FOREWORD

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The Age of Imperial Kanauj, with which this Volume deals, deserves a more important place in Indian history than it has been given so far. I should, therefore, be forgiven if I gave in my own way a picture as I see it.*

The Age begins with the repulse of the Arab invasions on the mainland of India in the beginning of the eighth century and ends with the fateful year A.D. 997 when Afghanistān passed into the hands of the Turks.

With this Age, ancient India came to an end. At the turn of its last century, Sabuktigin and Mahmud came to power in Ghazni. Their lust, which found expression in the following decades, was to shake the very foundations of life in India, releasing new forces. They gave birth to medieval India. Till the rise of the Hindu power in Mahārāshtra in the eighteenth century, India was to pass through a period of collective resistance.

This Age of Imperial Kanauj, on the other hand, was an era of great strength and achievement for India. The Arabs who were on a march in three continents were repulsed. Throughout they were held on the frontiers. The Tibetan power was eliminated from Nepāl. The South emerged effectively in the political life of the country, as it had emerged in the earlier age in its religious and cultural life.

This Age saw the rise and fall of three great Empires in the country: of the Rāṣṭrākūṭas, founded by Dantidurga (c. A.D. 733-757) and his successor, Krishṇa I (c. A.D. 757-773), which dominated the South till its collapse in the year A.D. 974; of the Pālas in the East, which saw its zenith under Dharmapāla (c. A.D. 770-810), though it revived a little at the end of the tenth century; of the Pratihāras of the West and North, founded by Nāgabhaṭa I, which saw its zenith during the reigns of Mihira Bhoja (c. A.D. 836-885) and Mahendrapāla (c. A.D. 885-908), went under on account of the catastrophic blows dealt by the Rāṣṭrākūṭa raids, but retained a shadowy imperial dignity to the end.

* I have incorporated without quotation marks several paragraphs from my study of the period in The Glory that was Gūjaratā (2nd Ed. Revised and in part re-written).
THE AGE OF IMPERIAL KANAUJ

II

It was the Age of Kanauj or, Kānyakubja, the imperial city of Iśānavarman, which dominated Madhyadeśa, the heartland of India. It was the coveted prize of the three imperial powers racing for all-India supremacy. Ultimately it passed into the hands of the Pratihāra Gurgareśvaras about A.D. 815; remained the metropolis of power till A.D. 950, and continued to be the most influential centre of culture till A.D. 1018 when it was destroyed by Māhmūd of Ghaznī.

By inheritance Kanauj was the home of Indo-Aryan traditions. In the post-Vedic ages the region from Hardwar to Umnao, near Lucknow, was known as Āryāvarta. Later with the spread of Indo-Aryan culture, first, north India, and then the whole country, came to be called by that name. The original Āryāvarta, then come to be known as Brahmāvarta, with accretions, was called Madhyadeśa during this age.

When Hastināpura met with disaster due to floods, as the recent excavations at Hastināpura corroborative of the Puranic testimony show, Nichakshu, the descendant of Janamejaya Pārīkshita led the Kurus to Kauśāmbi. In the early sixth century when the Magadhan Age opened, it was the capital of a powerful Aryan kingdom; Vatsarāja, who could lure elephants by his music, was then its ruler. It remained such capital till the end of the sixth century of the Christian Era. Then North India was overrun by the Hūṇas. Kauśāmbi was destroyed. But with Iśānavarman, the liberator who drove out the Hūṇas, Kanauj came into prominence, as the centre of power in Madhyadeśa, no longer a principality of the Gupta Empire.

In the seventh century the kings of Bengal and Mālava destroyed the power of Kanauj, then in the hands of the descendants of Iśānavarman. On the ruins of the Maukharī kingdom, Śrī Harsha built his short-lived empire of Madhyadeśa. During his forty-two years' rule (A.D. 606-647), Kanauj grew into the foremost city of India. Śrī Harsha, however, could not create a hierarchy pledged to support his imperial structure. He left no able successor. His empire was dissolved soon after he died.

For more than half a century thereafter, the history of Kanauj is wrapt in obscurity. At the end of it, Yaśovarman, a great conqueror and the patron of Bhavabhūti and Vākpati, is found ruling Kanauj. Both Yaśovarman and Lalitāditya of Kāshmir joined hands against the inroads of the Arabs and Tibetans. But the allies soon fell out and Lalitāditya destroyed the power of Yaśovarman.

The Classical Age of India closed with the reign of Yaśovarman. This Age then opened with one Indrāyudha on the throne of Kanauj,
which had retained its metropolitan and symbolic importance as the capital of India. And the stage was set for the triangular struggle for it between the Rāshtrakūtas of the South, the Pratīhāras of Gurjaradeśa and the Pālas of Bengal.

III

The first great conqueror to emerge on the scene, with the Age, was the Rāshtrakūta Dantidurga. The son of Indra I by a Chālukyan princess of Gujarāt, he began his Napoleonic career in c. A.D. 733, became the master of the whole of Mahārāṣṭra by 753, and destroyed the Chālukyan Empire to assume an imperial status. He was succeeded by his uncle Krishna I, the builder of the Kailāsa temple of Ellora. In a reign of fifteen years, he added to the empire what are the modern states of Hyderābād and Mysore.

About the same time, Gopāla, elected to the position of a chieftain, consolidated Bengal. His son Dharmapāla (c. A.D. 770-810) led his conquering army through the whole valley of Gaṅgā; reduced the ruler of Kanauj to a puppet; held courts at Kanauj and Pāṭaliputra. For long he commanded the allegiance of most of the kings of the north.

