CHAPTER V

DISINTEGRATION OF THE DELHI SULTĀNATE

I. Delhi: The Sayyids and the Lodis

A. The so-called Sayyids

After the death of Sultān Mahmūd, the nobles of Delhi acknowledged Daulat Khān Lodi, the most powerful of their number, as the ruler of Delhi. But he was destined to hold power only for a few months. In March, A.D. 1414, Khizr Khān, governor of Multān and its dependencies on behalf of Timūr, marched against him and took possession of Delhi by the end of May of the same year. Daulat Khān was sent as a prisoner to Hissār Firūzā. Some historians represent Khizr Khān as a descendant of the Prophet, and the dynasty founded by him has accordingly been styled the Sayyid Dynasty. But the arguments in favour of this claim seem to be very doubtful, though Khizr's ancestors might have originally hailed from Arabia. Khizr did not assume the insignia of royalty but professed to rule as a viceroy of Timūr's fourth son and successor, Shāh Rukh, to whom he is said to have sent tribute. His tenure of power for seven years was not marked by any striking event. The extent of the old Delhi kingdom had then been reduced to a small principality, and the authority of its ruler was limited to a few districts round Delhi. Even in those parts, it was frequently challenged by the Hindu zamindārs of Etāwah, Katehr, Kanauj, Patīāli and Kampila. Khizr Khān and his loyal minister, Tāj-ul-mulk, who was also an intrepid fighter, struggled hard against these chronic disorders till the latter died on the 13th January, 1421, and the former on the 20th May, 1421. Ferishta extols Khizr Khān as "a just, a generous and a benevolent prince", but he was not a strong ruler. Owing to the efforts Khizr Khān made, "there were, of course, the ordinary concessions to expediency . . . submission (by the insurgents) for the moment in the presence of a superior force, insincere professions of allegiance, temporising payments of tribute, or desertion of fields and strongholds easily regained; but there was clearly no material advance in public security or in the supremacy of the Central Government". 330
Mubārak Shāh, whom his father, Khizr Khān, had nominated as his heir on his death-bed, ascended the throne of Delhi on the very day of the latter’s death, with the consent of the Delhi nobles. It was during his reign that Yahiyā bin Ahmad Sarhindi wrote his Ta’rīkh-i-Mubārak Shāhī, which is a valuable source-book for the history of this period. But his reign is as uneventful and dreary as that of his father. There is nothing of importance to record except some punitive expeditions to suppress disorders, which compelled the Sultān to accompany his armies. He was able to subdue the rebellions at Bhātinda and in the Doāb and recover balances of tribute from a limited area. But the brave Khokars grew more and more powerful and harassed him more than once. Their chief, Jasrat, confidently aspired to the establishment of their supremacy on the ruins of the Delhi kingdom. The Hindu nobles enhanced their influence in the Delhi court itself. On the 19th February, 1434, the Sultān fell victim to a conspiracy, organised by some Muslim as well as Hindu nobles under the leadership of the discontented ważīr Sarvar-ul-mulk, when he proceeded to superintend the construction of a newly planned town, called Mubārqābād, on the Jumnā.

The nobles of Delhi then raised Muhammad, a grandson of Khizr Khān and the heir-designate of the late murdered Sultān, to the throne of Delhi. But he also became “the victim of factions and the sport of circumstances”. Even when he had the opportunity to display his capacity for rule after the death of the unscrupulous ważīr Sarvar-ul-mulk, he abused it in such a manner as to forfeit the confidence of those who had delivered him from the hands of his enemies. Buhlūl Khān Lodi, the governor of Lahore and Sirhind, who had come to help the Sultān when Mahmūd Shāh Khalji of Mālwa had advanced as far as the capital, soon made an attempt to capture Delhi. Though it failed for the time being, the condition of the Sayyids gradually passed from bad to worse. As Nizām-ud-din Ahmad writes, “the affairs of the State grew day by day more and more confused, and it so happened that there were nobles at twenty krohs from Delhi, who threw off their allegiance (to the tottering Empire) and engaged themselves in preparations for resistance to it”. After the death of Muhammad Shāh in A.D. 1445,¹ the nobles declared his son to be the ruler of the shattered kingdom, which now consisted only of the city of Delhi and the neighbouring villages, under the title of ‘Ālam Shāh. The new ruler was more feeble and inefficient than his father. He made over the throne of Delhi to Buhlūl Lodi in

¹ There are differences of opinion regarding this date.
1451 and retired in an inglorious manner to his favourite place, Badãûn, where he spent the rest of his life, absorbed in pleasure, probably without any regret for his surrender of the throne, till his death.

B. The Lodis

Buhlül Khân belonged to the Lodi tribe of Afghãns. He was a nephew of Sultân Shâh Lodi, who had been appointed governor of Sirhind with the title of Islâm Khân after the death of Mallû Iqbal. On the death of his uncle, Buhlül became the governor of Lahore and Sirhind. When ʿAlâ-ud-din ʿÂlam Shâh voluntarily abdicated the throne of Delhi, he seized it on the 19th April, 1451, with the support of the minister Hamîd Khân. Thus, for the first time in the history of India, an Afghán ruler was seated on the throne of Delhi.

Buãlhül was called upon to rule over a mere fragment of the Delhi kingdom, which again was then in a highly distracted condition. But he was made of a different stuff from that of his immediate predecessors. Born of a fighting clan, he was active, warlike, and ambitious, and was determined to restore the strength of the Sultânate. He got rid of the influence of the old minister Hamîd Khân by cleverly throwing him into prison with the help of his Afghán followers. He also frustrated an attempt on the part of Mahmûd Shâh Sharqî of Jaunpur to get possession of Delhi, and reduced to submission some provincial fief-holders and chieftains, who had enjoyed independence for several years. Thus Ahmad Khân of Mewât, Dariyâ Khân of Sambhal, ʿIsâ Khân of Koil, Mubârak Khân of Suket, Râjâ Pratâp Singh of Mainpuri and Bhongâon, Qutb Khân of Rewâri, and the chiefs of Etâwah, Chandwâr and other districts of the Doâb, were compelled to acknowledge the authority of the Sultân, who, however, treated them with leniency so that they might be reconciled to his rule. His more significant achievement was the successful war against the neighbouring kingdom of Jaunpur, the independence of which was extinguished. He appointed his eldest surviving son, Bârbak Shâh, viceroy of Jaunpur in 1480. While returning from Gwâlîor after chastising its Râjâ, Kirat Singh, the Sultân fell ill; and in the midst of intrigues for succession to the throne among the partisans of his sons, Bârbak Shâh and Nizâm Shâh, and grandsons, Aʿzâm-i-Humâyûn, he breathed his last by the middle of July, 1489, near the town of Jalâli.

As a ruler, Buhlül was incomparably superior to those who had preceded him on the throne of Delhi since the time of Firûz of the house of Tughluq. Possessed of courage, energy and tact, he
restored the prestige of the Muslim power in Hindustān and infused some vigour into the government of his kingdom. Averse to display of royal splendour, he was kind to the poor, and though not a learned man himself, was a patron of scholars. He enjoyed the love and confidence of his near relatives and fellow tribesmen, who were allowed to share with him his power and prosperity.

After Buhlūl’s death, his second son, Nizām Khān, was proclaimed king at Jalāli, under the title of Sultān Sikandar Shāh, on the 17th July, 1489. His succession was disputed, as some of the nobles suggested the name of Bārbak Shāh; but their proposal came to nothing as Bārbak was then at a distant place. Endowed with considerable energy and vigour, Sikandar amply justified the choice of the minority among the nobles. He made earnest efforts to increase the strength of the kingdom by removing the disorders and confusion into which it had been thrown during the preceding reigns, due largely to the refractoriness of the provincial governors, chieftains, and zamindārs. He took care also to check the accounts of the leading Afghan āqādār, much against their will. Marching to Tirhut and Bihār, he asserted his authority as far as the confines of Bengal; appointed Dariyā Khān to the government of Bihār; compelled the Rājā of Tirhut to pay him tribute; and concluded a treaty with ‘Alā-ud-din Husain Shāh of Bengal, by which both agreed not to encroach on each other’s dominion. The chiefs of Dholpur, Chanderi, and some other places, also tendered submission to him. With the object of controlling the chiefs of Etawah, Biyāna, Koil, Gwālior and Dholpur in an effective manner, he founded a new town in 1504 on the site where the modern city of Āgra stands. Striving till his last days to enforce obedience from the hostile chiefs, the Sultān breathed his last at Āgra on the 21st November, A.D. 1517.

Sikandar was undoubtedy the ablest of the three rulers of his dynasty. He has been highly praised by contemporary as well as some later writers for his excellent qualities of head and heart. A firm, vigilant, and upright ruler, he entertained kind feelings in his heart for the poor and the needy, patronised learned men, and himself wrote some Persian verses. He dispensed justice with strict impartiality and personally heard the complaints of even the poorest of his subjects. The efficiency of his government chiefly contributed to the prevalence of peace and prosperity in his kingdom, and the prices of the articles of prime necessity became excessively low. He was, however, not free from religious intolerance, which led him to commit some impolitic acts.

After the death of Sikandar, his eldest son, Ibrāhīm, was elevated
to the throne at Agra on the 21st November, 1517. A faction of the nobility advocated a partition of the kingdom and set up Ibrāhīm’s younger brother, Jalāl Khān, on the throne of Jaunpur. But Ibrāhīm frustrated their attempt, whereupon Jalāl fled from Jaunpur but was captured on the way and assassinated by the Sultān’s orders. The new Sultān possessed military skill, but lacked good sense and moderation, and this ultimately brought about his ruin. With a view to securing strength and efficiency, he unwisely embarked upon a policy of repression towards the powerful nobles of the Lohānī, Forūmī and Lodi tribes, who constituted the official class of the State. By his stern measures he alienated the sympathies of the Afsghān nobility and drove them to disloyalty, which manifested itself in absolute defiance of his authority. This embittered the Sultān more and more and increased the severity of his measures towards the nobles. But the latter lost their patience; and soon those of Bihār declared their independence under Dariyā Khān Lohānī. The discontent of the nobles was brought to a head by Ibrāhīm’s unsympathetic treatment of Dilwār Khān, son of Daulat Khān Lodi, the semi-independent governor of Lahore. Daulat Khān Lodi and ‘Ālam Khān, an uncle of Sultān Ibrāhīm and a pretender to the throne of Delhi, invited Bābur, the Timūrid ruler of Kābul, to invade India. Thus revenge and ambition, persecutions and disaffection, brought about the final collapse of the decadent Delhi Sultānate and paved the way for the establishment of a new Turkish rule in India.

Indeed, the fall of the Delhi Sultānate was inevitable under the conditions which had their birth in the last days of Muhammad bin Tughluq. The indiscretions of that Sultān brought on a process of disintegration, which was accelerated by the weakness and impolitic measures of his immediate successor, Fīrūz Shāh, such as the revival of the jagīr system, the extension of the institution of slavery, the imposition of jīzā on the non-Muslims and persecution of the heretical Muslim sects. This process could not be checked by the weak Sayyids and unstatesmanlike Lodis. In spite of some military successes to their credit, the Lodis failed to introduce any wholesome and strong element in the administrative structure, and committed a fatal blunder by making an attempt to suppress the military and official nobility by a policy of repression. An external calamity, which might very well be regarded as a symptom of the growing decline of the Delhi Sultānate, hastened its end. While internal dissensions had been eating into its vitality, the invasion of Tīmūr destroyed its coherence and increased the selfish intrigues of the nobility, who, like the feudal baronage of later
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medieval Europe, plunged the whole kingdom into disorder and confusion which it was beyond the capacity of the weak rulers of Delhi to remove by prudent measures. Further, the Tughluqs, and their successors, did nothing to introduce such reforms as could lead to the growth of a unified State in a country like India, where, during the Middle Ages, the sense of social solidarity or of territorial and political unity had hardly grown. Thus the military autarchy of the Turks and the Afghans could enforce obedience among the governors and peoples of the different provinces only so long as it could retain its vigour. As soon as the central authority grew weak, the centrifugal tendencies, so common in the history of India, made headway, and a number of independent kingdoms arose on the ruins of the Delhi Sultanate. Their history may now be studied in brief.

2. Bengal

The control of the Delhi Sultans over Bengal was always dubious, and it was one of the earliest provinces to assert its independence. Its distance from Delhi, and its profuse wealth, often tempted its governors to rebel against the central authority, which, as has already been noted, caused much trouble to Iltutmish and Balban. Under the descendants of Balban it was virtually independent of the Delhi Government, whose control was again asserted only in the time of Ghiyās-ud-din Tughluq, who defeated Ghiyās-ud-din Bahādur Shāh and divided the province into three independent administrative divisions with their capitals at Lakhnauti, Sātgāon, and Sonārgāon respectively. Soon after his accession, Muhammad bin Tughluq appointed Qadr Khān to the government of Lakhnauti, 'Izz-ud-din A'zam-ul-mulk to that of Sātgāon, and restored Ghiyās-ud-din Bahādur Shāh to the government of Sonārgāon but associated with him his own foster-brother, Tārtār Khān, better known as Bahrām Khān. This partition of Bengal did not, however, serve to remove the chronic troubles in that province. Ghiyās-ud-din Bahādur soon revolted and issued coins from the mints at Sonārgāon and Ghiyāspur. But he was soon defeated and killed, and Bahrām Khān became the sole governor of Sonārgāon, Sātgāon and temporarily of Lakhnauti.1 Bahrām Khān died in a.d. 1336, whereupon his armour-bearer, Fakhr-ud-din, immediately proclaimed himself ruler of Sonārgāon under the title of Fakhr-ud-

1 One author, Shibabuddin Talis, who was an officer of Aurangzeb, refers to the conquest of Chittagong by Fakhr-ud-din Mubarak Shāh. Sarkar, Studies in Mughal India, p. 122. But as this statement is not corroborated by any other contemporary evidence, it is difficult to vouchsafe its accuracy.
din Mubārak Shāh. Shortly 'Alā-ud-dīn Āli Shāh (A.D. 1339–1345) made himself independent in Northern Bengal, and removed his capital from Lakhmanti to Pāndaū. The coins of Fakhr-ud-dīn were of excellent quality. These have been described as “veritable gems of the art of coin-striking and speak volumes in favour of the skill of the Sonārgāon artists. Their shape is regular, the lettering on them delightfully neat and well-shaped, and they carry about them a refreshing air of refinement.” It has been asserted on the evidence of some coins that Fakhr-ud-dīn Mubārak Shāh died a natural death after an unbroken reign of ten years and was succeeded on the throne of Sonārgāon by Ikhtiyār-ud-dīn Ghāzī Shāh, who was most probably his son.

Ultimately Ḥājī Iliyās, foster-brother of ‘Alā-ud-dīn Āli Shāh, made himself the independent ruler of the entire province of Bengal, about A.D. 1345, under the title of Shams-ud-dīn Iliyās Shāh. Soon after his accession he extended his power in different directions. He even invaded Nepal in A.D. 1350 and destroyed many cities there. It appears that after annexing the eastern kingdom of Sonārgāon in A.D. 1352 he exacted tribute from the kingdoms of Orissa and Tîrîhut and went as far as Benares. He also annexed some parts of Kāmrūp to his kingdom. Thus his activities proved to be a menace to the Delhi kingdom on its eastern frontier, and it was during his reign that Firūz of the house of Tughluq made an attempt to recover the lost province of Bengal, which, however, ended in failure. Iliyās died at Pāndaū in A.D. 1357. His reign was marked by peace and prosperity, which “are attested by the inauguration of a national and typical coinage, and by the growth of a taste for the arts of peace, especially architecture”.

