act not ex-
pressly prohibited to him or for failure to bathe or worship his
deities.

Social exclusiveness grew in intensity particularly among religious
sects, and penances came to be prescribed for contact with or even
sight of the wrong class of persons. Women were held to be generally
incapable of independent action and the need for their protection
at all stages of their lives by their male relatives was stressed more
and more.

Gift of land was considered the most meritorious form of charity,
and numerous inscriptions show the widespread practice of the form
of charity, besides the construction and endowment of temples, tanks,
schools, gardens, choultries and feeding houses and hospitals.

Then, as now, the service of the state in its civil departments, as
well as the army and the navy (where one was maintained) furnished
openings for all classes of the population being employed, and
many are the instances of Brahmin generals who distinguished
themselves in war. There was often a select body of soldiers, ‘the
king’s companions’ who shared a ceremonial meal with him and
took the vow of defending him with their lives when occasion arose.
Huan Tsang notes that a general in Mahārāṣṭra who met with
defeat had to exchange his soldier’s dress for that of a woman. For-
est and hill tribes furnished a favourite recruiting ground for the
army, especially in times of war. The roads were often infested by
robbers, and any sharp local quarrel or turbulence of a chieftain
might lead to a village being attacked or its cattle being taken away.
In such circumstances the people had generally to carry on their
own defence, and numerous inscribed stones attest the bravery of
many village heroes, especially near forests and mountains.

Conquests often led to considerable migrations of people from
one part of the country to another, resulting in new adjustments in
social and economic relations. Grants of land and other conces-
sions were granted to the immigrants representing the conquering
power at the expense of the local inhabitants. Royal patronage of learning, the arts, and religion was another cause of similar movements. The Chalukyas of Badami and the Rashtrakutas of Malkhed, for instance, imported worshipping priests (archakas) of temples from among the acharyas on the banks of the Ganges. Two tapovanas, forest retreats for worship and penance, dedicated to Kārttikeya as the supreme deity, were started and run in the Bellary region by some teachers from Bengal.

The king and his court led an extravagant and luxurious life quite in contrast to the modest living standards of the rest of the population. The pomp and ceremony of the court that greatly impressed the foreign travellers who visited the Rājās of Vijayanagar in later times were only the culmination of a long development which began perceptibly with the smaller kingdoms with which we are concerned in our period. On the establishment of the royal palace there were numbers of women, chosen specially for their youth and beauty. Some were imported from abroad while others were from among prisoners taken in war. Many were courtesans skilled in the music and dance, while others were concubines of princes, nobles and courtiers. A mistress of the Chalukya king Vijayaditya of Badami, Vināpoṭīgal by name (notice the honorific plural), performed the hiranyagarbhdāna (gift of the golden egg) at Mahākūta and presented to the deity a pedestal (pitha), set with rubies, with a silver umbrella over it. Towards the close of our period Abu Zaid notices that most Indian princes while holding court allowed their women to be seen unveiled by all the men present, even foreigners not excepted. Sulaiman notices the love of ornaments such as gold bracelets set with precious stones that was common to men and women of the time.

Playing with balls (kanduka) and dancing for amusement were recreations favoured of high-born girls and women. It is not possible to decide how far the literary references to drinking parties and goshtis for conversazione were true to the facts of social life or just imaginary accounts.