There was ferment also in the west. In A.D. 712 the Arabs conquered Sindh. About A.D. 725 Junaid, its governor, under the orders of Caliph Hasham of Baghdād, sent an army for the conquest of India. It overran Saurāshṭra, Bhillamāla, the capital of Gurjara (the Abu Region), and reached Ujjāvini.

Then arose an unknown hero, Nāgabhaṭa by name; possibly he belonged to a branch of the royal Pratīhāra family of Bhillamāla, the capital of Gurjaradeśa. He rallied to his banner the warriors of the allied clans of Pratīhāras, Chāhāmānas and also, perhaps, Guhilaputras, Chālukyas and Paramāras, all of whom had their home in the region of Mount Abu. Nāgabhaṭa fought the invading army, flung it back, destroyed it.

This victory welded the clans of Gurjaradeśa into a hierarchy. It gave them self-assurance and the will to conquer. With a leader and a destiny, they laid the foundations of a new power that was destined to play an important part in history.

During Nāgabhaṭa’s time Dantidurga with his conquering army swept over the north, captured Ujjajyini, where the Pratīhāra, his fortunes temporarily eclipsed, played the host to the conqueror.

Vatsarāja, the son of a nephew of Nāgabhaṭa I, styled “the pre-eminent among valiant Kshatriyas”, waxed strong and entrenched
himself in a strong position in north India. The allied clans were now a well-knit hierarchy. He, however, suffered a disastrous defeat at the hands of Rāshṭrakūṭa Dhruva and had to take refuge in some unaccessible region.

Under the Pratihāras, Kanauj reached the zenith of power, learning and culture, between A.D. 815 and 940. Its rulers were called Gurjarēśvaras; in a late inscription, Gurjara-Pratihāras. One of them, as we know, was styled Mahārājādhirāja of Āryāvarta. One of the last emperors of the line, when the empire was no more than a symbol, was referred to as the Raghukula-bhū-chakravartī, Universal Overlord of Raghu’s race; for these Pratihāras claimed their descent from Lekshmanā, the brother of Śrī Rāmachandra of the Ikshvāku race. They were also called kings of Jurz or Gurjara by the Arab travellers, and their empire was called Gurjara.

Undaunted by reverses, the next ruler, Nāgabhaṭa II, consolidated the territory which comprised Mārwāḍ, Mālava and modern North Gujarāt. Having secured a base, he entered the race for all-India supremacy with the Pāla kings of Bengal and the Rāshṭrakūṭas of the South.

Dharmapāla marched on Kanauj, removed Indrāyudha from the throne of Kanauj and installed Chakrāyudha. Nāgabhaṭa II, in his turn, marched against Chakrāyudha, overthrew him and made Kanauj his capital. Soon after Rāshṭrakūṭa Govinda III invaded Kanauj and inflicted a defeat on Nāgabhaṭa which, however, did not cripple his strength. Ultimately Kanauj passed into the hands of the Pratihāras. About A.D. 815 it became the capital of the Pratihāra empire.

In c. A.D. 834 Nāgabhaṭa II died. Rāmabhadra, his son and successor, was in his turn, succeeded in c. A.D. 836 by Mihira Bhoja.

The new ruler of Kanauj was called Mihira Bhoja as he was born by the favour of God Śūrya; Ādi Varāha, because he uplifted the realm like the Divine Boar, the incarnation of Vishnū; Vṛiddha Bhoja by later writers to distinguish him from the later Bhoja the Paramāra. The Arab travellers called him Bauūra, possibly a corruption of Varāha or Barāha; they also referred to him as the king of Jurz, an Arab corruption of the word Gurjara.

When he came to the throne, Mihira Bhoja, then a youth, was faced with a grave situation. Under the feeble rule of his father Rāmabhadra, the power and prestige of the empire had suffered. Its outlying parts had become independent. Even Gurjaradesa, the homeland, was in open revolt. The imperial possessions extended
FOREWORD

no further than Kanauj and a small area surrounding it. Only a few of his father's feudatories stood loyal to the new ruler.

The first act of the young ruler was to restore his authority over his homeland; raise the morale of the allied clans of Gurjaradeśa and make them into a compact and invulnerable hierarchy. He did this with such success that the tenacity and vigour of the hierarchic dynasties survived more than a thousand years after the fall of the empire. Many of the Rajput rulers who surrendered power in the great integration of 1947-48 were descendants of the feudatories and generals of Mihira Bhoja.

The career of Mihira Bhoja, pieced together from stray references by modern scholars, was a great factor in making Kanauj a radiating centre of political and cultural activities which made for the integration of life.

In A.D. 836, Ral-pa-can, the Tibetan conqueror of Nepal, died. A civil war followed. Nepal shook off the foreign rule and became part of the political system of India. Sārasvata-maṇḍala in the Nepal Terai and other Himalayan areas were merged in the empire of Kanauj.

Bihār was also annexed to the empire of Kanauj. By A.D. 876, Mihira Bhoja had burnt 'the powerful people of Bengal in the fire of his rage', obtained a decisive victory over Nārāyaṇapāla and annexed considerable parts of the Pāla dominions to his empire. In the time of the next ruler, Mahendrapāla, the empire included parts of North Bengal.

During the reign of Mihira Bhoja, the Rāshtrakūṭas, the invete-rate enemies of Kanauj, were pre-occupied with troubled conditions in their own realm. And with occasional reverses, the armies of Bhoja and his allies pressed continually southwards till they dominated the whole of what is modern Gujarāt.