Iliyās was succeeded by his son, Sikandar Shāh, early in whose reign the Delhi Sultān made a second attempt to recover Bengal but had to return disappointed. After a prosperous reign of about thirty-three years, Sikandar died, most probably in October, 1390, in the course of a fight with his son, Ghiyās-ud-dīn A'zām, at Gcālpārā near Pāndaū. That his reign was prosperous is well attested by his building of the magnificent mosque at Ādina and by the large number, variety, and richness of the designs of his coins. He had great regard for Muslim saints. The next ruler,

1 N. K. Bhattashali, p. 11.
2 Bhattashali, Independent Sultans of Bengal, p. 17. The Muslim chroniclers give different accounts about Fakhr-ud-dīn’s death. The author of Riyāż writes that he was killed by ‘Alā-ud-dīn Āli Shāh; Badāūnī states that Muhammad bin Tughluq went to Sonārgāon, took Fakhr-ud-dīn to Delhi and killed him; and Shams-i-Sīrāj ‘Afif notes that Fakhr-ud-dīn was killed by Ḥājī Iliyās.
Ghiyās-ud-dīn Aʿzam, was a correspondent of the famous poet Hāfiz. He was an accomplished and able prince, having a profound regard for law and Muslim saints. He sent embassies with some presents to Emperor Yung-lo of the Ming dynasty of China in 1405, 1408 and 1409. The Emperor of China also sent, in return, embassies and presents to him. Ghiyās-ud-dīn Aʿzam Shāh died in a.d. 1410–11 after a reign of about twenty years and was succeeded by his son, Saif-ud-dīn Hamza Shāh. But about this time taking advantage of the growing weakness of the Ilyās Shāhi rule, as a result of some unsuccessful military campaigns, Rājā Ganesh (misread as ‘Kans’ in Persian manuscripts),¹ a Hindu Zaminadar of Bhatura in North Bengal and an influential officer of the Ilyās Shāhi rulers of Bengal, rose to power and made himself a virtual dictator during the reigns of the puppet rulers like Saif-ud-dīn Hamza Shāh, who ruled for about two to three years, Shihab-ud-dīn Bayazid Shāh, adopted son or slave of Saif-ud-dīn Hamza Shāh, whose rule also lasted from a.d. 1412–13 to a.d. 1414–15, and the latter’s son and successor, Ala-ud-dīn Firuz Shāh nominally ruled for a few months only, and when he died Rājā Ganesh seized the throne of Bengal for himself (beginning of a.d. 1415). This usurpation of authority and restoration of Hindu rule by Ganesh were not liked by a section of the Muslims in Bengal. They opposed him along with the local Muslim theologians under the leadership of Nur Kutab Alam, who wrote a highly exciting letter to Ibrāhīm Sharqī, ruler of Jaunpur, inviting him to invade Bengal for extirpating the authority of Ganesh. On his way to Bengal, Ibrāhīm Sharqī proceeded through Mithilā, where Shīva Sinha had made himself an independent ruler by shaking off his allegiance to Jaunpur and by removing his father, Devi Sinha, from the throne. Shīva Sinha, also a friend and ally of Ganesh, offered resistance to the Jaunpur army but was overpowered by its superior numerical strength and his father was restored as ruler of Mithilā on acknowledging the overlordship of the Sultān of Jaunpur. In Bengal, Rājā Ganesh could not long stand against the vast Jaunpur army and he had to relinquish his throne. Out of lust for the throne his son, Jadusen, embraced Islam and Ibrāhīm Sharqī made him the Sultan of Bengal under the title of Jalal-ud-dīn probably towards the end of a.d. 1415. But soon after the return of Ibrāhīm Sharqī from Bengal, Rājā Ganesh recovered his authority as ruler of Bengal and assumed the title Danujamardana Deva (‘devoted to the feet of the Goddess Chandi’). Rājā Ganesh now ruled over an extensive kingdom.

¹ Some believe that Ganesh was a Barendra Brahmin bearing title of the Bhaduri. But there is no historical evidence to support this view.
covering practically the whole of Bengal with unassailable authority till the middle of the year 1418. Ganesh sought to reconvert his son into Hinduism through a purificatory process. But this suddhi does not seem to have been accepted by the Hindu society and Jadusen had to spend his days almost as an outcaste during the rest of his father’s reign.

Ganesh was a wise and able ruler. Beveridge remarked, “Rājā Kāns is the most interesting figure among the kings of Bengal. We feel that this obscure Hindu who rose to supreme power in Bengal, and who for a time broke the bonds of Islam, must have been a man of vigour and capacity.” Writers like Ferishta and some others have also praised his qualities as a ruler. He governed his kingdom “in the best manner” and his treatment of the Muslim subjects in general was cordial, though he tried “to reduce the overgrown and unruly Muslim monastic orders to obedience”.¹

Ganesh died peacefully in A.D. 1418 and in the same year coins with Bengali letters were issued from Pandua and Chittagong by a king named “Mahendra Deva, devoted to the feet of the Goddess Chandi”. He was probably the younger son of Ganesh, whom some of his partisans raised to the throne for a few months only before Jadusen, by re-embracing the Islamic faith, ascended the throne the same year with the title of Jalal-ud-din Muhammad. During his reign Ibrāhim Sharqī of Jaunpur invaded Bengal for the second time in A.D. 1420.

The rule of the dynasty of Ganesh did not last long. Jalāl-ud-din Muhammad died in A.D. 1431 and was succeeded by his son Shams-ud-din Ahmad, who reigned probably until A.D. 1435–36. The tyranny of this monarch made him extremely unpopular, and he fell a prey to a conspiracy organised against him by two officers of his government, Shādī Khān and Nāsir Khān. Nāsir Khān and Shādī Khān soon became jealous of each other, as both of them aspired to the throne of Bengal, and the former put his rival to death. But he was destined to exercise sovereignty only for a few days, as the nobles, who had been attached to Shams-ud-din Ahmad, soon opposed his authority and slew him. They then placed Nāsir-ud-din, a grandson of Hāji Iliyās, on the throne, who assumed the title of Nāsir-ud-din ‘Abul Muzaffar Mahmūd Shāh, as appears on his coins. Thus was restored the rule of the Iliyās Shāhi dynasty.

As is proved by some coins, Nāsir-ud-din Mahmūd reigned for many years as a just and liberal ruler. He is credited with the construction of some buildings at Gaur and a mosque at Sātgāon. On his death in A.D. 1459, his son, Rukn-ud-din Bārbak Shāh, ascended the

¹ History of Bengal (Dacca University publication), Vol. II, p. 127.
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throne of Bengal. According to Firishta he was the first ruler in Hindustān to maintain a large number of Abyssinian slaves, some of whom were raised to high positions. Some historians have praised him as "a sagacious and law-abiding sovereign in whose kingdom the soldiers and citizens alike enjoyed contentment and security". He died in A.D. 1474, and was succeeded by his son, Shams-ud-din Yūsuf Shāh, who is described in his inscriptions as Shams-ud-din Abul Muzaffar Yūsuf Shāh. He was a virtuous, learned and pious ruler and reigned till 1481. After his death, the nobles raised his son, Sikandar II, to the throne. But the new ruler, being found to be of defective intellect, was deposed almost immediately in favour of Jalāl-ud-din Fath Shāh, a son of Nāsir-ud-din Mahmūd. He has been described as an intelligent and liberal ruler "who maintained the usages of the past and in whose time the people enjoyed happiness and comfort". Fath Shāh was prudent enough to realise the danger that lay in the growing influence of the Abyssinians, but his attempt to check it cost him his life. The discontented Abyssinians formed a conspiracy against him under the leadership of a eunuch, who had him murdered in A.D. 1486 and usurped the throne of Bengal under the title of Bārbak Shāh, Sultān Shāhzāda. But Bārbak was murdered in the course of a few months by Indil Khān, who, though an Abyssinian, was loyal to Fath Shāh and was a military commander of proved ability. Pressed by the widow of Fath Shāh, and the courtiers of Gaur, Indil Khān, after displaying some decent reluctance, ascended the throne of Bengal under the title of Saif-ud-din Firūz. If the author of the Riyāż is to be relied on, the confidence reposed in him as an able administrator and commander was justified by his measures, but he was indiscriminately charitable. He died in A.D. 1489, when the nobles placed on the throne a son of Saif-ud-din Firūz Shāh, under the title of Nāsir-ud-din Mahmūd Shāh II. But this ruler was done away with in A.D. 1490 by an ambitious Abyssinian, known as Śīdī Badr, who seized the throne under the title of Shams-ud-din Abu Nasar Muzaffar Shāh. This Abyssinian's reign of three years and a few months was marked by tyranny and disorder, which caused widespread discontent among the soldiers and the officers, including his wise minister, 'Sayyid Husain, who was an Arab by descent. They besieged him in Gaur for four months, in the course of which he died. The nobles of Bengal then raised 'Sayyid Husain to the throne (1493), under the title of Alā-ud-din Husain Shah in recognition of his merit and ability.

1 A modern writer notes that Sultan Shazada was not an Abyssinian. 'Sukhamay Mukhopadhyay, p. 157).
The accession of 'Alā-ud-din Husain Shāh marks the commencement of the rule of a new dynasty, which endured about half a century and the members of which have various useful measures to their credit. He shifted his capital to Ekdala. We have numerous inscriptions of Husain Shāh, and his coins, as well as those of his son Nusrat Shāh, are varied and abundant. An enlightened and wise man, and a contemporary of the great Vaishnava preacher Chaitanya Deva, Husain Shāh was one of the most popular rulers that ascended the throne of Bengal. With a view to restoring order in the internal administration of his kingdom, he suppressed the power of the palace guards, who had, during the preceding reigns, established a position similar to that of the Praetorian Guards in Rome. He also expelled the Abyssinians from his kingdom, as their increased influence had become a serious menace to the throne. In A.D. 1494 he hospitably received Husain Shāh Sharqi of Jaunpur, who, being driven from his kingdom by Sikandar Lodi of Delhi, had fled towards Bengal. The fugitive monarch was allowed to live at Colgong (in Bihār near Bhāgalpur) till he died there in A.D. 1500. At this Sikandar Lodi immediately decided to take action against the Bengal Sultan and sent an army to Bihār early in 1495 under Mahmud Lodi and Mubārak Lohāni. Husain Shāh of Bengal also sent an army under his son, Daniyal, to intercept them. The contending armies stood face to face at Barh for some time till peace was concluded between the two parties, on Husain Shāh giving an undertaking that in future he would not offer shelter to the enemies of the Delhi Sultan. Having established order near his capital, Husain Shāh tried to recover the lost territorial possessions of Bengal. He extended the limits of his kingdom as far as the borders of Orissa to the south, though he was not successful in his military campaigns against Orissa, recovered Magadha from the control of the Sharqis of Jaunpur, occupied North Bihār, invaded the Āhom kingdom of Assam, and captured Kāmatāpur in Koch Bihār in 1498. Assam was soon recovered by its old king. Husain Shāh also annexed a tract of Tipperah and recovered Chittagong from Arrakanese occupation. Husain Shāh then applied himself to ensuring the security of the frontiers of his kingdom, and built mosques and alms-houses in different parts of it, making suitable endowments for their maintenance. He died in 1519 and was succeeded by his eldest son, Nasīb Khān, who assumed the title of Nāsir-ud-din Nusrat Shāh. Unlike many other Muslim rulers in India, Nusrat Shāh proved generous towards his brothers and

1 There are several Muslim tombs at Colgong, one of which is regarded as the tomb of Husain Shāh Sharqi.
doubled their inheritance. He invaded Tirhut, slew its king Kansaṅrāyaṇ and placed there ‘Alā-ud-dīn and Makhdūm-i-‘Ālām, his own brothers-in-law, to look after its administration. Nusrat Shāh’s diplomacy to organise an anti-Mughal coalition did not prove quite successful and there was an open conflict between Babur’s troops and Nusrat Shāh’s army near the Ghoghra ferry in which the latter, after giving good account of themselves, were ultimately overpowered. This was followed by an agreement between Babur and Nusrat Shāh in 1529 on certain terms. Nusrat Shāh was a patron of art, architecture and literature. He caused two famous mosques, the Barā Sonā Masjid (Large Golden Mosque) and Qadam Rasūl (Foot of the Prophet), to be constructed at Gaur; and a Bengali version of the Mahābhārata was made under his orders. He was eventually assassinated by his palace eunuchs in 1532 and was succeeded by his son, ‘Alā-ud-dīn Firūz Shāh, who, after a reign of not more than three months, was killed by his uncle, Ghiyās-ud-dīn Mahmūd Shāh. Ghiyās-ud-dīn Mahmūd Shāh was the last king of the Husain Shāhī dynasty, whom Sher Khān Sūr expelled from Bengal.

3. Independent Sultānates in the Provinces of Northern and Western India

A. Jaunpur

The city of Jaunpur was founded by Firūz of the house of Tughluq to perpetuate the memory of his cousin and patron, Muhammad Jauna. We have noticed before how, during the period of confusion following the invasion of Timūr, Khwāja Jahān threw off his allegiance to the Delhi Sultānate and founded a dynasty of independent rulers at Jaunpur, known as the Sharqī dynasty after his title, “Malik-ush-Sharq”. He died in 1399, leaving his throne to his adopted son, Malik Qaranful, who assumed the title of Mubārak Shāh Sharqī. Mubārak Shāh died, after a short reign, in 1402, and was succeeded by his younger brother, Ibrāhim Shāh Sharqī. Ibrāhim ruled for about thirty-four years and was the ablest ruler of the Sharqī dynasty. Being himself a man of culture, he patronised art and literature, as a result of which Jaunpur became an important centre of Muslim learning. This city was also adorned by the construction of beautiful buildings, marked by Hindu influence, and having mosques without minarets of the usual type. The famous Atāla Masjid which stands now as a brilliant specimen of the Jaunpur style of architecture, was completed in A.D. 1408. Ibrāhīm died in 1436 and was succeeded by his son, Mahmūd Shāh. The new king annexed the greater part of the district of Chunār, but
his expedition against Kālpī proved unsuccessful. On making an attempt to occupy Delhi, he was defeated by Buhlūl Lodi, who compelled him to return to Jaunpur. Mahmud died in A.D. 1457, when his son, Bhikhan, ascended the throne under the title of Muhammad Shāh. But the unscrupulous conduct of this king highly incensed the nobles and his own relatives, who had him murdered and raised his brother, Husain Shāh, to the throne. Soon after his accession, Husain Shāh concluded in 1458 a four years’ truce with Buhlūl Lodi of Delhi. He utilised this period in suppressing the independent zamindārs of Tirhut, and in conducting a plundering expedition into Orissa, the Rājā of which purchased peace by paying a vast treasure. He also led an army in 1466 to capture the fortress of Gwālior, but could not reduce it and retired when its Rājā, Mān Singh, paid him a heavy indemnity. After these initial successes, fortune turned against Husain Shāh in his renewed war with Buhlūl Lodi, who expelled him to Bihār and annexed the kingdom of Jaunpur to Delhi. Buhlūl appointed his son, Bārbak, governor of Jaunpur, permitting him to use the royal title and coin money. Thus the independence of Jaunpur came to an end. The period of Sharqī rule at Jaunpur, extending for about eighty-five years, was marked by prosperity, development of architecture, and an outburst of a high type of culture, which earned for the city, during Ibrāhīm’s reign, the title of “the Shirāz of India”.