Higher education was imparted in urban centres like Nasik, Pravarapura, Vatsagulma and Paithan in Vakataka territories, and Kanchipuram, Talagundha, Talakād and other places elsewhere. Buddhist monasteries like those at Vijayapuri and Śrī-Parvata where monks from different countries like Malaya, China and Ceylon congregated were also centres of study. After noticing the good work that went on in the monasteries of Purvāsilā and Avaraśilā in the
kingdom of Dhanakaṭaka by laymen and clerics for several centuries, Hiuan Tsang mentions their decay at the time of his travels saying that “the place is now entirely waste and desert, without either priest or novice”\(^{55}\). But agrahāra colonies of learned Brahmans settled in villages and maintaining themselves from their revenues assigned to them were also quite common and practised and promoted learning in their own way. Some of these Brahmī donees conducted large schools where free education was imparted, and the donee of the Pāṇḍurangapalli grant (c. A.D. 500) is described as a teacher of a hundred Brahmans. The same conditions continued under the Chālukyas of Bādāmi and the Rāṣṭrakūṭas, and Hiuan Tsang describes the people of Mahārāṣṭra as ‘fond of learning’. The capital Vātāpi (Bādāmi) is described in an inscription of Vijayāditya as being adorned by the presence of several thousands of dvijas (twice-born) who were proficient in the ‘fourteen vidyās’, while another record from the city makes a pointed reference to a kind of academy in the phrase Śrimahāchaturvidyā-samudāyan-irchchāśivara i.e., the 2,000 of the academy of the four great sciences. Other inscriptions speak of the fourteen vidyās, and we have traditional reckonings of the two categories—the ‘four vidyās’ being ānvikshiki (philosophy), traiyī (Veda), Vīrtī (economics), and dāṇḍaniti (politics); the fourteen being made up of the four vedas, the six aṅgas, and Purāṇa Mīmāṁsā, Nyāya and Dharmaśāstra. The language of the people, Kannāda is called Prākritabhaṣā, the natural tongue, as opposed to the language of culture—Sanskrit—in the Bādāmi inscription of Vijayāditya’s time. The presence of skilled and literate artisans who could engrave long inscriptions in Sanskrit fairly correctly on stone and copper, and the practice of engraving stone inscriptions in public places frequented by the populace such as walls of temples and fortresses, may well be an indication of a fair proportion of literacy among the general public; we have little direct evidence on the level of popular education or on the organization and working of popular schools.\(^{56}\) There was little change in these conditions of education during the rest of our period. We owe to I-tsing, who was particularly interested in Buddhist education and its institutions at the close of the seventh century, the following account of the relations between the pupil and his teacher, which no doubt held true also of the other contemporary schools of education. The pupil goes to his teacher at the first watch and at the last watch of the night. He rubs the teacher’s body, folds his clothes or sometimes sweeps the apartment and the yard. Then having examined the

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\(^{55}\) Beal, Life, pp. 138-37.

water to see whether insects be in it, he gives it to the teacher. On the other hand in the case of a pupil’s illness his teacher himself nurses him, supplies all the medicines needed, and pays attention to him as if he was his child. He states that the study of the canon lasted five to ten years ordinarily, and that the pupils were of two types: one comprising novices studying the Buddhist canon, maintained by the saṅgha and becoming monks in due course, and the other lay pupils who met their own expenses and received secular instruction with no intention of retiring from the world.

Of the people of Mahārāṣṭra under the Chālukyas of Bādāmi we get a general account from Hiuan Tsang. He says that their king was a kshatriya by name Pu-lo-ki-shē (Pulakesīn) and that he was a benevolent ruler who commanded the loyalty of his vassals.

‘The inhabitants were proud-spirited and warlike, grateful for favours and revengeful for wrongs, self-sacrificing towards suppliants in distress and sanguinary to death with any one who treated them insolently. Their martial heroes who led the van of the army in battle went into conflict intoxicated, and their war-elephants were also made drunk before an engagement. Relying on the strength of his heroes and elephants, the king treated neighbouring countries with contempt.’

Vākaṭaka records contain little information on economic conditions. We may perhaps assume that the fine muslins for which the Deccan and Telengana were famous in the second century still continued to be produced, and Paithan figured as an important centre of this trade. Trades continued to be organized in guilds as in the Sātavāhana period. No coins of the time are known and cowries (shells) served as the means of exchange in small transactions, the bigger ones being put through by barter or with the aid of bullion. The rate of interest varied from 12 to 24 per cent.