A Turkish Shāhiya family ruled in Kābul for a long time. The last king of this dynasty, Lagatūrmān, was overthrown by his Brāhmaṇa minister, Kallar or Lalliyā Shāhi. He was possibly supported by Mihira Bhoja. Lalliyā, however, lost Kābul to the Šaffārid Ya'qūb ibn Layth in A.D. 870 and transferred his capital to Udabhāṇḍa, on Sindhu near Attock.

The Arab conquest of Sindh was no more than 'a mere episode in the history of India which affected only a fringe of that vast country'. Within a year of Bhoja's accession, 'Imrān ibn-Mūsa, the Arab Governor of Sindh, tried to extend his hold over the adjoin-
ing territory. The Arabs, however, were driven out of Kutch between A.D. 833 and 842. A few years later, they lost the best part of Sindh.

Two petty principalities only remained to the Arabs of which Multān and al-Mansurah were the capitals. The Hindus, who had been forcibly converted to Islam, went back to their ancestral fold. Balādhrurī says that in the time of al-Hākim ibn-‘Awānah, "the people of al-Hind apostatised with the exception of the inhabitants of Qassah. A place of refuge to which the Moslems might flee was not to be found, so he built on the further side of the lake, where it borders on al-Hind, a city which he named al-Maḥfūzah (the guarded), establishing it as a place of refuge for them, where they should be secure and making it a capital."

Sulaimān who visited India in A.D. 851 refers to Bhoja in vivid terms. "Among them is the king of Jurz (Gurjara). This king maintains numerous forces and no other Indian prince has so fine a cavalry. He is unfriendly to the Arabs, still he acknowledges that the king of the Arabs is the greatest of kings. Among the princes of India there is no greater foe of the Muhammadan faith than he. His territories form a tongue of land (Saurāshṭra?). He has great riches, and his camels and horses are numerous. Exchanges are carried on in his state with silver (and gold) in dust, and there are said to be mines (of these metals) in the country. There is no country in India more safe from robbers."

In A.D. 916, Abū Zaid, while completing the Silsilat-ut Taẕārīkh of Sulaimān, also attests to the excellent social conditions in India. "Thése observations", he says, "are especially applicable to Kanauj, a large country forming the empire of Jurz."

Al-Mas‘udī of Baghdād, who visited India more than once between A.D. 900 and 940, refers to the Bauūra as ‘the lord of the city of Kanauj’ and as ‘one of the kings of Sindh’. "He has large armies in garrisons on the north and on the south, on the east and on the west; for, he is surrounded on all sides by warlike kings. . . . Bauūra, who is the king of Kanauj, is an enemy of the Balharā (Vallabha Rāja, the title of Rāṣṭrakūṭa emperors), the king of India." He adds: Bauūra, the king of Kanauj, "has four armies, according to the four quarters of the wind. Each of them numbers 700,000 or 900,000 men. The army of the north was against the prince of Mūltān, and with the Musulmans, his subjects, on the frontier. The army of the south fights against the Balharā, king of Mānkīr (Mānyakheṭa)." According to him, Balharā is at war with Jurz, "a king who is rich in horses and camels, and has a large army."
FOREWORD

Sindh was evidently rescued by Mihira Bhoja, for, according to Mas'udī, the Indus ran right through one of the cities within the kingdom of Jurz (Gurjara).

The last known date of Bhoja is A.D. 882; possibly, he died in A.D. 888.

At the time of his death, the banner of the Ikshvāku Gurjareś-varas flew over an empire larger than those of the Guptas and Śrī Harsha. It comprised north India from the Himālayas to a little beyond the Narmadā, from East Punjāb and Sindh to Bengal. South was quiescent. The Pālas were no longer a power. The Arabs on the north-west frontier were kept at bay; Sindh had been wrested from them. Madhyadeśa was at the height of its power.

Bhoja, unlike ancient chakravartis, did not rest content by establishing an evanescent military supremacy. His empire was built on the strength of regularly paid standing armies, the loyalty of his hierarchs and, it appears, the support of popular enthusiasm. Considerable parts of his empire were governed directly from Kanauj. What he conquered he consolidated as well.

IV

The Hūṇa incursions had a devastating effect. The Classical Age lost its vitality. The tottering Gupta Empire was dissolved. Its hierarchs were left with little cohesion and less vigour. The race of the Kshatriyas of Madhyadeśa, who formed its martial backbone, lost their vigour; perhaps it paid a heavy price in blood during the last heroic efforts it put forward to drive out the Hūṇas.

Vast social and cultural changes followed. Varnāśrama-dharma, instead of being a social organisation of three higher castes more or less homogeneous in culture and traditions, became rigid. Inter-marriages between the castes came to be looked upon with disfavour. Instead of being associated with the masses as its natural leaders, the Brāhmaṇas and the Kshatriyas became dominant minorities.

In the South, the Brāhmaṇas, from the beginning, were a dominant minority. Their vast influence imposed the Smṛiti pattern of social life there but in a form different from North India. In the South the dialects were alien in structure and vocabulary to Sanskrit. Sanskrit, therefore, from the beginning, was the language of the learned only influencing the development of the dialects.

Naturally Sanskrit, though still a powerful integrating force, instead of being the language of the educated throughout the land, developed a learned character, removed still further from the spoken dialects even in the North.
Dharma-sāstras, as the source of the fundamental law in the
country, were looked upon as sacred and unifying factors. A new
Śaivism had, through its strength derived from its popular contacts
and beliefs, become the symbol of national resurgence. Āryāvarta
consciousness, which related dharmā to India as a whole, also con-
tinued as an effective group sentiment, particularly in north India.