B. Mālwa

Annexed by ‘Alī-ud-din Khaḷjī in A.D. 1305, Mālwa continued to be governed by Muslim chiefs, under the authority of Delhi, till it became independent, like other provinces, during the period of disorder after the invasion of Timūr. Dilāwar Khān Ghūṛī, who had been appointed governor of Mālwa, probably by Firūz of the house of Tughluq, made himself independent of the Delhi Sultānate for all practical purposes in 1401, though he did not formally renounce his allegiance to it or assume the “style of royalty”. In 1406 he was succeeded by his ambitious son, Alp Khān, who ascended the throne under the title of Hūshang Shāh. The new ruler was a man of restless spirit, and took a delight in adventurous enterprises and wars, in which he remained constantly engaged throughout his reign. In 1422 he left his capital for Orissa in the guise of a merchant and made a surprise attack on the unsuspecting Rājā of that kingdom, who had to bribe him to withdraw by giving him seventy-five elephants. On his way back to Mālwa, Hūshang captured Kherla and carried off its Rājā as a prisoner. He had to
fight against the Sultāns of Delhi, Jaunpur, and Gujarāt, and had once to measure his strength with Ahmad Shāh Bahmani, who had been offended by his capture of Kherla, the Rājā of which place had been formerly a vassal of the Bahmani kingdom. But most of his campaigns resulted in defeats and disasters for him. He died on the 6th July, 1435, when his eldest son, Ghaznī Khān, was proclaimed king of Mālwa, under the title of Muhammad Shāh. But the new ruler was absolutely unmindful of the affairs of the State. His minister, Mahmūd Khān, usurped the throne in May, 1436. Thus was founded the dynasty of the Khaljī Sultāns of Mālwa. Mahmūd frustrated the opposition of a faction of the nobles, and of Ahmad Shāh I of Gujarāt, who had espoused the cause of Mas'ūd Khān, a son of Muhammad Shāh of Mālwa.

Mahmūd Khaljī was a brave warrior, who fought against Ahmad Shāh I of Gujarāt, Muhammad Shāh of Delhi, Muhammad Shāh III Bahmani and Rānā Kumbha of Mewār. He failed in his contests with the Muslim Sultāns. His war with the Rānā of Mewār seems to have been indecisive. Strangely enough, both sides claimed victory, and while the Rānā of Mewār built the “Tower of Victory” at Chitor, the Sultān of Mālwa erected a seven-storeyed column at Māndū to commemorate his triumph. Mahmūd Khaljī was undoubtedly the ablest of the Muslim rulers of Mālwa. He extended the limits of this kingdom up to the Sātpurā Range in the south, the frontier of Gujarāt in the west, Bundelkhand in the east, and Mewār and Harautī in the north. His fame spread outside India. The Khalifah of Egypt recognised his position and he received a mission from Sultān Abu-Sa'īd. He was a just and active administrator. Ferishta thus praises his qualities: “Sultān Mahmūd was polite, brave, just and learned, and during his reign, his subjects, Muhammadans as well as Hindus, were happy and maintained a friendly intercourse with each other. Scarcely a year passed that he did not take the field, so that his tent became his home, and his resting-place the field of battle. His leisure hours were devoted to hearing the histories and memoirs of the courts of different kings of the earth read.” He died at Māndū, at the age of sixty-eight, on the 1st June, 1469, after a reign of about thirty-four years.

Mahmūd’s eldest son, Ghiyāṣ-ud-dīn, ascended the throne of Mālwa two days after his father’s death. He was a lover of peace and a devout Muslim, “particular in his daily prayers”, and abstained from all intoxicants and prohibited articles of food. But his last days were rendered unhappy by quarrels between his two sons, ‘Abdul Qādir Nāsir-ud-dīn and Shujā’at Khān ‘Alā-ud-dīn. The
former at last seized the throne in A.D. 1500. Nāsir-ud-din greatly abused his power till he died in A.D. 1510. His second son then ascended the throne under the title of Mahmūd II. To get rid of the influence of the Muslim nobles, Mahmūd II appointed Medīnī Rāī, the powerful Rājput chief of Chandęri, to the office of minister. Medīnī Rāī soon acquired supreme influence in the State and appointed Hindus to offices of trust and responsibility. This excited the jealousy of the nobles of Mālwa, who removed the Rājput minister with the help of Sultan Muzaffar Shāh II of Gujārāt. But Medīnī Rāī was able to inflict a defeat on Māhmūd II himself with the help of Rānā Sanga of Chitor. The Sultān of Mālwa was captured by the victorious Rājputs. Rānā Sanga, however, treated him with chivalrous generosity, characteristic of the Rājput race, and restored his vanquished foe to his kingdom. But the authority of the kingdom of Mālwa had been by this time greatly reduced, and the days of its independence were numbered. The Sultān, Mahmūd II, incurred the hostility of Rānā Ratan Singh, successor of Rānā Sanga, by raiding his territories; and the Rānā, as an act of reprisal, invaded Mālwa. He also excited the wrath of Sultān Bahādur Shāh of Gujārāt by giving shelter to Chānd Khān, the latter’s younger brother and a rival for his throne. Bahādur Shāh thereupon captured Māndū on the 17th March, 1531, and the independence of Mālwa was thus extinguished. It continued to remain under Bahādur Shāh of Gujārāt, till it was later on occupied for a short period by the Mughul ruler, Humāyūn. About 1535 Mallū Khān, formerly an officer of the Khaljī Sultāns of Mālwa, established independent sovereignty in Mālwa under the title of Qādir Shāh, but he was deposed by Sher Shāh, the Afghān ruler of Delhi, in 1542. After being governed by viceroys of the Afghān government, Mālwa was conquered by Mughul generals from Bāz Bahādur in A.D. 1561–1562.

**C. Gujārāt**

The immense wealth of the province of Gujārāt, due particularly to active commerce through the rich ports of Cambay, Surāt and Broa, often drew upon her external invasions. Annexed to the Delhi Sultānate by ‘Alā-ud-din Khaljī in A.D. 1297, it was ruled for a long time by Muslim governors appointed by the Delhi Sultāns. But in 1401 Zafar Khān (son of a Rājput convert), who had been appointed governor of the province in 1391 by Muhammad Shāh, the youngest son of Firūz of the house of Tughluq, formally assumed independence. In 1403 Zafar
Khān's son, Tātār Khān, acting in conspiracy with some discontented nobles, rose against his father, imprisoned him at Asāwal and proclaimed himself king under the title of Nāsir-ud-din Muḥammad Shāh. He even marched towards Delhi with a view to establishing his authority there, but was put to death by his uncle and regent, Shams Khān. This enabled Zafar Khān to recover his throne and to assume the title of Sultan Muzaffar Shāh. Muzaffar Shāh waged a successful war against Hūshang Shāh, Sultan of Mālwa, and captured Dhār. After his death in June, 1411, Ahmad Shāh, his grandson and heir-designate, ascended the throne. Ahmad has been justly regarded as the real founder of the independence of Gujarāt. Endowed with considerable courage and energy, he engaged himself throughout his reign of about thirty years in extending the limits of his kingdom, which had been confined, during the reigns of his two predecessors, to a small territory near Asāwal. Success always attended his campaigns against the Sultan of Mālwa and the chiefs of Asīrgarh, Rājputāna and other neighbouring territories. He also devoted his attention to improving the civil administration of his kingdom and dispensed justice impartially. In the first year of his reign, he built the beautiful city of Ahmadābād, on the site of the old town of Asāwal, and removed his capital to that place, which to this day bears witness to his taste and munificence. His only defect was his religious intolerance. He died on the 16th August, 1442, and was succeeded by his eldest son, Muhammad Shāh, who reigned till his death on the 10th February, A.D. 1451. Two weak rulers, Muhammad Shāh's son, Qutb-ud-din Ahmad, and Muhammad's brother Dāūd, followed him. Through his evil ways, Dāūd alienated the sympathy of the nobles within a few days of his accession. They deposed him, and raised his nephew, Abū Fath Khān, a grandson of Ahmad Shāh, to the throne, under the title of Mahmūd, commonly known as Begarha.

Mahmūd Begarha was by far the most eminent Sultan of his dynasty. The leading Muslim historian of his country observes that "he added glory and lustre to the kingdom of Gujarāt, and was the best of all the Gujarāt kings, including all who preceded, and all who succeeded him; and whether for abounding justice and generosity... for the diffusion of the laws of Islam and of Mussalmāns; for soundness in judgment, alike in boyhood, in manhood, and in old age; for power, for valour, and victory, he was a pattern of excellence". Ascending the throne at a comparatively young age, he at once took the management of the affairs of his kingdom into his own hands, and overpowered his hostile courtiers,
who had formed a conspiracy to raise his brother, Hasan Khān, to the throne. He ruled vigorously, without the influence of any minister or of the harem, for about fifty-three years; and being a brave warrior, he gained success in all his campaigns. He saved Nizām Shāh Bahmani from aggression on the part of Mahmūd Khalji of Mālwa, defeated the Sūmra and Sodha chiefs of Cutch, suppressed the pirates of Jagat (Dvārakā), and reduced the strong forts of Junāgarh and Chāmpāner, the latter being named by him Muhammadadābād. As a result of his conquests, the kingdom of Gujarāt reached its extreme limits, extending "from the frontiers of Māndū to the frontiers of Sind, by Junāgarh; to the Siwālik Parbat by Jālor and Nāgaur; to Nāsik Trimbak by Bagāna; from Burhānpur to Berar and Malkāpur of the Deccan; to Karkūn and the river Narbada on the side of Burhānpur; on the side of Ídar as far as Chitor and Kumbhalgarh, and on the side of the sea as far as the bounds of Chaul". Towards the close of his reign, he tried, in alliance with Qansaub-al-Ghauri, Sultān of Egypt, to check the rising power of the Portuguese in the Indian Seas, who had within a decade, since the discovery of the Cape Route by Vasco da Gama in 1498, almost monopolised the lucrative spice trade from the Red Sea and Egypt at the expense of the interests of Muslim traders and the important sea-ports of Western India, like Cambay and Chaul. The Egyptian fleet, under the command of Amir Husain the Kurd, governor of Jecūjia, and the Indian contingent, under the command of Malik Ayāz, a Turk who had found employment in the court of Gujarāt, defeated a Portuguese squadron commanded by Dom Lourenço, son of the Portuguese viceroy, Francesco de Almeida, near Chaul, south of Bombay, in 1508. But the Portuguese inflicted a crushing defeat on the allied Muslim fleet, near Diu, in 1509, and recovered their naval ascendancy on the sea-coast. Mahmūd granted them a site for a factory at Diu.

After the death of Mahmūd Begarha on the 23rd November, 1511, the throne passed to his son Muzaffar II, who waged successful wars against the Rājputs and restored Mahmūd Khalji of Mālwa to his throne. Muzaffar's death on the 7th April, 1526, was followed by two short and insignificant reigns of his sons, Sikandar and Nāsir Khān Mahmūd II, till in the month of July of the same year his more daring son, Bahādur, got possession of the throne.

Brave and warlike like his grandfather, Bahādur was a famous ruler in the history of medieval India. He not only defeated Mahmūd II of Mālwa and annexed his kingdom in 1531 but also overran the territories of the Rānā of Mewār, the old enemy of his house, and stormed Chitor in A.D. 1534. Fortune, however,
went against him in his wars with Humāyūn, in the course of which he was deprived not only of the newly-conquered province of Mālwa but also of the greater part of his own kingdom. But on the withdrawal of the Delhi troops, Bahādur regained his kingdom and turned his attention towards expelling the Portuguese, whose assistance he had sought in vain against the Mughuls. Failing to persuade the Portuguese governor, Nunho da Cunha, to come to him, he himself proceeded to visit him on board his ship in February, 1537, but was treacherously drowned by the Portuguese, and all his companions were murdered. After the death of Bahādur, anarchy and confusion reigned supreme in Gujarāt under his weak successors, who were mere puppets in the hands of rival baronial parties; so it was easily annexed to the Mughul Empire by Akbar in A.D. 1572.

D. Kāshmīr

In the year A.D. 1315 Shāh Mīrzā, a Muslim adventurer from Swāt, entered the service of the Hindu Prince of Kāshmīr, who died shortly afterwards. Shāh Mīrzā seized the throne of Kāshmīr in A.D. 1339 or 1346 under the title of Shams-ud-din Shāh and caused coins to be struck and the Khutba to be read in his name. He used his newly-acquired power wisely, and died in A.D. 1349.1 His sons, Jamshīd, ʿAlā-ud-din, Shihāb-ud-din, and Qutb-ud-din, then reigned successively for about forty-six years. After Qutb-ud-din's death in A.D. 1394, his son Sikandar ascended the throne of Kāshmīr.

Reigning at the time of Timūr's invasion of India, Sikandar exchanged envoys with him, though the two never met each other. He was generous towards the men of his own faith, and many learned Muslim scholars flocked to his court from Persia, Arabia and Mesopotamia, but his general attitude was not liberal. He died, after a reign of twenty-two years and nine months, in A.D. 1416. His eldest son, ʿĀli Shāh, then reigned for a few years, after which he was overpowered by his brother, Shāhī Khān, who ascended the throne in June, A.D. 1420, under the title of Zain-ul-ʿĀbidīn.

Zain-ul-ʿĀbidīn was a benevolent, liberal and enlightened ruler. He did much to diminish theft and highway robbery in his kingdom by enforcing the principle of the responsibility of the village communities for local crimes, regulated the prices of commodities,

1 The chronology of the Muhammadan Sultāns of Kāshmīr is rather bewildering, and the dates of their reigns have to be regarded as being approximate.
lightened the burden of taxation on the people, and rehabilitated the currency, which had been greatly debased during the reigns of his predecessors. His public works immensely benefited his subjects. He was a man of liberal ideas, and showed remarkable toleration towards the followers of other faiths. He recalled the Brāhmaṇas, who had left the kingdom during his father's reign, admitted learned Hindus to his society, abolished the jizya and granted perfect religious freedom to all. He possessed a good knowledge of Persian, Hindi, and Tibetan, besides his own language, and patronised literature, painting and music. Under his initiative, the Mahābhārata and the Rājatarangini were translated from Sanskrit into Persian, and several Arabic and Persian books were translated into the Hindi language. Thus, for all these qualities, he has been justly described as "the Akbar of Kāshmir", though he differed from him in a few traits of personal character. He died in November or December, 1470, and was succeeded by his son Haidar Shāh.