The role of the temple in the social economy can hardly be exaggerated. Almost all the useful and fine arts of the country flourished around it and were devoted mainly to the divine service which was also the service of society in a spirit of consecration. Besides providing employment for the best technical skills in the land, the temple regularly fed scholars and holy men and distributed alms to the needy. A Bādāmi inscription of the time of Maṅgalesa, for instance, records the gift of a village (Laṉjīśvaran) to a new Vishṇu temple for nārāyana bali (funerary offering for ascetics), the regular feeding of sixteen Brahmans every day, and the feeding of parivrājakas (ascetics); and dānasālās (almshouses) are mentioned in other inscriptions. A

57 Watters, On Yuan Chuoang, II, p. 259.
record at Paṭṭadkal mentions the musicians (gāndharvas) of the temple and details their privileges. Garland makers were other professionals attached to temples.\footnote{Yazdani, I, p. 242.}

While the Chinese pilgrims of the seventh century give us a general idea of the land being well cultivated as a rule all over India and being rich in the production of cereals and fruits, they provide few concrete data on particular regions especially those of South India. The Arab writers of the ninth and tenth centuries mention the rich soil and the cultivation of much grain and fruit in western India. Malabar had plenty of pepper and bamboo. Cotton was grown in Gujarat and Berar, jowar and bajra in Mahārāṣṭra and Karnāṭaka; and rice, coconuts, and betelnuts in Konkan. Mysore yielded large quantities of sandal, teak and ebony woods which had been important items of export to western Asia from very early times. More or less similar is the evidence of literature and archaeology on the industrial arts; we get a general view of the considerably advanced state of these arts, but few specific data on the localization of particular industries. We know, however, that pearls which were valued everywhere and gold, copper and precious stones came particularly from the South. The textile and allied industries like dyeing, lace-making, etc. flourished everywhere and provided employment for considerable numbers, including women and even children. Metal industries produced domestic utensils for those who could afford them and the numerous icons and vessels that found their place in temples. The jewellers' arts were encouraged by temples, courts and rich merchants and nollier.

There were no good roads and therefore pack bullocks and ponies were much used for transport of merchandise. Currency continued to be rare, and the use of cowries as means of exchange for small transactions and of barter for larger ones persisted. Chola records of the time give the prices and wages of the time, but it is not easy to translate them into corresponding modern terms as we lack the details needed.

Cosmas Indicopleustes records that trade between the ports on the east and west coast of South India was in a flourishing condition in the sixth century and that Ceylon by virtue of its central position had become a great resort of ships from all parts of India and from Persia and Ethiopia.\footnote{Foreign Notices, pp. 88-89.} He states that aloes, clove and sandal wood were sent from the east coast to Ceylon and exported thence to the western ports and countries. Pepper was exported...
from several ports on the west coast and the sandal wood is said in the *Amarakosa* to have been the particular product of the Malaya mountain, the southernmost section of the Western Ghats, and Hsuan Tsang confirms this. Cardamom was also a notable produce of that area. Hsuan Tsang also notices the prosperity of Orissa due to her maritime trade with the eastern countries. Trade in horses imported from abroad was also beginning to assume importance.

Trade and industry were organized in specialized guilds and the *smrīti* literature abounds in rules regarding joint enterprises and problems relating to them which must be assumed to be based, at least to some extent, on current practices. Medhātithi defines a *śreni* as consisting of people belonging to one profession like trade, money lending, conch-diving and so on, while *saṅgha* was a similar association of people of different castes (*jāti*) and regions (*deśa*); but we lack the means of testing these literary classifications in the light of the concrete facts of life though many inscriptions mention the guilds and describe piecemeal the part they played in the economy of particular localities particularly as making pious endowments or helping in administrating them. Two of the best known merchant guilds of the south were the *manigrāman* and the *nāṇadeśis* or *tiṣāiy-āyuattu-aiṇṇīrwar*.