The Age of Imperial Kanauj saw a vast religious and cultural
resurgence in the country, of which the Purāṇas were the gospels.
It harmonised beliefs and practices of most of the cults which accept-
ed as the final source, also Buddhism. The temple architecture, which
began with the majestic Kailāsa of Ellora and developed into the
exquisite beauty of Chandella Dhanga’s Śiva temple at Khajurāho,
was its symbol. The cult of tīrthas as a fundamental institution of
religio-social significance strengthened the unity of India, carrying
forward the consciousness that Āryāvarta was the inviolate land of
dharmā. The sweeping movement of the spirit was led by Śaṅkarā-
chārya, the prophet of the Age and the intellectual architect of ages
to come.

It was an age of catholicity. The different creeds joined
hands to respect each other. The gods of differing cults were all
worshipped; Śiva was worshipped with his whole family, and so were
the Trimūrtis, the Pañchāyatana and the Mātṛikās. The kings
generally patronised all religions and different rulers of the same
dynasty are known to belong to different religious persuasions. Even
the Arab traders were found happily settled in some parts of the
country.

Though the Pāla Kings were great patrons of Buddhism, Bud-
dhism was on the decline since the days of Harshavardhana. Its
disappearance from India during this period was hastened by the
growing unpopularity of the Tāṇtrik practices which it had adopted;
by the Puranic pantheon accepting Buddha as an avatāra of Vishṇu
and adopting several of its practices and beliefs; above all, by the
evangelical triumphs of Śaṅkarāchārya.

The Pratihāra emperors formed the spearhead of this religio-
cultural upsurge. Some of them, like Mihira Bhoja, worshipped
Bhagavatī as their guardian deity; others Vishṇu and Śiva. They
were of the people and did not stand away from their hopes, aspira-
tions and traditions. Like the Gupta Emperors, they received the
full co-operation of the Brāhmaṇas, who, through their intellectual
achievements and religious and social influence, could maintain a
sense of identity between the dominant minorities and the people.
FOREWORD

The ruling dynasties of Gurjaradeśa also maintained the tradition of being the protectors of dharma. They did not treat the old social order with contempt, nor did they deprive it of its inherent tenacity by imposing unfamiliar lines of development; in the result, they strengthened it. While they led the country to progress, they drew upon the social and spiritual energy of the people.

The reciters of the Purāṇas became as powerful, if not more, as Brāhmaṇas specialising in ritualism, philosophy, or literature. Particularly the Brāhmaṇas of Kānyakubja played a great role during this period. Even today after a thousand years, they are found all over Northern India. The Kūlina Brāhmaṇas of Bengal, for instance, and the Anavil Brāhmaṇas of South Gujarāt both claim their descent from the Brāhmaṇas of Kānyakubja.

An illustration of the prevailing Purānic atmosphere in royal courts is furnished by the Gwālior-praśasti of Mihiira Bhoja composed by the poet Bālāditya on the occasion of the construction of a temple of Vishṇu. The whole poem pulsates with the fervour of a living belief. Manu, Ikshvāku, Kakutstha and Prithu provide the background. The primeval Nārāyaṇa is born twice, as Nāgabhaṭa I, and again as Nāgabhaṭa II, descended from Lakshmana the son of Daśaratha of the line.

The praśasti begins with an invocation to Vishṇu, to whom the temple is also dedicated, as the destroyer of the demon Naraka, the embodiment of evil.

The Gurjarēśvaras, if the praśasti tells the truth, were cultured. Each possessed a distinct personality. Nāgabhaṭa I was a warrior; Kakkuka had a keen sense of humour; Vatsaraṇa was compassionate, generous and of flawless conduct. Nāgabhaṭa II, short and modest, was of resistless energy. He was virtuous, and worked for the welfare of the people and performed many sacrifices. He possessed ātmavaibhava, true greatness of soul. Rāmbhadra was brave and virtuous, a pure soul, opposed to worldliness and a defender of the faith.

But Bhoja was the greatest of all. Famous as he was, he was always unperturbed. Though an adept in rooting out evil, and wooed by Lakṣmī, the guardian goddess of sovereignty, he was untainted by arrogance, and spotless in character. He was an ardent and unmatched administrator and a receptacle of pleasant and sweet words. When Brahmā himself wanted to discover another such man, whom else could he find but Śri Rāmchandra himself?

So that his life may extend beyond the ordinary span everyone desired to serve him; the ascetics in return for his protection; the
preceptors from affection, the servants from devotion; his many foes out of policy; all men in the interest of their own well-being and livelihood. And he was as worthy a recipient of these offerings as the Creator Himself.

Men of intellect, of honesty and of virtuous deeds helped to increase his prosperity, while enemies were scorched by the flame of his anger. The oceans were guarded by his valour. Like unto Kārttikeya, the god of war, he was of unbounded energy and the Earth waited upon him to hear her fate from his lips.

Thus, Bālāditya the poet sings of Bhojadeva with the vanity of the poet. He expresses the hope that his praśasti would last till the end of Creation. His prayer was granted. The praśasti will last till the end of time and through it Mihira Bhoja will live down the ages.

Mihira Bhoja was not merely a Caesar, nor a pontiff, as were imperators of Rome and Byzantium. He was a conqueror and a great emperor. He was the protector of dharma. He was an Ikshvāku, a family in which God Himself had chosen to be born.

Āryāvarta was thus a pyramid of culture. At its apex stood Vishṇu Himsel, the upholder of an evenly ordered realm, the protector of happy and well-ordered governance. That is why Bhoja bore the epithet ‘Ādi Varāha’.

V

The Puranic Renaissance gave added sanctity to the Dharma-śāstras. In this Age, learning tended more and more to live on the past, the commentators and the writers of digests took the place of the law-givers. Of them, the most outstanding was Medhātithi, who wrote a commentary on the Manu-smṛiti.