The history of the later Sultāns of Kāshmir is uninteresting and unimportant. After Zain-ul-‘Ābidin's death, anarchy "ensued under the rule of nominal kings who were placed on the throne as a mark for the machinations of the different parties who were seeking pre-eminence for purposes of self-aggrandisement and plunder". Towards the end of A.D. 1540, Mirzā Haidar, a relative of Humāyūn, conquered Kāshmir. He governed it, theoretically, on behalf of Humāyūn, but in practice as an independent ruler, till 1551, when he was overthrown by the Kāshmir nobles, who resumed their intrigues and quarrels. About A.D. 1555 the Chakks seized the throne of Kāshmir, but with no relief to the troubled kingdom, which was absorbed into the Mughul Empire in the time of Akbar.

4. Independent Sultānates in Southern India, including Khāndesh

A. Khāndesh

Khāndesh was a province of Muhammad bin Tughluq's empire in the valley of the Tāptī river. Firūz Shāh entrusted its government to one of his personal attendants, Malik Rājā Farūqi, whose ancestors had been respected nobles of the Delhi court in the reigns of 'Alā-ud-dīn Khaljī and Muhammad bin Tughluq. In the period of confusion following the death of Firūz Shāh, Malik Rājā, following the example of his neighbour, Dilāwar Khān of Mālwa, declared his independence of the Delhi Sultānate. He was defeated by Muzaffar Shāh I of Gujarāt in several battles. Being a
man of peaceful disposition, he treated his subjects, Muhammadans as well as Hindus, with kindness and consideration. He died on the 29th April, 1399, and his son, Malik Nasir, soon made himself absolute master of Khândesh by overpowering his brother Hasan. The new Sultán captured the fortress of Asirgarh from its Hindu chieftain, but Ahmad Sháh, the Sultán of Gujarát, defeated him when he attacked Nandurbár and compelled him to swear fealty to him. His war against his son-in-law, 'Alá-ud-din Ahmad of the Bahmani dynasty, also ended in disaster for him and he died in the year 1437–1438. Then after the two uneventful reigns of his son, 'Ádil Khán I (1438–41), and grandson, Mubarak Khán I (1441–1457), the throne of Khândesh was occupied by Mubarak Khán's son, 'Ádil Khán II, who was an able and vigorous ruler and tried hard to restore administrative order in his kingdom, the authority of which was extended by him over Gondwána. On his death without any issue in 1501, the throne passed to his brother Dádd, who, after an inglorious reign of about seven years, died in 1508, and was succeeded by his son, Ghazñi Khán. Ghazñi Khán was poisoned within ten days of his accession, and Khândesh was plunged into disorder due to the faction fights of two rival claimants to its throne, one being supported by Ahmad Nizám Sháh of Ahmednagar, and the other by Mahmúd Begarba of Gujarát, till the latter succeeded in raising his candidate to the throne with the title of 'Ádil Khán III. The reign of 'Ádil Khán III was not marked by any event of importance. He died on the 25th August, 1520, and his weak successors had not the courage or ability to save the kingdom from the aggressions of its external enemies. Like Gujarát, Khândesh was annexed by Akbar to his empire in 1601.

B. The Bahmani Kingdom

Of all the independent Muslim kingdoms that arose on the ruins of the Delhi Sultánate, the Bahmani kingdom of the Deccan proved to be the most powerful. It came into existence during the reign of Muhammad bin Tughluq as a challenge to his authority. The nobles of the Deccan, driven to rebellion by the eccentric policy of the Delhi Sultán, seized the fort of Daulatábád and proclaimed one of themselves, Ismá’íl Mukh the Afghan, as king of the Deccan under the title of 'Ásir-ud-din Sháh. Ismá’íl Mukh, being an old and ease-loving man, proved unfit for the office. Soon he voluntarily made room for a more worthy leader, Hasan, entitled Zafar Khán, who was declared king by the nobles on the 3rd August, 1347, under the title of Abul-Muzaffar 'Alá-ud-din Bahman
Shāh. The story related by Ferishta about Hasan's origin, to the
effect that he was originally a menial in the service of a Brāhmaṇa
astrologer of Delhi, Gangū, who enjoyed the favour of Muhammad bin
Tughluq, and later on rose to prominence owing to the patronage
of his Hindu master, finds no corroboration in the accounts of the
later Muslim chroniclers and is also not supported by the evidence
of coins and inscriptions. Hasan, in fact, claimed descent from the
famous Persian hero Bahman, son of Isfandiyār, and the dynasty
that he founded thus came to be known as the Bahmanī dynasty.

Soon after his accession, 'Alā-ud-dīn Hasan selected Gulbarga
as his capital and renamed it as Ahsanābād. But the Hindu rulers
of the south, who had not failed to profit by the political
disorders in the Deccan at the time of 'Alā-ud-dīn Hasan's rise,
were not disposed to submit to his authority. He therefore
launched on a career of conquest, which was marked by
success. When he died on the 11th February, 1358, he left a
dominion extending from the Waingangā river in the north to
the Krishnā river in the south and from Daulatabād in the
west to Bhongir, now in the Nizām's dominions, in the east. For
the administration of his kingdom, he divided it into four tarafs
or provinces, Gulbarga, Daulatabād, Berar and Bidar. Each
province was placed in charge of a governor, who maintained an
army, and made appointments in all civil and military posts under
him. The efficiency of administration in the provinces checked the
outbreak of rebellions. The author of Burhān-i-Maʿāṣir has thus
praised this Sultān: "Sultān 'Alā-ud-dīn I Hasan Shāh was a just
king and the cherisher of his people and pious. During his reign
his subjects and the army used to pass their time in perfect ease
and content; and he did much towards propagating the true faith."

The next Sultān was Muhammad Shāh I, the eldest son of
Hasan, who had nominated him as his heir on his death-bed.
Soon after his accession, Muhammad Shāh organised the different
branches of his government, like the ministry, the household
troops and the provincial administration. But throughout his
reign, he was chiefly engaged in waging wars against the rulers
of Warangal and Vijayanagar. Those rulers offered a stubborn
resistance, but both were overpowered by the troops of Gulbarga,
and had to conclude peace, after immense losses, on humiliating
terms.

Muhammad Shāh's mode of life was not unimpeachable. The
author of Burhān-i-Maʿāṣir distinctly states that the Sultān
"showed signs of an irreligious manner of living, which threw him
on the bed of helplessness".
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After the death of Muhammad Shāh I in A.D. 1377, his son, Mujāhid Shāh, ascended the throne and marched in person against Vijayanagar. But he could not capture that city and soon had to return to his capital after making peace with its Rāya. He fell a victim to a conspiracy organised by one of his near relatives named Dāūd Khān,¹ who usurped the throne. The usurper was paid back in his own coin by being murdered in May, 1378, by an assassin at the instigation of Mujāhid’s foster-sister, Rūh Parwar Āghā. The nobles and military officers then raised to the throne Muhammad Shāh, son of Mahmūd Khān, the fourth son of ‘Alā-ud-din Hasan Bahmani.

Unlike his predecessors, Muhammad Shāh II was a lover of peace and devoted to learning; and his reign was not disturbed by foreign wars. He built mosques, established free schools for orphans, and invited learned men from all parts of Asia to his court. But his last days were embittered by the intrigues of his sons, who were eager to get the throne. After his death in April, A.D. 1397, followed the inglorious and troubled reigns of his two sons, Ghīyās-ud-din and Shams-ud-din Dāūd, lasting for only a few months, till the throne of Gulbarga was seized in November, 1397, by Firūz, a grandson of ‘Alā-ud-din Hasan Bahmani, who assumed the title of Tāj-ud-din Firūz Shāh.

We are told by the author of *Burhān-i-Ma‘āsir* that Firūz Shāh “was an impetuous and a mighty monarch, and expended all his ability and energy in eradicating and destroying tyranny and heresy, and he took much pleasure in the society of the Sheikhs, learned men and hermits”. But after a few years’ rule, he became addicted to the common vices of his time, which even Ferishta has noted. He was conversant with various languages and could talk freely with his wives of diverse nationalities in their own tongues. He followed the traditional policy of his dynasty in waging wars against the Rāyas of Vijayanagar and some other Hindu rulers of the Deccan. He gained success in his two expeditions against Vijayanagar in 1398 and 1406, exacted heavy indemnity from its Rāya and even compelled him to surrender a princess of Vijayanagar for his harem. But his third attack in 1420 resulted in his defeat at Pāngul, to the north of the Krishṇā, and his retreat from the field after his commander-in-chief, Mīr Fazl-ullāh Injū, had been killed. The Vijayanagar troops soon occupied the southern and eastern districts of the Bahmani kingdom. This defeat told heavily on the Sultān’s mind and body, and he left

¹ Dāūd was uncle of Mujāhid according to Ferishta but his cousin according to the author of *Burhān-i-Ma‘āsir*. 
the administration in the hands of his slaves, Ḥūshyār ‘Ain-ul-mulk and Nizām Bidār-ul-mulk. He was ultimately forced to abdicate the throne in favour of his brother Ahmad, who, according to the author of Burhān-i-Mu‘āṣir, did away with Firūz Shāh in September, 1422, though some writers believe, on the authority of Firishta, that Firūz Shāh died a natural death.

To avenge the losses sustained by the Bahmani troops in his brother’s reign, Ahmad Shāh carried on a terrible war against Vijayanagar. The siege of Vijayanagar by the Bahmani troops reduced it to great distress and compelled its Rāya to conclude peace by paying a heavy indemnity. This was conveyed to Ahmad’s camp, on elephants, by the Rāya’s son, who was received there honourably; and the invaders then returned to their country. In 1424 or 1425 Ahmad Shāh’s general, Khān-i-‘Azam, attacked the Hindu kingdom of Warangal and succeeded in capturing its fortress, with immense treasures, and in killing its ruler. The independence of Warangal was thus extinguished. Ahmad Shāh also waged war against Mālwa. The Sultān of Mālwa, Ḥūshang Shāh, was defeated with great losses in men and money. Ahmad’s war with the Sultān of Gujarāt, Ahmad Shāh I, ended in failure, and peace was at last concluded through the intervention of theologians and learned men of both sides. The Hindu chiefs of the Konkan also felt the weight of Bahmanī arms during his reign, but this pressure was removed after his death from illness in February, 1435.

Ahmad Shāh transferred the capital of his kingdom from Gulbarga to Bīdar, which was beautifully situated and had a salubrious climate. Though not endowed with much learning, he bestowed favours on some Muslim scholars. The poet, Shaikh Āzari of Ifsārāyin in Khurāsān, who came to his court, received a huge amount of money for composing two verses in praise of his palace at Bīdar; and Maulāna Sharīf-ud-din Māzandarānī was also rewarded with 12,000 tankās for inscribing in beautiful handwriting two verses on the door of that palace.

In the meanwhile, baronial intrigues for position and influence, often resulting in pitched battles and massacres, had begun to affect the homogeneity of the Bahmanī kingdom. There were perpetual feuds between the Deccani nobles with their allies, the Africans and the Muwallads (issue of African fathers and Indian mothers) on the one side, and, on the other, the foreign nobles, composed of the Turks, the Arabs, the Persians and the Mughuls. Many of the latter had been elevated to high offices in the State, for their hardy and active habits, in preference to the children of the soil, who grew jealous of them. This jealousy was
accentuated by religious differences, for while most of the Deccanis
were Sunnis, the majority of the rival party consisted of Shiahs.
Thus the history of the later Bahmanids is a dreary tale of
conspiracies and strife, which sucked the life-blood of the kingdom
till it finally disintegrated.

Ahmad was succeeded peacefully by his eldest son under the
title of 'Alā-ud-din II. Soon after his accession, 'Alā-ud-din II
suppressed a rebellion headed by his brother Muhammad, who
was, however, pardoned and given the government of the Rāichūr
Doāb, where he remained faithful during the rest of his life. The
Hindu chiefs of the Konkan were next reduced to submission, and
the Rājā of Sangameshwar gave his beautiful daughter in marriage
to the Bahmani Sultān. This was not liked by the Sultān’s Muslim
wife Malikā-i-Jahān. At her request her father, Nasir Khān,
the ruler of Khāndesh, invaded Berar, but was defeated by
Malik-ul-Tujjār Khalaf Hasan, governor of Daulatābād and
leader of the foreign nobles. In 1443 ‘Alā-ud-din waged war
against Vijayanagar, the Rāya of which had to conclude peace
by promising regular payment of tribute in future. Firishta
writes that at this time the Rāya of Vijayanagar employed Muslim
soldiers in his army, admitted some Muslims into his service, and
even erected a mosque at the capital city for their worship. Like
other Sultāns of the dynasty, ‘Alā-ud-din was a zealous champion
of Islam and was benevolent towards the followers of his own
faith. We know from Firishta and the author of Burhān-i-Ma’āsir
that he “founded masjids, public schools and charitable institutions,
among which was a hospital of perfect elegance and purity of
style, which he built in his capital, Bidar, and made two beautiful
villages there as a pious endowment, in order that the revenue
of these villages should be solely devoted to supplying medicines
and drinks . . . so much did he attend to carrying out the orders
and prohibitions of the divine law that even the name of wine
and all intoxicating liquors was abrogated in his jurisdiction . . . .”

‘Alā-ud-din died peacefully in April, 1457, and was succeeded
by his eldest son, Humāyūn, who was so cruel as to get the epithet
of “Zālīm” or “the Tyrant”. Examples of his cruelties have been
cited by the author of Burhān-i-Ma’āsir. Humāyūn died a natural
death, according to some writers, in October, 1461, but the more
reliable authorities write that he was murdered by some of his
servants when he was in a state of intoxication. His death freed
his people “from the talons of his tortures” and the general
sense of relief was thus expressed by the contemporary poet
Nazir:
"Humāyūn Shāh has passed away from the world,  
God Almighty, what a blessing was the death of Humāyūn!  
On the date of his death the world was full of delight,  
So, ‘delight of the world’ gave the date of his death."

According to the chroniclers Humāyūn’s minor son, Nizām Shāh,  
was next raised to the throne. The queen-mother, Makhdūmah  
Jahān, tried to manage the administration of the State with the  
assistance of Khwāja Jahān and Khwāja Mahmūd Gāwān. But  
the rulers of Orissa and Telingāna were emboldened, during the  
rule of the boy king, to attack his kingdom. They were driven back  
with heavy losses. But soon a more formidable danger appeared for  
the Bahmanis when Mahmūd Khalji I of Mālwa led an invasion into  
their territories and besieged Bidar, which was saved only when  
Mahmūd Begarha, the Sultān of Gujarāt, sent a favourable response  
to the Bahmani Sultān’s appeal for help. Nizām Shāh died very  
suddenly, on the 30th July, 1463, and his brother, aged only nine,  
ascended the throne under the title of Muhammad III.

Soon after Muhammad’s accession, the old minister Khwāja  
Jahān, who aimed at a monopoly of power in the State, was put to  
death through the influence of the queen-mother, and the vacant  
office was entrusted to Mahmūd Gāwān, who received the title of  
Khwāja Jahān. Though possessed of wide powers, Mahmūd Gāwān  
ever abused his authority. By virtue of his conspicuous ability,  
he served the Bahmani State with unstinted loyalty; and, by  
skilful diplomacy and successful military operations, he brought  
the dominions of the Bahmanis “to an extent never achieved by  
former sovereigns”.