As regards food and drink we may gather reliable data from indigenous literature and the notices of foreign, particularly Chinese, travellers. A list of approved foods found in the *Laṅkavatāra sūtra* includes *śāli* rice, wheat and barley, pulses, ghee, oils, molasses and sugar. But fish, meat and liquor must have been used by the common people, and even women are described as drinking wine in the Sanskrit works, romances and dramas, of the time. Hsuan Tsang's account in the general introduction to his travel record may well be taken to apply to South India in general. He says that the common articles of food were cakes and parched grain with milk, sugar and preparations made from them and mustard oil; the flesh of goats and sheep was allowed though other kinds of meat were forbidden. Eating onions and garlic, he says, resulted in loss of caste, but this rule could have applied only to the higher classes. He specifies the drinks of the different castes e.g., syrup of grapes and sugar-cane for Brāhmaṇas, Bhikshus and Kshatriyas; strong spirits for Vaiśyas and other drinks for lower castes. Writing a little later I-tsin partly confirms these data saying that Indians did not eat onions and *bhikshus* abstained even from pure meat on *uposatha* days.60 At a later date towards the end of our period, Medhātithi discusses at length the oc-

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cations when meat eating is lawful and the animals that provide lawful food and includes among them the cow, goat and deer. Rules regarding drink became less strict than before, and even Brahmanas were strictly forbidden to drink only liquor made from rice flour (paishṭi surā) for which the penalty was death, while drinking other kinds of intoxicants could be expiated by penance. One authority mentions ten kinds of wines forbidden to Brahmanas but permitted to Kshatriyas and Vaiśyas. Rājaśekhara mentions the drinking of wine (madhū) and the use of betel leaves as common practices of Tamil women, which contradicts the testimony, perhaps wrong, of Arab writers of the time on Indians abstaining from wine.

Personal cleanliness was maintained at a high level, especially among the upper and middle classes, and daily bathing is noted by the Arab writers as distinctive of the Indian people. The use of twigs for cleaning the teeth and of tooth-picks is noted. Unguents like saffron, sandal, musk, camphor and aloes, and ornaments and different types of coiffure are richly attested by literary and archaeological sources relating to the period. Rājaśekhara takes particular notice of Marāṭhā girls applying saffron to their cheeks and collyrium to their eyes, and of the people of Kerala chewing betel leaf with camphor and arecanut.

The data regarding dress are tantalisingly poor. We have, however, one dependable source in the paintings at Ajañṭā and elsewhere; besides the Jaina texts and the commentaries on them which record details on the clothing especially of nuns borne out by the paintings. It is peculiar that the highly sophisticated and luxurious society of the Gupta Age in which a refined sensuality was tolerated without being deemed immodest, the dancers both male and female, covered their bodies completely. In the Ajañṭā wall paintings the dancers whose sex cannot be determined wear tunics and trousers—doubtless fashions due to foreign influence; and the danseuse having thus dressed properly did not feel ashamed when lifting her legs. South Indian costumes of the third and fourth century a.d. are fairly correctly represented on the reliefs at Amarāvatī and Nāgārjunakoṇḍa; men of status wore dhoti, kammarbund and turban; soldiers were also dressed likewise, though at times they wore a full-sleeved tunic over the dhoti. Brahmins were dressed in dhoti and dupattā worn transversely over the chest. Women were dressed in their sādis, and coiffures of different patterns besides head ornaments, and rarely a cap.

The Ajañṭā paintings are a veritable cyclopaedia of the costumes of the age; they show the wealth of sewn materials with striped or floral patterns, and the craft of tailoring had come to stay in Indian
culture. We see crowds of pilgrims and traders dressed in the characteristic garments of their countries which must have influenced the dress of Indians to some extent as attested by writers like Bāṇa. The frequent use of caps, tunics and boots by the Ajanṭā figures may be ascribed to Central Asian influences as also the increased use of sewn garments which were however known even from the Vedic times. The well-executed Gupta coins confirm these inferences from the paintings of the time.

Popular superstitions of many types including the evil eye and methods of averting its consequences, attempts to propitiate sundry godlings and planets with offerings, penances and so on, and the prevalent beliefs in omens and astrology are all well attested for this period as for other times.

Bibliography