The spirit of the Age found expression in relating Varṇāśrama-dharma which was dynamic to the virile concept of Āryāvarta. Āryāvarta, says Medhātithi, is not limited to geographical boundaries; it is not confined to the four corners of India; it is so called because the mlechchhas, though they frequently invade the country, are not able to abide in it.

If any prince of good character belonging to the Kshatriya or other castes subdues the mlechchhas and reduces them to the position of chaṇḍālas, as in Āryāvarta, and introduces chāturvarṇa in the conquered country, it would be fit for Vedic sacrifices to be performed. No sanctity attaches to Brahmāvarta as such; it would be mlechchhadēśa if the mlechchhas subjugated it and lived there.
FOREWORD

Impurity does not attach to the land, but to the people. *Varṇāśrama-dharma* is a dynamic and expansive social organisation to be maintained and spread. Aryāvarta extended wherever the *dharma* is enforced and maintained.

This concept did not remain a mere theory; it was in active operation. The culture having come to dominate India was on a march to wider expansion. Indians crossed the frontiers and established kingdoms, carrying religious, literary and cultural traditions with them to far-off lands. In this way came into existence the Śailendra Empire in Java, Sumatra and Malay Peninsula (c. A.D. 778-13th century); the dynasty of Pāṇḍuraṅga (c. A.D. 757-860) and the Bhṛgu dynasty (c. A.D. 860-985) in Champā, the dynasties of Jaya-varman II (A.D. 802-877) and Indra-varman (c. A.D. 877-1001) in Kambuja, the dynasty of Sañjaya (c. A.D. 732-928) in Central Java, and the dynasty of Siṅḍok (c. A.D. 929-1007) in Eastern Java.

This dynamic outlook was followed in actual practice in India as would appear from the Arab chroniclers and the *Devala-smṛiti*. Even though converted to Islam, Brāhmaṇas, Kshatriyas, Vaiṣyās and Śūdras; who had been forced to do forbidden or unclean things, could be reclaimed by purification. A woman carried away by the *mlechchhas* could become pure by abstention from food and sexual intercourse for three nights.

A king, says Medhātithi, has responsibility to maintain *dharma* in the land. He is under a paramount duty to resist foreign invasion at all cost. There can be no compromise with the invader: if his realm is invaded and its people massacred, the king must die fighting.

For a king, the law-giver says, fame should have no meaning; what matters is securing the submission of other kings. An enemy is an enemy; he should not be given time to prepare for war; his difficulties are no concern to a king. The best time for attack is when the king feels confident of his own strength; when the morale of his forces is high; when the crop in his country is plentiful; when the subjects of the enemy are in indifferent circumstances or are to be alienated.

Once a war is declared, there should be no weakening; no consideration for the enemy’s weakness; no regard for consistency, for friend or foe. In pursuit of his aim he should, if necessary, dismiss or punish his minister.
Once an enemy is conquered, the form in which he submits is immaterial; what matters is effective surrender. A victorious king should take care to destroy his enemies, but he should penalise only the wicked and the treacherous. He should uproot the weeds, but spare, wherever possible, the inhabitants of the conquered realm.

It is not easy to consolidate gains after victory, says the political sage. The learned and the pious of the conquered country should be honoured; restraints on the subjects should be removed; the poor and ailing should be treated with kindness; sports and rejoicings should be initiated. Justice and sound finance must be restored. Wise methods of governance should be introduced. Above all, a policy of non-interference in the life of the people should be adopted.

Medhātithi lays stress on sound internal administration. Ambassadors should guard against the lure of women. The king should not part with the portfolios of finance and home to anyone and in making war and peace his should be the final voice. Services—both civil and military—should be paid their salaries regularly. Irrigation and other works must be carried out to make people independent of rains. On a small holding the taxes should be light; heavier taxes should be borne by larger profits. Then comes the dictum of a man who knows human nature well. “It is neither possible nor desirable to prohibit drinking, gambling or hunting absolutely”.

The king owes his position to no divine sanction but to the wishes of the people. He is only an instrument of maintaining dānda or sovereignty which is based on the fundamental law propounded by the Dharma-sāstras. This law is above the king and is inalienable; nor should custom be permitted to override it. The king must submit to the ordinances of the Smṛitis. At the same time Dharma-sāstras are not to be rigidly interpreted. Equity is an equal authority with the Vedas, Smṛitis and āchāra for determining the right principle of law. “Satisfaction of the learned and the virtuous,” says Medhātithi, “is a vital test; it may find what appears to be dharma as adharma and what appears adharma as dharma. When those learned in the Vedas feel that a thing is pure, it is to be deemed as pure”.

VI

Varnāśrama-dharma of Medhātithi is a dynamic world force and not a static social order. A Brāhmaṇa can marry the daughter of a Kshatriya or a Vaiśya. An adopted son may be of a caste other than the father’s; a Brāhmaṇa can adopt even a Kshatriya boy. A
FOREWORD

Kshatriya and a Vaiśya have the right to recite the Gāyatrī-mantra. Brāhmaṇahood is not acquired by birth alone.

A Śūdra has the right to offer oblations to the fire, or to perform religious sacrifices, except the Vaiśāhika fire at marriage. He may not be competent to pronounce judgment according to the Sṛvitas, but he can be one of the sabhyas in a court of justice. If any Sṛvita, says Medhātithi, takes away the right of a Śūdra or lays down any prohibition, the injunction should be very strictly interpreted, and its scope is not to be enlarged by inferences from other texts. Those Sṛvitas, which are in favour of the Śūdras, should, therefore, be enforced. But these dicta are more in the nature of a protest against the growing rigidity of the social order and cannot be read as reflecting universal practice.