In 1469 Mahmūd Gāwān marched with an army to subdue the  
Hindu Rājās of the Konkan, and when he succeeded in capturing  
several forts, the Rājā of Sangameshwar, overpowered with fear,  
surrendered the fortress of Khelna to his agents. “This unrivalled  
minister,” writes the author of Burhān-i-Ma’āsir, “seized many  
forts and towns and captured immense booty, and valuable goods,  
such as horses, elephants, maidens, and female slaves, as well  
as precious jewels and pearls, fell into the minister’s hands.” He  
also captured Goa, one of the best ports of the Vijayanagar Empire.  
In the meanwhile, Nizām-ul-mulk Barhi, a commander of the  
Bahmani kingdom, had seized the forts of Rajamundry and  
Kondavir. In the year 1474 the Deccan was devastated by a  
terrible famine due to the failure of rain for two successive years,  
and many succumbed to its rigours. When rain at last fell in
the third year, scarcely any farmers remained in the country to cultivate the land.

But the military enterprises of the Sultān continued unabated. In February, 1478, Muhammad invaded and devastated Orissa, the Rājā of which induced him to withdraw by presenting to him some elephants and other valuable gifts.

The most successful military exploit of his reign was directed, in the course of a war with Vijayanagar, against Kāñchī or Conjeeveram (12th March, 1481), a seat of some old temples, which "were the wonder of the age, filled with countless concealed treasures and jewels, and valuable pearls, besides innumerable slave-girls". The besieged soldiers offered a brave resistance but were ultimately vanquished by the Bahmanī troops, who captured an immense booty.

The military record of Muhammad Shah III's reign is indeed one of triumph. But his own voluptuousness, and the selfish intrigues of the nobles of his court, stood in the path of his progress in other respects, and ultimately caused his ruin. Being addicted to hard drinking, the Sultān became mentally unbalanced as years rolled on, and took a suicidal step by passing the death sentence on Mahmūd Gāwān on 5th April, 1481, at the instigation of his enemies, the Deccani nobles, who, being jealous of his power and success, produced a forged letter to persuade the Sultān to believe in the minister's treasonable correspondence with the Rāya of Vijayanagar. Thus Mahmūd Gāwān, who had served the Bahmani kingdom as minister in three successive reigns with efficiency and honesty, for which he was entitled to the gratitude of his master, fell a prey to a conspiracy organised by a rival baronial clique, blind to the true interests of the State. With the unjust execution of this old minister "departed," remarks Meadows Taylor rightly, "all the cohesion and power of the Bahmani kingdom". In many respects, Mahmūd Gāwān's character was far superior to that of his contemporaries. Leading a simple and pure life, he was fond of learning and the society of the learned, which led him to maintain a magnificent college and a vast library at Bidar; and his disinterested services as a public officer justly entitle him to our praise. Muhammad III discovered his own folly rather too late, and, seized with grief and remorse, he expired within a year on the 22nd March, A.D. 1482.

The Bahmani kingdom was henceforth thrown into utter confusion, leading to its inevitable collapse. Mahmūd Shāh, the younger son and successor of Muhammad III, had neither the strength of personal character, nor the guidance of an able minister,
to enable him to maintain the integrity of his kingdom. The feud between the Deccanis and the foreigners continued with unabated fury and rancour. The provincial governors availed themselves of the prevailing confusion to declare their independence. The nominal authority of Mahmūd came to be confined within a small area round the capital, and he and his four successors remained mere puppets in the hands of Qāsim Barīd-ul-Mamālik, a clever noble of Turkish origin, and after his death in 1504, in those of his son ‘Amir ‘Āli Barīd, "the fox of the Deccan". The last ruler, Kalimullah Shāh, secretly tried to secure the help of Bābur to restore the lost fortunes of his dynasty, but was sadly disappointed. With his death in 1527 the Bahmani dynasty came to an end after about one hundred and eighty years’ rule.

The history of the Bahmani dynasty in the Deccan on the whole offers no pleasant reading. Most of its Sultāns employed themselves chiefly in terrible wars, and its internal politics were severely distracted by court intrigues and civil strife. Among the eighteen kings of this dynasty, five were murdered, two died of intemperance, and three were deposed, two of them being blinded. The Bahmani Sultāns should, however, be credited with patronage of learning and education according to their lights, erection of fortresses and buildings, and construction of irrigation works in the eastern provinces, which benefited the peasantry while securing more revenues to the State.

We get a glimpse of the condition of the common people in the Bahmani kingdom from certain observations made by the Russian traveller, Althanasius Nikitin, who travelled in this kingdom during the years 1470 to 1474 in the reign of Muhammad Shāh III. He writes: "The Sultān is a little man, twenty years old, in the power of the nobles. . . . The Sultān goes out with 300,000 men of his own troops. The land is overstocked with people; but those in the country are very miserable, whilst the nobles are extremely opulent and delight in luxury. They are wont to be carried on their silver beds, preceded by some 20 chargers caparisoned in gold, and followed by 300 men on horseback and by 500 on foot, and by hornmen, ten torch-bearers, and ten musicians.

"The Sultān goes out hunting with his mother and his lady, and a train of 10,000 men on horseback, 50,000 on foot; 200 elephants adorned in gilded armour, and in front 100 horsemen, 100 dancers, and 300 common horses in golden clothing; 100 monkeys and 100 concubines, all foreign."

Thus the testimony of a foreign traveller tells us that the lot of the common people was hard as compared with the luxurious
standard of living of the nobility. But there is no other positive
evidence to enable us to form an accurate picture of the condition
of the mass of the people during the whole of the Bahmani period.
The accounts of the Muslim chroniclers are full of details regarding
military campaigns and wars against infidels, without any refer-
ence to the history of the people.

C. The Five Sultānates of the Deccan

Five separate Sultānates arose in the Deccan, one after another,
on the break-up of the Bahmani kingdom. These were known,
after the titles of their founders, as the Imād Shāhī dynasty of
Berar, the Nizām Shāhī dynasty of Ahmadnagar, the ‘Ādil Shāhī
dynasty of Bijāpur, the Qutb Shāhī dynasty of Golkundā and the
Bārid Shāhī dynasty of Bidar. The first to secede was Berar,
where Fathullāh Imād Shāh, a Hindu convert, declared his independ-
ence in A.D. 1484 and founded the Imād Shāhī dynasty. Berar
was absorbed by Ahmadnagar in A.D. 1574.

Yūsuf ‘Ādil Khān, Governor of Bijāpur, asserted his independence
in A.D. 1489–1490. He was known during his early days as a
Georgian slave, who was purchased by Mahmūd Gāwān, and rose
to prominence by dint of his merit and ability. Ferishta, however,
relying on some private information, writes that he was the son of
Sultān Murād II of Turkey, who died in A.D. 1451, that he fled from
his country, first to Persia, and then to India at the age of seven-
teen, to save himself from assassination, ordered by his elder
brother, Muhammad II, who had succeeded his father on the throne,
and that he sold himself as a slave to the minister of the Bahmani
Sultān. Yūsuf ‘Ādil Shāh was not a bigot. Religion was no bar
to securing offices in his government, and he had a preference for
the Shiah creed, probably due to his sojourn in Persia. Free from
vices in his private life, he was mindful of his duties as a ruler.
Ferishta tells us that although Yūsuf ‘Ādil Shāh “mingled pleasure
with business, yet he never allowed the former to interfere with
the latter. He always warned his ministers to act with justice
and integrity, and in his own person showed them an example of
attention to those virtues. He invited to his court many learned
men and valiant officers from Persia, Turkestān, and Rum, and
also several eminent artists, who lived happy under the shadow
of his bounty. In his reign the citadel of Bijāpur was made of stone”.
The reigns of Yūsuf ‘Ādil Shāh’s four immediate successors, Ismā’īl
‘Ādil Shāh, son of Yūsuf (1510–1534), Mallū, son of Ismā’īl (1534),
Ibrāhim ‘Ādil Shāh I, brother of Mallū (1534–1557), and ‘Āli
'Ādil Shāh, son of Ibrāhīm (1557–1579), were full of intrigues and wars. But the dynasty produced another remarkable ruler in Ibrāhīm 'Ādil Shāh II, nephew and successor of 'Āli 'Ādil Shāh, who governed the kingdom with universal toleration and wisdom till he died in A.D. 1626. In the opinion of Meadows Taylor, who wrote with some experience of Bijāpur and its local traditions, "he was the greatest of all the 'Ādil Shāhi dynasty, and in most respects, except its founder, the most able and popular". The Bijāpur kingdom survived till its annexation by Aurangzeb in A.D. 1686.

The founder of the Ahmadnagar kingdom was Malik Ahmad, son of Nizām-ul-mulk Bahri, who sprang from the hereditary Hindu revenue officials of Pāthri, north of the Godāvari, took a leading part in the conspiracy against Mahmūd Gāwān, and became prime minister after his death. Malik Ahmad was appointed governor of Junnar, but in 1490 he declared himself independent. Some time later he transferred the seat of his government to a place of better strategic position and thus founded the city of Ahmadnagar. After several years' attempts, he captured Daulatābād in A.D. 1499, which helped him to consolidate his dominion. He died in A.D. 1508 and was succeeded by his son, Burhān Nizām Shāh, who, during his reign of forty-five years, waged wars with the neighbouring States and about A.D. 1550 allied himself with the Rāya of Vijayanagar against Bijāpur. His successor, Husain Nizām Shāh, joined the Muslim confederacy against Vijayanagar in 1565. After his death in that year, he was succeeded by his son, Murtaza Nizām Shāh I, a pleasure-loving youth, unfit to compete successfully with his adversaries. There is nothing of importance and interest in the subsequent history of Ahmadnagar except the heroic resistance offered by Chānd Bibi to Akbar's son, Prince Murād, in 1595, and the military as well as administrative skill of Malik 'Ambar. The kingdom was overrun by the Mughuls in 1600, but it was not finally annexed to their Empire until 1633 in the reign of Shāh Jahan.

The Muslim kingdom of Golkundā grew up on the ruins of the old Hindu kingdom of Warangal, which was conquered by the Bahmanis in A.D. 1424. The founder of the Qutb Shāhi dynasty was Quli Shāh, a Turki officer of the Bahmani kingdom during the reign of Mahmūd Shāh Bahmani. He was appointed governor of Telengāna by Mahmūd Gāwān and remained loyal to his master till, as a protest against the power and insolence of the Barida, he declared his independence in A.D. 1512 or 1518. He had a long and prosperous reign till he was murdered at the age of ninety in 154'
by his son Jamshid, who reigned for seven years. Jamshid's brother and successor, Ibrāhim, fought against Vijayanagar in 1565 in alliance with the other Muslim Sultānates. He was a good ruler and freely admitted the Hindus to high offices in the State. After his death in 1611, the history of Golkundā was largely entangled with that of the Mughul Empire till it was annexed to it by Aurangzeb in 1687.

When the distant provinces of the Bahmani kingdom declared their independence, the remnant of it survived only in name under the ascendency of the Barīds. In 1526 or 1527 Amir ʿĀli Barīd formally dispensed with the rule of the puppet Bahmani Sultāns and founded the Bárid Shāhi dynasty of Bidar, which lasted till its territory was absorbed by Bijāpur in A.D. 1618–1619.

The five offshoots of the Bahmani kingdom had some good rulers, notably in Bijāpur and Golkundā. The history of these Sultānates is largely a record of almost continuous quarrel with one another and with Vijayanagar. Each aspired to the supremacy of the Deccan, which was consequently turned into a scene of internal warfare, similar to what went on between the Chalukyas and the Pallavas in earlier days, or between Mysore, the Marāthas and the Nizām in the eighteenth century. The disruption of the Bahmani kingdom, and the dissensions among the five Sultānates that rose on its ruins, seriously hampered the progress of Islam, political as well as religious, in the south, where the spirit of Hindu revival, that had manifested itself since the days of the Tughluqs, culminated in the rise and growth of the Vijayanagar Empire.

5. The Hindu Kingdoms—The Vijayanagar Empire

A. Political History

The early history of Vijayanagar is still shrouded in obscurity. Sewell, after referring to several traditional accounts about the origin of the great imperial city, remarks that "perhaps the most reasonable account would be culled from the general drift of the Hindu legends combined with the certainties of historical fact". He accepts the tradition according to which five sons of Sangama, of whom Harihara and Bukka were the most eminent, laid the foundation of the city and kingdom of Vijayanagar, on the southern bank of the Tungabhadrā facing the fortress of Anegundi on the northern bank. They got inspiration for their enterprise from the learned Brāhmaṇa sage and scholar of the day, Mādhava Vid-
yāranya, and his brother Sāyana, the famous commentator on the Vedas. This tradition is regarded by some as a later fabrication which found currency in the sixteenth century. In the opinion of Rev. Father Heras, the foundation of the city of Anegundi, which formed the cradle of the Vijayanagar Empire, was laid by the Hoysala king Vira Ballāla III, and Harihara, a near relative of the Hoysala ruling family, was a frontier officer with his headquarters there. According to another writer, “the fortification of the city that afterwards became Vijayanagar must be regarded as the deliberate act of the great Hoysala ruler, Vira Ballāla III. It was founded soon after the destruction of Kampili by the army of Muhammad Tughluq, and immediately following the invasion of the Hoysala capital, Dorasamudra. The theory of Hoysala origin has been recently challenged by a writer who, in discussing the question from different sources, has argued that Harihara and Bukka founded the city and that they shaped the course of their conduct” on the advice of Mādhava Vidyāranya, who is described in an inscription of Harihara II as “the supreme light incarnate”. According to some authorities, the five brothers were fugitives from the Telugu country included in the Kākatiya kingdom of Warangal, the capital of which was captured by the Muhammadans in 1424. In the midst of these conflicting opinions, this much can be said with certainty, that Harihara and Bukka and their three brothers made earnest efforts to organise resistance against the advance of the invaders from the north. The significance of the Vijayanagar Empire in the history of India is that for well nigh three centuries it stood for the older religion and culture of the country and saved these from being engulfed by the rush of new ideas and forces. It also indirectly prevented the extension of the influence of the Bahmani kingdom and its offshoots in the north, where the power of the Delhi Sultānate had been already considerably weakened, by keeping them constantly engaged in the south. In short, “it was Vijayanagar which held the key to the political situation of the time”, characterised by the decline of the Turko-Afghān Sultānate and the rise of important indigenous powers.

The first dynasty of Vijayanagar is named after Sangama. In the time of Harihara I and Bukka I, the Vijayanagar kingdom brought under its influence many principalities and divisions, including, in the opinion of some, most of the Hoysala territory. But it has been pointed out by some writers that Harihara I and Bukka I did not assume full imperial titles. In 1374 Bukka I sent an embassy to China and he died in A.D. 1378–1379. He was succeeded by his son, Harihara II, who undoubtedly assumed the imperial titles of
Mahārājādhirāja, Rājaparameśvara, etc. Sewell in his earlier work\(^1\) states on the authority of some Muhammadan historians that Harihara’s reign was a period of “unbroken peace”. But it is proved by certain inscriptions that there were conflicts between the Vijayanagar Empire and the Muslims during his reign. As a matter of fact, the history of the Vijayanagar Empire, like that of the Bahmani kingdom, is an unbroken record of bloody wars with different powers. In the cold weather of 1398, Bukka II, son of Harihara II, conducted a raid northwards to the Bahmani territory, with his father’s permission, with a view to seizing the Rāichūr Doāb, situated between the Krishnā and the Tuṅgabhadrā, which formed the bone of contention between the Vijayanagar Empire and the Bahmani kingdom. He was opposed and defeated by Firūz Shāh Bahmani and a peace was concluded by the middle of 1399, Firūz exacting a heavy indemnity. But as several inscriptions show, the reign of Harihara II saw the extension of Vijayanagar authority over the whole of Southern India, including Mysore, Kanara, Chingleput, Trichinopoly and Conjeeveram (Kāñchi). Harihara II was a worshipper of Śiva under the form of Virupākṣa, but was tolerant of other religions. He died in August, 1406, after which the succession to the throne was disputed for some time among his sons. Deva Rāya I, however, secured the throne for himself on the 5th November, 1406. He met with some reverses in his wars with the Bahmani Sultāns and died in the year A.D. 1422. His son, Vijaya-Bukka or Vira Vijaya, reigned for only a few months, then Deva Rāya II, son of Vijaya-Bukka, ascended the throne. Though Deva Rāya II’s wars with the Bahmanīs ended in defeat and loss, his reign was marked by reorganisation of the administration. To compete with the Bahmanīs, Mussalmāns were admitted by him into the army; and, to control and regulate trade, he appointed his right-hand man, Lakkanna or Lakshmana, to the “lordship of the southern sea”, that is, to the charge of overseas commerce. Nicolo Conti, an Italian traveller, and ‘Abdur-Razzāq, an envoy from Persia, visited Vijayanagar in 1420 and 1443 respectively; and they have left glowing descriptions of the city and the Empire of Vijayanagar. In fact, the Empire now extended over the whole of South India, reaching the shores of Ceylon, and attained the zenith of its prosperity during the rule of the first dynasty.

Deva Rāya II died in A.D. 1446 and was succeeded by his eldest surviving son, Mallikārjuna, who repelled a combined attack on his capital by the Bahmani Sultan and the Rājā of the Hindu kingdom of Orissa and was able to keep his kingdom intact during

\(^1\) *A Forgotten Empire*, p. 51.
his rule, which lasted till about A.D. 1465. It was during this reign that the Sāluva chief, Narasimha of Chandragiri, whose ancestors had served the Vijayanagar kingdom faithfully as its feudatories, rose into prominence and resisted the aggressions of the Bahmani kingdom and the kingdom of Orissa. But Mallikārjuna’s successor, Virūpāksha II, proved to be an incompetent ruler. Confusion and disorder naturally followed, taking advantage of which some of the provinces revolted, the Bahmani Sultan advanced into the Doāb between the Krīshnā and the Tungabhadrā, and Rājā Purusottama Gajapati of Orissa advanced as far south as Tiruvannāmalai.

To save the kingdom from these dangers, Narasimha Sāluva deposed his worthless master and seized the throne for himself in about A.D. 1486. Thus the Sangama dynasty was overthrown by what has been called the “First Usurpation” and Vijayanagar passed under the rule of the Sāluva dynasty. Narasimha Sāluva enjoyed the confidence of the people. With the interests of the Empire at heart, he recovered most of the revolted provinces during his six years’ rule, though the Rāichūr Doāb remained under the control of the Bahmanīs and Udayagiri under that of the Rājā of Orissa.

Narasimha Sāluva had the prudence to charge his trusted general, Narasa Nāyaka, who claimed descent from a dynasty which ruled over the Tuluva country, with the responsibility for the administration of the kingdom after him, though he desired that his sons should succeed him. Epigraphic evidence disproves the statement of the Muhammadan historians, and of Nuniz, that Narasa Nāyaka murdered the two sons of his master and usurped the throne for himself. In reality he remained loyal to the dynasty of his master. He placed the latter’s younger son, Immadi Narasimha, on the throne, when the elder died of wounds in a battle, though he ably managed the affairs of the State as its de facto ruler. It was only when he himself died in A.D. 1505 that his son, Vīra Narasimha, deposed the last Sāluva ruler and seized the throne for himself. This “Second Usurpation” led to the direct rule of the Tuluva dynasty over the Vijayanagar Empire. Vīra Narasimha is described on some copper plates and also by Nuniz as a pious king who distributed gifts at sacred places.

Vīra Narasimha was succeeded by his younger brother, Krīshnapadeva Rāya, by far the greatest ruler of Vijayanagar, and one of the most famous kings in the history of India. A gallant and active warrior, he was always successful in the wars that he waged almost throughout his reign. He first turned his attention towards
suppressing the feudatories in the central portion of his empire before trying to meet his great rivals in the north. Leaving his headquarters towards the end of 1510, he marched against the refractory chief of Ummattūr in Southern Mysore. He was defeated and the fortress of Sivasamudram was captured (1511–1512). Other neighbouring chiefs were also reduced to obedience. In 1512 Krishnadeva Rāya moved towards the Bijāpur frontier and took possession of Rāichūr. Under the advice of his able and experienced minister and general, Sāluva Timma, he did not now invade the Muhammadan territories but turned against Gajapati Pratāparudra of Orissa in 1513, with a view to recovering the territories that his predecessors had captured from Vijayanagar during the reigns of the last rulers of the first dynasty. Early in 1514 he captured the fortress of Udayagiri and made prisoners of an uncle and an aunt of the Rāja of Orissa, who were, however, treated with honour. By the first half of the next year he had captured the strong fortresses of Kondavidū and other fortresses of lesser importance in the neighbourhood, in spite of the fact that the Rāja of Orissa had received assistance from the Sultāns of Golkundā and Bidar. He also took as captives the Gajapati prince, Virabhadra, and some other Orissa nobles. The prince was appointed by him governor of a province, and this fact, remarks Krishna Shastri, "testifies to the high statesmanship of Krishnarāya". In his third campaign against the King of Orissa, Krishnadeva Rāya encamped at Bezvāda, laid siege to Kondapalli and captured it. The wife and a son (other than Prince Virabhadra) of the Rāja of Orissa and some Orissa nobles and generals fell into his hands on this occasion also. He then advanced north-eastwards as far as Simhāchalam in the Vizagapatam district and forced his Orissan contemporary to come to terms. The last great military achievement of Krishnadeva Rāya was his victory over Ismā'īl 'Ādil Shāh near Rāichūr on the 19th, March, 1520, when the latter attempted to recover the Rāichūr Doāb. He is said to have overrun the Bijāpur territory and to have razed to the ground the fortress of Gulbarga. In short, the military conquests of Krishnadeva Rāya enabled him to humble the pride of his northern foes and to extend the limits of his Empire up to the South Konkan in the west, Vizagapatam in the east and the extreme border of the peninsula in the south, while some islands and coasts of the Indian Ocean were within its sphere of influence. During the last few years of his life he devoted his attention to the organisation of the Empire in all respects and to works of peaceful administration.

Krishnadeva Rāya maintained friendly relations with the Portu-
guise and granted them some concessions, since, writes Sewell, “he benefited largely by the import of horses and other requisites”. In 1510 the Portuguese governor, Albuquerque, solicited his permission to build a fort at Bhatkal, which was granted after the Portuguese had captured Goa from the Muslims. The Portuguese traveller, Paes, praises him in eloquent terms: “He is the most learned and perfect king that could possibly be, cheerful of disposition and very merry; he is one that seeks to honour foreigners and receives them kindly; asking all about their affairs whatever their condition may be. He is a great ruler and a man of much justice, but subject to certain fits of rage . . . he is by rank a greater lord than any, by reason of what he possesses in armies and territories, but it seems that he has in fact nothing compared to what a man like him ought to have, so gallant and perfect is he in all things.”

The reign of Krishnadeva Rāya not only marked the climax in the territorial expansion of the Vijayanagar Empire, but was also remarkable for the encouragement and development of art and letters. Himself an accomplished scholar, the Rāya was a generous patron of learning. He was “in no way less famous”, writes Krishna Shastri, “for his religious zeal and catholicity. He respected all sects of the Hindu religion alike, though his personal leanings were in favour of Vaishnavism. . . . Krishnarāya’s kindness to the fallen enemy, his acts of mercy and charity towards the residents of captured cities, his great military prowess which endeared him alike to his feudatory chiefs and to his subjects, the royal reception and kindness that he invariably bestowed upon foreign embassies, his imposing personal appearance, his genial look and polite conversation which distinguished a pure and dignified life, his love for literature and for religion, and his solicitude for the welfare of his people, and above all, the most fabulous wealth that he conferred as endowments on temples and Brāhmanas, mark him out indeed as the greatest of the South Indian monarchs who sheds a lustre on the pages of history.” In fact, the Vijayanagar Empire rose, during his reign, to the zenith of its glory and prosperity, when the old Turko-Afghan Sultānate was almost a shrivelled and attenuated carcase and was soon to be swept away by a fresh Turkish invasion.

But dangers lurked for the Vijayanagar Empire in the ambition of her powerful neighbours in the north and in the attitude of her viceroys, two of whom, the viceroy of Madura and the viceroy who was in charge of the central block of the kingdom, rebelled even during the last days (1528 or 1529) of Krishnadeva Rāya.
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The former was brought back to submission before the death of Krishnadeva Rāya, but the latter had to be “dealt with only at the beginning of his successor’s reign”.

Krishnadeva Rāya died in A.D. 1529 or 1530 and was succeeded by his half-brother, Achyuta Rāya, who, as epigraphic and literary evidences show, was not “altogether the craven that he is represented by Nuniz to have been”. He chastised the rebel viceroy of Madura and reduced to obedience the Rājā of Travancore, who had given shelter to the former. But he soon committed the blunder of relaxing his personal hold on the administration, which fell under the control of his two brothers-in-law, both named Tirumala. This irritated the other viceroys, who formed a rival party under the leadership of three brothers, Rāma, Tirumala and Venkata, of the Āraviḍu dynasty, connected by marriage with the reigning Tuluva dynasty. The kingdom was consequently plunged into troubles which continued throughout the whole course of its imperial history and did not cease till it entirely disappeared. After the death of Achyuta Rāya in A.D. 1541 or 1542, his son, Venkatādri or Venkata I, ascended the throne, but his reign did not last for more than six months and the crown then passed to Sadāsiva, a nephew of Achyuta. Sadāsiva Rāya was a mere puppet in the hands of his minister, Rāma Rāya, of the Āraviḍu dynasty, who was the de facto ruler of the State. Rāma Rāya was endowed with ability and was determined to restore the power of the Vijayanagara Empire, which had sunk low after the death of Krishnadeva Rāya. One important feature of Rāma Rāya’s policy was his active interference in the quarrels among the Deccan Sultānates, in alliance first with one and then with another. His enterprises were, indeed, successful for the time being. But these made him over-confident and haughty and ultimately proved to be a cause of disaster for the Empire. In 1543 Rāma Rāya formed an alliance with Ahmadnagar and Golkundā with a view to attacking Bijāpur. But his object was baffled by the diplomacy of the Bijāpur minister, Asad Khān, who concluded peace separately with Burhān Nizām Shāh and Rāma Rāya, and thus broke up the coalition. A change of alliance took place in 1558, when Bijāpur, Golkundā and Vijayanagar joined against Ahmadnagar and invaded it. On this occasion the army of Vijayanagar alienated the people of Ahmadnagar.

The haughty conduct of the Vijayanagar army kindled the long-standing, though smouldering, hostility of the Sultānates of the Deccan against Vijayanagar, and all, with the exception of that of Berar, joined in a coalition against it, which was cemented
by matrimonial alliances. The allied Deccan Sultāns fought against Vijayanagar on the 23rd January, 1565, at a site marked by the two villages of Ṛāksas and Tagdi. This battle resulted in the defeat of the huge Vijayanagar army with immense losses. "The victors," writes the author of Būrhn-i-Maʿāṣir, "captured jewels, ornaments, furniture, camels, tents, camp-equipage, drums, standards, maidservants, menservants, and arms and armour of all sorts in such quantity that the whole army was enriched."

"The plunder was so great," notes Ferishta, "that every private man in the allied army became rich in gold, jewels, tents, arms, horses and slaves, the kings permitting every person to retain what he acquired, reserving the elephants only for their own use." Husain Nizām Shāh killed Rāma Rāya with his own hand and exclaimed: "Now I am avenged of thee! Let God do what He will to me." The magnificent city of Vijayanagar was sacked and deprived of its splendour by the invading army in a manner which has been described by Sewell as follows:

"The third day saw the beginning of the end. The victorious Mussalmāns had halted on the field of battle for rest and refreshment, but now they had reached the capital, and from that time forward for a space of five months Vijayanagar knew no rest. The enemy had come to destroy and they carried out their object relentlessly. . . . Nothing seemed to escape them. They broke up the pavilions standing on the huge platform from which the kings used to watch the festivals, and overthrew all the carved work. They lit huge fires in the magnificently decorated buildings forming the temple of Viṭṭhalasvāmi near the river, and smashed its exquisite stone sculptures. With fire and sword, with crowbars and axes, they carried on day after day their work of destruction. Never perhaps in the history of the world has such havoc been wrought, and wrought so suddenly, on so splendid a city; teeming with a wealthy and industrious population in the full plenitude of prosperity one day, and on the next seized, pillaged, and reduced to ruins, amid scenes of savage massacre and horrors beggaring description."

The so-called battle of Talikota is indeed one of the decisive battles in the history of India. It destroyed the chance of Hindu supremacy in the south, which was left open to the invasions of the rulers of a new Turkish dynasty, till the rise of the Marātha power in the seventeenth century. Undoubtedly the battle did vital damage to the Vijayanagar Empire, but recent researches have proved that it did not disappear altogether as a result of it. "Talikota," remarks a modern writer aptly, "was the climactic
but not the grand climacteric of the Vijayanagar Empire." In fact, the Empire continued to exist till the early part of the seventeenth century under the rulers of the Āravidū dynasty, "before it got weakened and dismembered—weakened by the constant invasions from the north and dismembered by the dissatisfaction and rebellion of the viceroy's within".

The victorious Sultānates did not ultimately gain much as a result of this battle. Their alliance was soon dissolved and there was a rerudescence of mutual jealousy. This afforded the Vijayanagar Empire the opportunity for recuperation under Rāma Rāya's brother, Tirumala. He returned to Vijayanagar after the Muslims had left it, but after a short stay there went to Penugondā, and restored the prestige and power of the Empire to such an extent as to be able to interfere in the affairs of the Muslim kingdoms. Towards the end of his reign, in about A.D. 1570, he dispensed with the phantom of the nominal ruler, Sadāśiva, and usurped the throne for the Āravidū dynasty to which he belonged. His son and successor, Ranga II, continued after him his policy of increasing the efficiency of the Empire. Ranga II was succeeded about A.D. 1586 by his brother, Venkata II, who had his headquarters at Chandragiri and died after a glorious reign in A.D. 1614. He may be regarded as the last great ruler of Vijayanagar, who kept the Empire intact with the exception that in A.D. 1612 Rājā Oedyar founded, with his permission, the kingdom of Mysore, on the extinction of the viceroyalty of Srirangapatnam. His death was the signal for the dismemberment of the Empire. It was followed by a war of succession, and the consequent rise of disintegrating forces. These could not be checked by Ranga III, the last important ruler of Vijayanagar, in spite of his best attempts, owing to the selfish attitude of the rebel vassals of the Empire and the ambition of the Muslim States of Bijāpur and Golkundā. Thus the Hindu feudatories of the Vijayanagar Empire proved to be her enemies in the long run. Their "insane pride, blind selfishness, disloyalty and mutual dissensions" largely facilitated the conquest of the Hindu Deccan by the Muslim States of Bijāpur and Golkundā. Further, subordinate viceroy's, like the Chiefs of Seringapatam and Bednūr (Kēladi, Ikkeri), and the Nāiks of Madura and Tanjore, carved out independent kingdoms for themselves.