Medhātithi accords to women a position in refreshing contrast to some of the later authorities who wrote for the succeeding Era of Resistance. Women can perform all saṁskāras; only they should not recite Vedic mantras. At a partition an unmarried sister should be given one-fourth share of the dividing brothers.

A wife is obtained from God, not secured like cattle or gold, in the market; a husband, therefore, has no ownership over his wife. Before the wife could be compelled by the husband to serve him, he must have the necessary qualifications, among others, a loving attitude towards her. Medhātithi condemns the dictum of Manu that one is to protect oneself even at the cost of one's wife; even princes should not forsake their wives, says he. The practice of Sati, according to Medhātithi, is nothing but suicide, and as such, it is not permissible.

The position which the women occupied during this age, is also evidenced by other contemporary sources. The general level of their culture was high. Śilamahādevi, wife of the Rāśitrakūṭa Emperor, Dhruva, described as parameśvarī and paramabhaṭṭārikā, probably ruled jointly with her husband. She enjoyed the privilege of granting large gifts without her husband's consent. Several queens of the Kara dynasty ruled in Orissa. Sugandhā and Diddā of Kāshmir administered extensive kingdoms as dowager queens. There were learned women as well as women administrators. Avantisundarī, the wife of the poet Rājaśekhara, was an exceptionally accomplished woman. The poet quotes her thrice in the Kāvyamānasa. Ḍīśa Karpūramaṇjari was produced at her request and Hemachandra quotes three of her Prakrit stanzas. Udbhabhāratī or Sarasvatī, wife of Maṇḍanamiśra, who acted as an arbitrator in her husband's disputations with Śaṅkarāchārya, was a learned scholar herself.
THE AGE OF IMPERIAL KANAUJ

We have a glimpse of the social conditions of imperial Kanauj in the works of Rājaśekhara, an ardent lover of Kanauj. Its women did not lag behind men in point of education. According to the poet, there were several poetesses in Kanauj. “Culture is connected with the soul and not with the sex” says the poet. The poet had met princesses and poetesses, daughters of prime ministers, courtesans and wives of court jestors who were well versed in science.

The dress worn by the ladies of the capital was adorable. “Women of other countries”, says the poet, “should study the ways in which the ladies of Mahodaya dress and bedeck themselves, braid their hair and speak their words”.

The women of Lāṭa were noted for their beauty and elegance. At the same time, it would be untrue to accept the position of women as portrayed by Rājaśekhara as reflecting the generally prevailing conditions under which women lived, for whatever it was, it was distinctly better than the position to which they were reduced under the painful pressure of the Era of Resistance.

VII

In the field of literature this Age cannot be compared with the Classical Age with its old masters like Kālidāsa and Bhavabhūti. Under the influence of the rhetoricians external features of literature rather than literary beauty came into fashion; scholarship replaced poetic fancy; Sanskrit acquired a learned character.

Even kings, as we find from some notable instances, were highly educated; several of them were accomplished poets. Most of them were patrons of learning as well as authors. All branches of literature were assiduously cultivated.

There were kāvyas in plenty; epics, romances and champūs were composed in large numbers. Lexicography was cultivated; so were grammar, poetics, metrics and rhetorics. Anandavardhana wrote his famous Dhvanyāloka, propounding his famous theory of Dhvani. The favourite literary form of the Age was the Drama, though only one classical specimen survives in Viśākhadatta's Mudrārākshasa.

Literary activity in Sanskrit abounded even in the South. Rigarthadipika by Veṅkaṭa Mādhava, in the reign of the Choḷa king Parāntaka I, is one of the earliest of its kind in Sanskrit literature.
FOREWORD

Śaktibhadra contributed the drama Aścharyachūḍāmaṇi, the first Sanskrit drama to be composed in the south, as known so far.

Literature was also cultivated in Prakrit, Haribhadra being the greatest master of the period. There was a vast non-canonical literature in Pāli and in Apabhramśa in which the works of several eminent Jain writers like Dhanapāla, Pushpadanta, Kanakāmara, Padmakīrti and Svayambhū have survived. During this period, several works of great value were composed in Kannāḍa and Tamil, forming landmarks in the development of these languages.

Philosophic literature was widely cultivated by the Bauddhas, the Jains and the Brāhmaṇas. Of them all, Śaṅkarāchārya was the greatest. He provided a philosophic theory which undermined the barren ritualism of the Mīmāṃsakas as well as the decadent Mahāyāna Buddhism and Jainism. He stood for monism; preached the superiority of sanātana over ritualism. He purged many religious beliefs of their grossness. He was also a practical reformer. His organizational work, which brought cults, practices and rituals under the direction of the four great Maṭhas which he founded and which stood for his Vedāntic monism, restored the cultural unity of the land. He also reorganized the monastic orders and infused a nobler sense of mission in them.

The Bhāgavata Purāṇa was the culminating point of the strong theistic movement started by the Āḻvārs and Nāyanārs in the South. It became the gospel of bhakti, the intense devotional ecstasy of the Āḻvārs as well as the teachings of Bhagavadgītā. Its deep emotion and creative beauty saved the soul of India during the following Era of Resistance.

The last literary phase of the Age is represented by Rājaśekhara, who lived in the reign of Mihira Bhoja, for he was the court poet and teacher of Mahendrapāla and Mahīpāla.

Rājaśekhara's works give us a vivid glimpse of himself and the time. The poet was born in the family of Yāyāvaras, a family of poets. Though a Brāhmaṇa, he married into a Chāhamāna family and his wife, Avantisundari, was therefore a Kshatriya.