B. Splendour and Wealth of Vijayanagar

Foreign travellers who visited India during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries have left glowing accounts of the Empire of
Vijayanagar. The city of Vijayanagar was encompassed by massive fortifications and was of enormous size. The Italian traveller, Nicolo Conti, who visited it about A.D. 1420 writes: "The circumference of the city is sixty miles; its walls are carried up to the mountains and enclose the valleys at their foot, so that its extent is thereby increased. In this city there are estimated to be ninety thousand men fit to bear arms. . . . The King is more powerful than all the other kings of India." 'Abdur Razzāq, who came to India from Persia and went to Vijayanagar in A.D. 1442–1443, observes: "The country is so well populated that it is impossible in a reasonable space to convey an idea of it. In the King's treasury there are chambers with excavations in them, filled with molten gold, forming one mass. All the inhabitants of the country, whether high or low, even down to the artificers of the bazar, wear jewels and gilt ornaments in their ears and around their necks, arms, wrists and fingers." Domingos Paes, a Portuguese, who has recorded a detailed description of Vijayanagar, writes: "Its King has much treasure and many soldiers and many elephants, for there are numbers of these in this country. . . . In this city you will find men belonging to every nation and people, because of the great trade which it has and the many precious stones there, principally diamonds. . . . This is the best provided city in the world, and is stocked with provisions such as rice, wheat, grains, Indian corn, and a certain amount of barley and beans, moong, pulses, horse-grain and many other seeds which grow in this country, which are the food of the people, and there is a large store of these and very cheap. . . . The streets and markets are full of laden oxen without count. . . ." Edoardo Barbosa, who was present in India in A.D. 1516, describes Vijayanagar as "of great extent, highly populous and the seat of an active commerce in country diamonds, rubies from Pegu, silks of China and Alexandria, and cinnabar, camphor, musk, pepper and sandal from Malabar".

C. Economic Condition of the Vijayanagar Empire

It is clear from foreign accounts, and also other sources, that unbounded prosperity prevailed in the Vijayanagar Empire. Agriculture flourished in different parts of the realm and the State pursued a wise irrigation policy. The principal industries related to textiles, mining and metallurgy, and the most important of the minor industries was perfumery. Craftsman's and merchants' guilds played an important part in the economic life of the kingdom. 'Abdur Razzāq writes: "The tradesmen of each separate guild or craft
have their shops close to one another.” Paes also observes: “There were temples in every street, for these appertain to institutions like the confraternities you know of in our parts, of all the craftsmen and merchants.”

The most remarkable feature in the economic condition of the kingdom was commerce, inland, coasting and overseas. The most important port on the Malabar coast was Calicut, and, according to ‘Abdur Razzāq, the Empire “possessed 390 seaports”. It had commercial relations with the islands in the Indian Ocean, the Malay Archipelago, Burma, China, Arabia, Persia, South Africa, Abyssinia and Portugal. The principal articles of export were cloth, rice, iron, saltpetre, sugar and spices, and the imports into the Empire were horses, elephants, pearls, copper, coral, mercury, China silks and velvet. The cheap means of transport for inland trade were kāvadis, head-loads, pack horses, pack-bullocks, carts and asses. Ships were in use for coasting and overseas trade. According to Barbosa, South India got its ships built in the Maldive Islands. Epigraphic evidence proves that the rulers of Vijayanagar maintained fleets and the people there were acquainted with the art of ship-building before the advent of the Portuguese. We have, however, no definite knowledge as to how the Vijayanagar Empire “dealt with the important question of ocean transport”.

The coinage of the Vijayanagar Empire was of various types, both in gold and copper, and there was one specimen of a silver coin. The coins bore on them emblems of different gods and animals varying according to the religious faith of the rulers. The prices of articles were low. The accounts of the foreign travellers tell us that the upper classes of the people had a high standard of living; but we know from inscriptions that the common people groaned under the weight of heavy taxation, collected with rigour by the local governors, who were, however, sometimes restrained by the supreme rulers.

D. Social Life in the Vijayanagar Empire

Accounts of foreign travellers, inscriptions, and literature, contain copious references regarding the different aspects of the social life of the people in the Vijayanagar Empire, of which we can study here only the more striking ones. Women in general occupied a high position in society, and instances of the active part they took in the political, social and literary life of the country are not rare. Besides being trained in wrestling, handling swords and shields, music and other fine arts, some of them at any rate
received a fair amount of literary education. *Nuniz* writes: "He (the King of Vijayanagar) has also women who wrestle, and others who are astrologers and soothsayers; and he has women who write all the accounts of expenses that are incurred inside the gates, and others whose duty it is to write all the affairs of the kingdom and compare their books with those of the writers outside; he has women also for music, who play instruments and sing. Even the wives of the King are well-versed in music. . . . It is said that he has judges, as well as bailiffs and watchmen who every night guard the palace, and these are women." Plurality of wives was a recognised practice, especially among the wealthy classes, and child marriage was the usual custom. The evil practice of exacting exorbitant dowries was greatly prevalent among those who were well placed in life. The State occasionally interfered in social affairs to settle disputes among various communities. The rite of *Sati*, or women burning themselves on the funeral pyres of their husbands, was very common in Vijayanagar, and the Brähmaṇas freely sanctioned it. Being held in high esteem by the rulers, the Brähmaṇas exercised a predominant influence not merely in social and religious matters but also in the political affairs of the State. *Nuniz* describes them as "honest men, given to merchandise, very acute and of much talent, very good at accounts, lean men and well formed, but little fit for hard work".

There were no strict restrictions in matters of diet. Besides fruits, vegetables and oil, meat of all kinds, excepting that of oxen or cows, for which the people had great veneration, was taken by the general population; but the Brähmaṇas never killed or ate any "live thing". *Nuniz* gives the following description about the diet of the Vijayanagar Kings:

"These Kings of Bissnaga eat all sorts of things, but not the flesh of oxen or cows, which they never kill because they worship them. They eat mutton, pork, venison, partridges, hares, doves, quail, and all kinds of birds; even sparrows and rats, and cats, and lizards, all of which are sold in the market of the city of Bissnaga.

"Everything has to be sold alive so that each may know what he buys—this at least so far as concerns game—and there are fish from the rivers in large quantities."

If the statements of *Paes* and *Nuniz* be true, this was, remarks Dr. Smith, "a curious dietary for princes and people, who in the time of Krishnadeva Rāya and Achyuta Rāya were zealous Hindus with a special devotion to certain forms of Vishnu". Most probably rats, cats and lizards were eaten by the lower section of the people, who formed the non-Aryan element in the Vijayanagar population.
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The foreign travellers refer to numerous blood sacrifices in the kingdom. According to Paes, the King used to witness the sacrifice of 24 buffaloes and 150 sheep, the animals being decapitated by a single blow of a large sickle. On the last day of the famous "nine days festival" 250 buffaloes and 4,500 sheep were slaughtered.

E. Art and Literature

The Vijayanagar Empire has to its credit brilliant cultural and artistic achievements. The Emperors were patrons of all languages—Sanskrit, Telugu, Tamil and Kannada, and under their fostering care some of the finest pieces of literature were produced. Sāyana, the famous commentator of the Vedas, and his brother, Mādhava, flourished during the early days of Vijayanagar rule and were deeply attached to the State. The reign of Krishnadeva Rāya was of special importance in this branch of activity as in all others. It marked "the dawn of a new era in the literary history of South India. Himself a scholar, a musician and poet, he loved to gather around him poets, philosophers, and religious teachers whom he honoured with munificent gifts of land and money". He wrote his magnum opus, Āmuktamālāyadā, in Telugu, in the introduction
to which he refers to five Sanskrit works written by him. This book is not merely of religious interest but also of great historical importance for the reign of Krishnadeva Rāya. In his court "flourished the ‘Aṣṭadevājas’, ‘the eight elephants’ (famous poets), who supported the world of (Telugu) literature". His poet laureate, Peddana, enjoyed a wide reputation and held a high position among Telugu writers. Even the rulers of the Āraviṇu dynasty patronised poets and religious teachers, and Telugu literature flourished under them with "reinforced vigour". There were also authors among the petty chiefs and relatives of the emperors. Works on music, dancing, drama, grammar, logic, philosophy, etc., received encouragement from the emperors and their ministers. In short, the Vijayanagar Empire was a "synthesis of South Indian culture".

Along with the growth of culture we have a remarkable development of art and architecture. The ruins of the old capital of this Empire proclaim to the world that there evolved, in the days of its glory, a distinct style of architecture, sculpture and painting by native artists. The famous Hazāra temple, built during the reign of Krishnadeva Rāya, is, remarks Longhurst, "one of the most perfect specimens of Hindu temple architecture in existence". The Viṭṭhalasvāmi temple is also a fine example of Vijayanagar style. In the opinion of Ferguson, it "shows the extreme limit in florid magnificence to which the style advanced". The art of painting attained a high degree of excellence, and the art of music rapidly developed. Some new works on the subject of music were produced. Krishnadeva Rāya and the Regent, Rāma Rāya, were proficient in music. Theatres provided amusement for the people of the kingdom.

Epigraphic and literary evidence clearly shows that the rulers of Vijayanagar were of pious disposition and devoted to Dharma. But they were not fanatics. Their attitude towards the prevailing four sects, Saiva, Baudhā, Vaishnava and Jaina, and even alien creeds, Christian, Jewish and Moorish, was liberal. Barbosa writes: "The King allows such freedom that every man may come and go and live according to his own creed without suffering any annoyance, and without enquiry, whether he is a Christian, Jew, Moor or Hindu."

**F. Administration of the Vijayanagar Empire**

The Vijayanagar Empire gradually developed a centralised administration with all its branches carefully organised. No doubt,
for the task which they set before themselves, its rulers had to maintain a strong army and also to undertake military expeditions, but it does not seem to be correct to describe their State as an essentially military one based on force and condemn it as an organisation which “contained no principle of development; . . . represented no ideal of human progress and therefore could not be lasting”, as a modern writer has done. As a matter of fact, with the expansion of the Empire, its rulers organised the administration with such efficiency as served to remove the disorders that had prevailed during the periods of war and facilitate the pursuit of peaceful activities in various fields.

As in other medieval governments, the King was the fountain-head of all power in the Vijayanagar State. He was the supreme authority in civil, military as well as judicial affairs, and also often intervened to settle social disputes. But he was not an irresponsible despot, neglecting the interests of the kingdom and ignoring the rights and wishes of the people. The Vijayanagar kings knew how to secure the good-will of the people; and by their liberal policy they “conduced towards bringing peace and plenty into the kingdom”. “A crowned King,” writes Krishnadeva Rāya in his Āmuktamālyadā, “should always rule with an eye towards Dharma.” He further says that “a King should rule collecting round him people skilled in statecraft, should investigate the mines yielding precious metals in his kingdom and extract the same, should levy taxes from his people moderately, should counteract the acts of his enemies by crushing them with force, should be friendly, should protect one and all of his subjects, should put an end to the mixing up of the castes among them, should always try to increase the merit of the Brāhmaṇas, should strengthen his fortress and lessen the growth of the undesirable things and should be ever mindful of the purification of his cities. . . .”

The King was assisted in the task of administration by a council of ministers, appointed by him. Though the Brāhmaṇas held high offices in the administration and had considerable influence, the ministers were recruited not only from their ranks but also from those of the Kshatriyas and the Vaiśyas. The office of a minister was “sometimes hereditary and sometimes rested on selection”. Both ‘Abdur Razzāq and Nuniz refer to the existence of a sort of secretariat. Besides the ministers, the other officers of the State were the chief treasurer; the custodians of the jewels; an officer who was to look after the commercial interests of the State; the prefect of the police, who was responsible for the prevention
of crime and maintenance of order in the city; the chief master of the horse; and subordinate officials like the bhāts, who sang the praise of the kings, the betel-bearers or personal attendants of the King, the calendar-makers, the engravers and the composer of inscriptions.

A magnificent court was maintained by the kings of Vijayanagar in the capital city at a huge cost of money. It was attended by nobles, priests, litterateurs, astrologers and musicians, and festivals were celebrated with great pomp and grandeur.

The Empire was divided for administrative purposes into several provinces (rājya, maṇḍala, chāvaḍi), which had again subdivisions like venṭhe, nāḍu, sima, village and sṭhala in the Karnātaka portion, and kotṭam, parru, nāḍu and village in the Tamil portion. It is very difficult to state the exact number of provinces in the Empire. Some writers relying on Paes write that the Empire was divided into 200 provinces. But the foreign traveller evidently "confounds the tributary kings with the provincial viceroys, and these again with the minor nobles who were merely officials in the government". According to H. Krishna Shastri, the Empire was divided into six principal provinces. Each province was under a viceroy, nāyaka or nāik, who might be a member of the royal house, or an influential noble of the State, or some descendant of the old ruling families. Each viceroy exercised civil, military and judicial powers within his jurisdiction, but he was required to submit regular accounts of the income and expenditure of his charge to the central government and render it military aid in times of need. Further, he was liable to severe punishment by the King if he proved to be a traitor or oppressed the people, and his estate could be confiscated to the State if he made default in sending one-third of his income to the latter. Though the nāiks were generally severe in raising revenue from the people, they were not unmindful of beneficial work like the encouragement of agriculture, the plantation of new villages, protection of religion and erection of temples and other buildings. But they were greatly responsible for the disorders which prevailed in Southern India during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, when the power of Vijayanagar disappeared for ever.

1 A territorial division higher than a nāḍu.
2 A territorial division higher than a village.
3 A portion of land comprising several fields.
4 A territorial division higher than a parru, which again was higher than a nāḍu.
5 The designation of Nāik was also given to the collectors of customs and military commanders.
The Vijayanagar rulers inherited and continued to maintain a healthy and vigorous system of local administration, with the village as the lowest unit. Each village was a self-sufficient unit. The village assembly, like the Panchāyat of Northern India, conducted the administration of the area under its charge—executive, judicial and police—through its hereditary officers like the senatores, or the village accountant, the talara or the village watchman or commandant, the begāra or the superintendent of forced labour, and others. These village officers were paid either by grants of land or a portion of agricultural produce. The heads of commercial groups or corporations seem "to have formed an integral part of the village assemblies". The King maintained a link with the village administration through his officer called the Mahānāyakārkāhārya, who exercised a general supervision over it.

Land revenue, known as śist, was the principal source of income of the Vijayanagar State. It had an efficient system of land revenue administration, under a department called the athavane. Lands were classified under three heads for the purpose of assessment—wet land, dry land, and orchards and woods; and the assessments to be paid by the tenants were clearly indicated. To meet the heavy burdens of the State, and solve the problem of obtaining men and money to withstand its enemies, the Vijayanagar Emperors gave up the traditional rate of assessment at one-sixth of the produce and increased it to some extent. It is difficult to accept the statement of Nuniz that the "husbandmen had to pay one-tenth of their produce". The Vijayanagar rulers adopted the "principle of differential taxation", that is, levied taxes according to the relative fertility of the lands. Besides the land tax, the ryots had to pay other kinds of taxes like grazing tax, marriage tax, etc. Other sources of income of the State were the revenue from customs duties; tolls on roads; revenue from gardening and plantations; and taxes levied on dealers in goods of common consumption, manufacturers and craftsmen, potters, washermen, shoemakers, barbers, mendicants, temples and prostitutes. Taxes were paid both in cash and kind, as during the days of the Cholas.

There is no doubt that the incidence of taxation was heavy and the provincial governors and revenue officials often practised oppression on the people. But at the same time there are instances to show that the Government redressed the grievances of the people on complaints being made to it and sometimes reduced or remitted taxes, and that the people could appeal directly to the King in time of need. The Empire could certainly not last for about three centuries on a systematic policy of extortion and oppression.
The King was the supreme judge, but there were regular courts and special judicial officers for the administration of justice. Sometimes, disputes were settled by the State officials with the co-operation of the local bodies. The only law of the land was not "the law of the Brâhmaṇas which is that of the priests", as Nuniz would ask us to believe, but was based on traditional regulations and customs, strengthened by the constitutional usage of the country, and its observance was strictly enforced. Severe punishment was inflicted on guilty persons. These penalties were chiefly of four kinds—fines, confiscation of property, ordeals and death. Death or mutilation was the punishment for crimes like theft, adultery and treason. Sometimes the criminals were "cast down before the feet of an elephant, that they may be killed by its knees, trunk and tusks". Official oppression in the sphere of justice was not absent, but the State occasionally granted remedies against it, and it was also "sometimes successfully checked by the united opposition of corporate bodies".

Like the Hoysalas, the rulers of Vijayanagar had a carefully organised military department, called Kandâchâra, under the control of the Dandanâyaka or Dannâyaka (Commander-in-Chief), who was assisted by a staff of minor officials. The State maintained a large and efficient army, the numerical strength of which was not, however, uniform all through. The regular troops of the King were, in times of need, reinforced by auxiliary forces of the feudatories and nobles. The several component parts of the army were the infantry, recruited from people of different classes and creeds, occasionally including even Muslains; the cavalry, strengthened by the recruitment of good horses from Ormuz through the Portuguese, owing to a dearth of these animals in the Empire; elephants; camels; and artillery, the use of which by the Hindus as early as A.D. 1368 is proved by the evidence of foreign accounts as well as of inscriptions. The discipline and fighting strength of the Vijayanagar army were, however, inferior to those of the armies of the Muslim States of the Deccan.

With all that has been said above, the Vijayanagar Empire suffered from certain defects. Firstly, the provincial governors enjoyed a good deal of independence, which contributed in no small degree to the weakening of the central authority and ultimately to the disintegration of the Empire. Secondly, the Empire failed to develop a sustained commercial activity in spite of various facilities. "This failure," remarks Dr. Aiyangar justly, "proved a vital defect in the imperial career of Vijayanagar, and made a permanent Hindu Empire impossible." Thirdly, in
consideration of temporary gains, the Emperors allowed the Portuguese to settle on the west coast and thus "principles of profit" overrode "the greater question of the stability of their Empire".

The Kingdom of Orissa

Orissa was consolidated into a powerful kingdom by Anantavarman Choda Ganga during his long reign of more than seventy years (c. 1076–1148). It appears from several inscriptions that the kingdom then extended from the mouth of the Ganges to the mouth of the Godāvari in the south. Choda Ganga’s achievements in the domain of peace were also remarkable. He was a patron of religion, and of Sanskrit as well as Telugu literature. The great temple of Jagannāth at Puri stands as a brilliant monument to "the artistic vigour and prosperity of Orissa during his reign". The successors of Choda Ganga effectively checked the invasions of the Muslims and maintained the prosperity of their kingdom. The most famous of them was Narasimha I (1238–1264), who, besides achieving a remarkable success against the Muslims of Bengal, probably completed the construction of the temple of Jagannāth at Puri and built the great temple of the Sun-God at Koṇārak in the Puri district. After the death of Narasimha, the fortunes of the dynasty began to decline, and it was supplanted in about A.D. 1434–1435 by a solar dynasty, which ruled in Orissa for more than a century.

The founder of the new dynasty, Kapilendra, was endowed with considerable ability and vigour, and restored the prestige of the kingdom of Orissa, which had sunk low during the reigns of the later Gangas. He suppressed the powerful rebels in his own country, fought successfully with the Bahmanis of Bidar and the rulers of Vijayanagar, succeeded in extending his dominions from the Ganges to the Kāveri, and even marched with a victorious army to the vicinity of Bidar in the heart of the Bahmani kingdom. It is stated in the Gopināthpur inscription that he took possession of Udayagiri, the seat of a Vijayanagar viceroyalty, and Conjeeveram. The beginning of the reign of the next ruler, Purushottama (A.D. 1470–1497), was marked by certain disorders during which the kingdom of Orissa lost its southern half from the Godāvari downwards. Sāluva Narasimha captured the country to the south of the Krishnā and the Bahmanis seized the Godāvari-Krishnā Doáb. But towards the end of his reign Purushottama recovered the Doāb and regained a part of the Andhra country as far as the modern Guntur district. It cannot be said with certainty
BLACK PAGODA, DANCING HALL, KONÁRAK

CHARIOT WHEEL, KONÁRAK
if he recovered any of the Tamil districts of the empire of Kapilendra.

Purushottama’s son and successor, Pratâparudra (1497–1540), a contemporary and disciple of Chaitanya, inherited a kingdom extending from the Hugli and Midnapur districts of Bengal to the Guntur district of Madras, and including also a part of the highlands of Telingâna. But it was not destined to maintain this extent for long owing to the aggressions of Krishnadeva Râya of Vijayanagar and of the growing Qutb Shâhi kingdom of Golkundâ on the eastern coast. As a result of three campaigns, Pratâparudra had to cede to his more powerful Vijayanagar contemporary that portion of his kingdom which lay to the south of the Godâvari. The Sultân Quli Qutb Shâh of Golkundâ invaded the kingdom of Orissa in 1522.

Some believe that this political decline of Orissa was a sequel to the loss of martial spirit by her rulers and people due to the effect of Vaishnavism preached by Chaitanya. Be that as it may, the fact remains that the kingdom of Orissa lost its old power from the beginning of the sixteenth century. About A.D. 1541–1542 the dynasty of Kapilendra was supplanted by the Bhoi dynasty, which was so called because its founder, Govinda, formerly a minister of Pratâparudra, belonged to the Bhoi or writer caste. Govinda, his son and two grandsons reigned for about eighteen years. The dynasty was ousted, in about A.D. 1559, by Mukunda Harichandana, who did his best to save the kingdom of Orissa from Muslim invasions till his death in A.D. 1588, and whose alliance was sought by Akbar in pursuance of his policy of attacking the Afghans of Bengal from both sides. The Kararâni Sultâns of Bengal annexed Orissa in A.D. 1568. The Hindu renegade, Kâlâpâhâr, who had accompanied Sulaimân Kararâni’s son, Bâyazid, to Orissa, is said to have desecrated the temple of Jagannâth and even made attempts to destroy the wooden idols. Then began a Mughul-Afghan contest for the possession of Orissa.

Mewâr

Some of the Râjput States were stirred with the spirit of revival on the dismemberment of the Turko-Afghân Empire. The most prominent of these was the Guhila principality of Mewâr, where the Râjput genius unfolded itself so brilliantly and which for generations produced a succession of brave generals, heroic leaders, prudent rulers and some brilliant poets. As early as the seventh century A.D. the brave and chivalrous Râiputs of the Guhila clan
established their power in this territory. We have already narrated how 'Alā-ud-din Khaljī besieged and captured Chitor, the capital of Mewār, and how Hamir, or his son, delivered it from the hands of the Muslims and retrieved the lost honour of his race. Hamir died full of years possibly in A.D. 1364 "leaving a name still honoured in Mewār as one of the wisest and most gallant of her princes and bequeathing well-established and extensive power" to his son, Kshetra Simha. Kshetra Simha being killed in the course of a family quarrel in or about A.D. 1382 was succeeded by his son, Lākhā. On Lākhā’s death after 1418 (?), his son, Mokala, ascended the throne of Mewār, but he was assassinated in or about A.D. 1431 by two of his uncles. The next Rānā of Mewār was Kumbha, one of the most famous rulers in the history of India. His reign was an important period in the annals of his country. Tod thus praises his achievements: "All that was wanting to augment her (Mewār's) resources against the storms which were collecting on the brows of Caucasus and the shores of Oxus, and were destined to burst on the head of his grandson, Sangha, was effected by Kumbha; who with Hamir's energy, Lākhā's taste for arts, and a genius compre-
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hensive as either or more fortunate, succeeded in all his undertakings, and once more raised the 'crimson banner' of Mewār upon the banks of the Ghaggar, the scene of Samarsi's defeat." Kumbha fought against the Muslim rulers of Mālwa and Gujarāt, and although success did not attend all his enterprises, he could hold his own position against his ambitious neighbours. He was also a mighty builder, to whom Mewār is indebted for some of her finest monuments. Of the eighty-four fortresses built for the defence of Mewār, thirty-two were erected by Kumbha. The most brilliant monument of his military and constructive genius is the fortress of Kumbhalgarh, "second to none in strategical importance or historical renown". Kumbha's Jayastambha, also called the Kirtistambha (Tower of Fame), is another monument of his genius. Further, the Rānā was a poet, a man of letters and an accomplished musician. He was assassinated by his son, Udaya Karan, probably in A.D. 1469. This cruelty of Udaya's horrified the nobles, who acknowledged his younger brother, Rāyamalla, as the Rānā. Rāyamalla's sons quarrelled among themselves for the succession and ultimately one of them, Sangrāma, or Sanga, as he was popularly called, succeeded to the throne of Mewār in or about A.D. 1500. Sanga was endowed with remarkable military prowess. A hero of a hundred fields, he bore the scars of eighty wounds on his body in addition to having an eye blinded and a leg crippled. He fought successfully against Mālwa, Delhi and Gujarāt, and organised the financial resources and the military forces of Mewār with a view to building her supremacy on the break-up of the Delhi Sultānate. Thus a contest between him and any other power then trying to establish supremacy in Northern India was inevitable. The battle of Khānua, to be described in a subsequent chapter, was a logical outcome of this fact.

Kāmarūpa and Assam

At the time of the advent of the Muslims in Bengal in the early thirteenth century, the Brahmaputra valley was parcelled out into a number of independent principalities, at war with one another. A line of Chutiya (a tribe of mixed Bodo-Shān stock) kings ruled over the tract east of the Subansiri and the Disang, while a strip to the south and south-east was under the control of some Bodo tribes. Further west was a Kachāri kingdom lying south of the Brahmaputra and extending probably half way across the Nowgong district. West of the Chutiyas on the north bank and of the Kachāris on the south, were the domains of some petty chiefs called Bhuiyās. To the extreme west was situated the kingdom of Kāmarūpa, the western boundary of which was marked by the
river Karatoya and the eastern boundary varied according to the position of its hostile neighbours. It was known as the kingdom of Kāmata. The Āhoms, a section of the great Shān tribe, had appeared as a new element in the history of the Brahmaputra valley early in the thirteenth century, and checked the eastern expansion of the Kāmata kingdom, while its western neighbours, the Muslim Sultāns of Bengal, led several invasions into its territories with varying results.

Early in the fifteenth century a strong monarchy was established in Kāmata by the Khens with their capital at Kāmatapur, a few miles to the south of Cooch Bihār. The Khens ruled over Kāmata for about seventy-five years and their last ruler, Nilāmbar, was overthrown by ‘Alā-ud-din Husain Shāh in about A.D. 1498. After a short period of confusion, Biswa Simha, of the Koch tribe, which was Mongoloid in origin, established a powerful kingdom with Koch Bihār, modern Cooch Bihār, as his capital, about A.D. 1515. The greatest ruler of this line was Biswa Simha’s son and successor, Nara Nārāyan, during whose reign the kingdom of Kāmata grew in prosperity, and reached the zenith of its power. But in 1581 he was compelled to cede the portions of his kingdom to the east of the river Sankosh to his nephew, Raghu Dev. Thus the Koch kingdom was divided into two rival principalities, called Koch Bihār and Koch Hájo by the Muslims. Their feuds drew the intervention of the Āhoms and the Muslims, and in 1639 the western and the eastern States fell under the supremacy of the Muslims and the Āhoms respectively.

The Āhoms, a section of the Shān tribe, who appeared in Assam in about A.D. 1215, gradually consolidated their position and established a strong monarchy which lasted for six centuries. During the period under review they checked the eastward expansion of the kings of Kāmarūpa and the Sultāns of Bengal. The kingdom of the Āhoms became vulnerable to Muslim attacks only after the latter had subjugated Kāmarūpa. Thus ‘Alā-u-din Husain Shāh of Bengal led an expedition into Assam when it was ruled by Suhenphā. In spite of the initial success of Muslim arms, this expedition had a disastrous end. There was no Āhom-Muslim conflict for more than thirty years, till the second phase of it began when invasions into Assam were conducted by some local Muhammadan chieftains of Bengal. But their attempts also failed by September, 1533. Thus the attempt of the Muslims of Bengal to conquer Assam ended in failure by the thirties of the sixteenth century. The history of Assam after this period will be treated in its proper place.
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Nepāl

By the year A.D. 879 Nepāl possibly threw off the Tibetan yoke and came to have an independent history of its own. For two hundred years after this we know little about the kings ruling in Nepāl, but from the eleventh century Nepāl flourished under the Thākuris. For more than two hundred years (1097-1326), the Karnātaka king Nānyadeva of Mithila and his successors claimed, from their capital at Simrāon, a sort of loose sovereignty over the local princes of Nepāl. In A.D. 1324, Harisimha of Tirhut, a descendant of Nānyadeva, invaded Nepāl, the reigning king of which, Jayarudramalla, submitted to him. With his headquarters at Bhatgāon, Harisimha gradually extended his power over the whole valley, and his kingdom had diplomatic relations with China in the fourteenth century. But at the same time Harisimha and his descendants “left undisturbed the local rulers, who acknowledged their hegemony, in the possession of the two other capitals, viz., Patan and Katmandu”. About 1370 A.D. Jaya-Sthitimala, grandson-in-law of the Malla king, Jayarudra (1320-1326), and son-in-law of Jagatsimha, a prince of the Karnātaka line of Harisimha, who had married Jayarudra’s daughter, Nayakadevi, seized the throne of the Mallas and by 1382 established his authority over practically the whole of Nepāl. It was henceforth ruled by his descendants “in regular succession”. He had three sons—Dharmamalla, Jyotirmalla and Kirtimalla. They kept the kingdom undivided. By A.D. 1418 Harisimha’s descendants lost their authority in Nepāl, and Jyotirmalla tried to exercise imperial power. About A.D. 1426 Jyotirmalla was succeeded by his eldest son, Yakshamalla, who ruled for more than half a century and was the greatest of the Malla rulers of Nepāl. But he made a mistake before his death, about 1480, in partitioning the kingdom among his sons and daughters. This led to the rise of the two rival principalities of Katmandu and Bhatgāon, whose quarrels ultimately led to the conquest of Nepāl by the Gurkhas in A.D. 1768.