His Bālarāmāyanam was staged at the court of Mahendrapāla at Kanauj. Bālabhārata was staged at Kanauj after Mahīpāla completed his campaign against the Rāṣṭrakūṭa emperor Indra III, in about A.D. 916. The poet thus describes his patron who was present in the audience—

"In the family of Raghu, there was born a glorious Mahīpāla-deva, who lowered the heads of the Muralas; who destroyed
the Mekalas; who drove out the Kaliṅgas; who destroyed Kun-talas as if with an axe; who forcibly seized the royalty of the Ramaṭhas”.

Rājaśekhara’s Kāvyā-mīmāṃsā is a work of great value and gives glimpses of the life and literature of the times.

The poet was a much travelled man, and has some very interesting remarks to make about the manners and speech of the people of different parts of the country. The Magadhas and those living to the east of Banaras spoke Sanskrit well but Prakrit badly. A Gauḍa could not speak Prakrit properly; he should, therefore, either give up the attempt or improve his Prakrit. The Karnaṭakas recited poetry proudly with a twang at the end of each sentence irrespective of sentiment, style or quality. The Draviḍas recited prose and poetry both in a musical way. The people of Saurāshṭra and Travaṇa spoke Sanskrit but mixed it with Apabhraṃśa to add beauty to their speech. Kāshmirians were good poets but their recital sounded like a mouthful of gaḍuchi.

Rājaśekhara had a partiality for Lāṭa (South Gujarāt). According to him, it was the ‘crest of the earth’. Its people, however, hated Sanskrit, but spoke elegant Prakrit in a beautiful way. Its women were noted for their beauty and elegance of speech. Its poets possessed distinctive literary traits; and favoured the style called ‘Lāṭi’. Humour was its speciality.

The people of the region enclosed by the Gaṅgā and the Yamunā, the centre of which was Kanauj, according to the poet, were the ornaments of the land. They liked new and elegant literary works. The composition of its poets was well constructed and their recitation was sweet like honey. To him the city was the centre of the universe; a sacred place; the home of the imperial Ikshvākus; a centre from where radiated power, fashion and culture.

The whole country, therefore, in this period, had a unity of culture. Sanskrit was the language of the cultured, spoken and understood among the educated throughout the country, but was most prevalent to the east of Banaras.

VIII

Mihira Bhoja was succeeded by his son Mahendrapāla, a fearless military genius, who extended the empire of Mihira Bhoja adding to it the Karnal district in the Punjāb, the Nepalese terrain and the Rājshāхи district of Bengal. In A.D. 910 he was succeeded by Mahīpāla who also, like his father, was educated by the poet Rājaśekhara.
FOREWORD

Within a few years of Mahîpâla’s coming to the throne of Kanauj, however, Indra III, the Râṣṭhrakûṭa emperor, marched to the north and occupied Kanauj. But he suddenly died, possibly in battle, and his army withdrew precipitately to the South. Though the Râṣṭhrakûṭa empire was already disintegrating in A.D. 940, Kṛishṇa III again re-appeared in the north, overran Mâlava and Gurjaradeśa, occupied Kâlañjara and gave a shattering blow to the Pratihâra empire.

The two raids of the Râṣṭhrakûtas had unfortunate results for the whole of India. Madhyadeśa lay mauled and bleeding. The empire of the South tottered to a fall. The feudatories of both declared independence one after the other. The country was prostrate and defenceless, and the Āryāvarta Consciousness was submerged by parochial sovereignties.

Out of the chaos, two powerful feudatories carved out independent kingdoms: the Paramâras of Mâlava and the Chandellas of Jejakabhukti. Kanauj, however, continued to remain the metropolis of culture, but its emperor was no more than a shadow of his former self.

By about A.D. 974 the Empire of the Râṣṭhrakûtas was taken over by the Châlukya king, Taila II, a feudatory. A bitter and long drawn out war ensued between Taila II and Paramâra Muñja of Mâlava. Ultimately, Muñja was captured and killed between A.D. 995-997. Taila followed him soon after in A.D. 997-998.

In the fateful year A.D. 997 Abû-l-Qâsim Mahmûd, son of Sabuktîgîm, captured Ghaznî, developed a marvellous striking power and turned his attention to India.

Ancient India ended. Mediaeval India began.

IX

My thanks are due to Dr. R. C. Majumdar, the General Editor, and Dr. A. D. Pusalker, the Assistant Editor, for their indefatigable and conscientious labours, and to the scholars who have supplied their learned contributions for this volume. I am specially indebted to the Associated Advertisers & Printers Ltd., Bombay, who have, in such a short time, seen the volume through the Press, and to the staff of the Bhavan and the Press who looked after the preparation and printing of this volume with care and zeal. It is difficult to express adequately the deep debt of gratitude to Shri G. D. Birla, the Chairman, and other members of the Board of the Krishnarpan Trust who have so liberally financed the preparation of these volumes.
## ABBREVIATIONS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Abh. Rat.</td>
<td>Abhidhānaratnamalā of Halāyudha.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ABORI.</td>
<td>Annals of the Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute, Poona.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Apar.</td>
<td>Aparārka.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AR.</td>
<td>Rāṣṭrapālaṇas and their times, by A. S. Altekar.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ASC.</td>
<td>Archaeological Survey of India, Reports by Sir Alexander Cunningham.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ASI.</td>
<td>Archaeological Survey of India, Annual Report.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ASS.</td>
<td>Anandāśrama Sanskrit Series, Poona.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ASWI.</td>
<td>Archaeological Survey of Western India.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AUS.</td>
<td>Allahabad University Studies.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bāla.</td>
<td>Bālarāmāyaṇa of Rājaśekhara.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BG.</td>
<td>Bombay Gazetteer.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bhav.</td>
<td>Bhavisayattakahā of Dhanapāla.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bh. List.</td>
<td>A List of Inscriptions of Northern India by D. R. Bhandarkar (Appendix to EI, XIX-XXIII).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BI.</td>
<td>Bibliotheca Indica, Calcutta.</td>
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<tr>
<td>BSS.</td>
<td>Bombay Sanskrit Series.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BV.</td>
<td>Bhāratiya Vidyā, Bombay.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CII.</td>
<td>Corpus Inscriptionum Indicarum.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CP.</td>
<td>Copper-plate.</td>
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<tr>
<td>DUS.</td>
<td>Dacca University Studies.</td>
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<tr>
<td>EC.</td>
<td>Epigraphia Carnatica.</td>
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<td>Abbreviation</td>
<td>Title</td>
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<tr>
<td>EI.</td>
<td>Epigraphia Indica.</td>
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<tr>
<td>EISMS.</td>
<td>Eastern Indian School of Medieval Sculpture, by R. D. Banerji.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ERE.</td>
<td>Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics. Ed. by J. Hastings.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gaut.</td>
<td>Gautama Dharma-sūtra.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GOS.</td>
<td>Gaekwad's Oriental Series, Baroda.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GSAI.</td>
<td>Giornale della Società Asiatica Italiana.</td>
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<tr>
<td>HAL.</td>
<td>History of Alamkāra Literature, by P. V. Kane, Bombay, 1923.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HIED.</td>
<td>History of India as told by its own historians, Ed. by H. M. Elliot and John Dowson.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HISI.</td>
<td>Historical Inscriptions of South India, by R. B. Sewell.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HOS.</td>
<td>Harvard Oriental Series.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HSL.</td>
<td>History of Sanskrit Literature.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IA.</td>
<td>Indian Antiquary, Bombay.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IC.</td>
<td>Indian Culture, Calcutta.</td>
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<tr>
<td>IHQ.</td>
<td>Indian Historical Quarterly, Calcutta.</td>
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<tr>
<td>JAHRS.</td>
<td>Journal of the Andhra Historical Research Society, Rajahmundry.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JASB.</td>
<td>Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal, Calcutta.</td>
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</tbody>
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ABBREVIATIONS

JDL. Journal of the Department of Letters, Calcutta University.
JDPS. Jaina Dharma Prasāraka Sabha, Bhavnagar.
JGJRI. Journal of the Ganganath Jha Research Institute, Allahabad.
JIH. Journal of Indian History, Madras.
JKHRS. Journal of the Kalinga Historical Research Society, Balangir.
JRI. Journal of the Oriental Institute, Baroda.
JPTS. Journal of the Pali Text Society.
JUB. Journal of the University of Bombay.
Kar. Kārpūramāñjari of Rājaśekhara.
Kāv. Kāvyamāṁsā of Rājaśekhara.
KHDS. History of Dharma-śāstra, by P. V. Kane.
KM. Kāvyamāla. NSP, Bombay.
KSS. Kāmarūpa-śāsanāvali.
Kuṭṭ. Kuṭṭanimatam of Dāmodaragupta.
List. See “Bh. List” above.
Manu. Manu-smṛti.
MAR. Mysore Archaeological Report.
MASB. Memoirs of the Asiatic Society of Bengal.
MASI. Memoirs of the Archaeological Survey of India.
M.C.C. Magazine. Madras Christian College Magazine
MDJG. Māṇikachandra Digambara Jaina Grantha-mālā.
Mrichchh. Mrichchhakāṭika of Sādṛaka.
NIA. New Indian Antiquary, Bombay.
NIS. New Imperial Series.
NPP. Nāgarī Prachārini Patrikā (in Hindi), Banaras
N.S. or NS. New Series.
NSP. Nirṇaya-sāgara Press, Bombay.
NUJ. Nagpur University Journal.
OC. Transactions (Verhandlungen, Actes) of International Congress of Orientalists.
OHRJ. Orissa Historical Research Journal, Bhubaneswar.
ORLI. Outline of the Religious Literature of India. by J. N. Farquhar.
Par Mādh. Parāśara-Mādhava (Comm. of Mādhavāchārya on Parāśara-smṛiti).
THE AGE OF IMPERIAL KANAUJ

PIHC. Proceedings of the Indian History Congress.
POC. Proceedings of the All-India Oriental Conference.
P.S. Prakrita-sarvasva of Markendeya.
PTS. Pali Text Society, London.
QJMS. Quarterly Journal of the Mythic Society, Bangalore.
Rajat. Rajatarangini of Kalhana.
Rati. Ratirahasya of Kokkoka.
RT. Rajatarangini of Kalhana.
SBE. Sacred Books of the East, Oxford.
SBH. Sacred Books of the Hindus, Allahabad.
SDar. Sahitya-darpana of Vishvanatha.
SII. South Indian Inscriptions.
SIS. Sino-Indian Studies, Calcutta.
SJS. Singhi Jain Series.
Sm. C. Smriti-chandrika of Devanabhata.
Taranatha. See “Schiefner” above.
TAS. Travancore Archaeological Series.
THK. History of Kanauj, by R. S. Tripathi.
TSS. Trivandrum Sanskrit Series.
Upamiti. Upamiti-bhavapraptapancha-katha of Siddharsh.
Vid. Viddhasalabha-jikika of Rajaekhara.
Vish. Vishnu-smriti.
VRS. Varendra Research Society.
VSS. Vizianagaram Sanskrit Series, Benares.
Yaj. Yajnavalkya-smriti.
ZDMG. Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft.