CHAPTER II.

The Saluva'ga Dynasty.
(555 to 405 B.C.)

Situva'ga was formerly a vassal of the Turanal Vrijjisans. He founded his dynasty of 10 kings who ruled for some 250 years.

1. Situva'ga was powerful, ambitious, wise and popular. He conquered the neighbouring kingdom of Kasi where he placed his own son as king (Brahmanda Puran). To the north of the Ganges lay the Videhas who were growing very powerful. The bravery and power of Sivasva saved Magadh from the grasp of the heroic Vrijjis of the north. The Aryan
entered Magadh and other kingdoms of East India were sound practical men. They loved politics, they loved conquests. Theirs was a stern materialistic civilisation. Besides, Magadh was a very ancient kingdom. But her military spirits had cooled under the later worthless kings. In Sisunaga, they have now found a worthy eader. Afraid of the powerful rivals of the north, Sisunaga and his people desisted from fresh conquests. He consolidated his power at home. He ruled till 615 B.C. His son Kākavarna, so long king of Benares under him, succeeded to the throne of Magadh. Giribraja continued to be the capital. Kākavarna was dark in complexion and not heroic like his father. It appears that the king of Sravasti wrested Benares from his hands. Kākavarna ruled till 600 B.C. The next king was Kshema-dharman, a good monarch devoted to the welfare of the people. He ruled till 570 B.C. He was succeeded by heroic Kshatarajnas who ruled till 546 B.C. Buddha was born (564 B.C.) in his reign. About this time, there were 16 principal kingdoms in North India. The next king of Magadh was the renowned Bimbisāra, also called Srenika. He ruled from 546 B.C. to 496 B.C. The following points are noteworthy:—

(i) To save Magadh from the powerful Licchhavis of Vaishali (now Besar, 27 miles N.W. of Patna) he removed the capital to Rajagriha (now Rajgir) which he built and fortified. (ii) Conquered and annexed Anga (Eastern Behar); he was the real founder of the Magadhan Power. (iii) He was a mild, humane, just and very popular king. Jisaka, educated at
Taxila, was his physician. (iv) The Solar line of Ayodhya was now weak; the Solar line of Sravasti was now very powerful, held both North and South Kosala and had subjugated the kingdom of Kasi (perh. about 353 B.C.) King Brahmadatta or danta of Sravasti married his daughter Kashemakā to Bimbisāra and gave the revenues of Kasi as dowry. Bimbisāra also married princess Vāsavi of the Lichchhavi king of Vaisali, by whom he had the Prince Ajaṭhasatru. Brahmadatta passed into religious retirement and his worthy son Prasenajit succeeded him to the Kosala throne. Bimbisāra also resigned his throne in favor of his prince Ajaṭhasatru and passed into private life. The Vāyu Purāṇ gives him a reign of 28 years. But the other Purāṇs and the Mahābhārata assign to him a reign of some 50 years. We adopt this latter. It is said that at the instigation of a wicked plotter named Devadatta, cousin and the rebellious disciple of Buddha, Ajaṭhasatru killed his good and aged father Bimbisara, by starvation. The first queen, princess of Kosala, died of grief. Thereupon her brother Prasenajit, stopped the revenue of Kasi. Ajaṭhasatru, thus insulted attacked his Kosala. He was victorious in the first 3 battles. In the fourth, he was defeated, made prisoner and taken to the Kosala king in chains. He renounced his claim to the revenue of Kasi and begged hard for release to his uncle. A treaty was concluded and Prasenajit gave his daughter Princess Bajirā in marriage to Ajaṭhasatru, with the revenue of Kasi as her dowry. Ajaṭhasatru returned to his capital. 3 years after this, Prasenajit went to Ulumbā in the
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Sākya kingdom. In the meantime, his son Biruddhaka revolted against him. Prasenajit fled and came down to Rājagriha to seek the shelter of his son-in-law, but died outside the town, tired and care-worn. Prasenajit was a great friend of Buddha. His aunt Sumana noted for her learning and piety, became a Buddhist nun.

Prasenajit had asked the hand of a Sākya princess. The Sakya Chiefs could not agree, as both the houses belonged to the same Solar stock. Yet, afraid of displeasing Prasena, they sent him the daughter of a maidservant Vāsava-Kshatriya by name. Biruddhaka was born of her. He gained the throne about 490 B.C. To punish the Sakya for their fraud, he attacked the Sākya kingdom about 485 B.C. The Sakya fought hard but were defeated and brutally massacred by the ruthless savage victor. The Sākya kingdom was annexed to Kosala. Shortly after, Biruddhaka and his chief minister died in a burning house. The last Sākya king Mahānāma, losing all the relatives drowned himself. 17 stupas commemorate the massacre of the Sākyas, by Biruddhaka at Sāgarwah near the Vānangad river in Nepal.

(v) The Bengali Conquest of Ceylon—Prince Vijaya, banished by his father for numerous misdeeds, took to sea with 700 followers, arrived in Lanka and conquered it (543 B.C.) From the Sinhalese dynasty, the country got its new name of Sinhalese. (vi) Cyrus, the Persian emperor, invaded India (541-40 B.C.). (vii) About 512 B.C., Darius, son of Hystaspes, the Persian monarch, conquered the right bank of the Indus, north of
Caul, which formed the 20th province of his vast empire. This Indian province was the richest and most populous in the empire and paid Darius in gold-bull to the value of over a crore of rupees. Of course, the Indus then was more easterly in course. There were Indians in the Persian Court and army. The Indian troops in the Persian Service, went to fight even in Europe. Cf. Herodotus, vii. 65; viii. 13; ix. 91. The Persian empire was the brightest in the world till the middle of the 4th century, B.C. Certainly, there were Indo-Iranian relations in those times.

6. Ajatasatru came to the throne about 496 B.C.

(i) He interviewed Buddha, confessed his crimes, begged his pardon and was taken into the prophet's grace. He was at first a Hindu, then a patron of Devadatta's Ajivaka cult and afterwards of Buddhistic tendency. Perhaps he was never a sincere Buddhist like his father-in-law Prasenajit. (ii) Expecting an invasion from Pradyota, king of Avanti and also from Vrijjians, he strengthened his army and built a strong fort near Patna with the help of his Brahmin ministers Sunidha and Varshakara. He had already conquered the Liebchavis of Valsall, who were a branch of the ancient Vrijjis, a highly civilized people. Buddha died in the 9th year of his reign, i.e., in 487 B.C. He claimed a share of Buddha's relics, built a stupa over it and helped the celebration of the first Buddhistic Council before the Saptaparni caves (487 B.C. About 483 B.C., after the sad death of his brother-in-law Brid-dhaka, Ajatasatru conquered
Kosala and the Sakya kingdom. Now Ajatasatru was the master of Magadh, Anga, Vaisali (North Bebar), Kapilavastu and the Kosaias. It is said that for better government he removed his capital to Champapuri (now Pātharphāta), 24 miles from modern Bhāgalpur. His favorite idea of conquering Avanti ended with his death in 473 B.C. The great Sāskrit dramatist Bhāsa, gives us a very curious historic sketch of the time in his play entitled the "Svapna Vāsavadatta." Udayana, king of Vatsa kingdom near Allahabad, had stolen Princess Vāsavadatta, daughter of Pradyota, the mighty king of Avanti. Udayana was made prisoner by Pradyota. The shrewd minister of Udayana not only delivered his master but also married him to Vāsavadatta. Again, Ajatasatru had conquered a part of the Vatsa kingdom of which Kausāmbi was the capital. Ajatasatru left his son Darsaka on the throne of Magadh. His daughter Padmāvati was yet unmarried.

Pradyota's intended invasion of Magadh was for the recovery of his son-in-law's lost kingdom from Ajatasatru. Now, the said clever minister of Udayana thought of marrying his master to Princess Padmāvati of Magadh and regaining the lost parts of the Raj. He did really succeed in his ends. Darsaka gave back the province. Bhāsa in his play, Act I., twice mentions Pataliputra as a capital of Darsaka. This king probably ruled till 464 B.C., Darsaka was succeeded by his son Udayāśva who in 460 B.C. built Kusumapura—"the City of Gardens" now Bankipore. Pataliputra now rose to great importance (Vayu P. Chap. 99) Udayāśva
probably ruled till 431 B.C. The next king was Nandi Vardhana who perhaps ruled till 420 B.C. The last king was Mahanandi, a foppish person. He ruled some 14 years. These kings kept the kingdom intact; they neither received any invasion nor had sent out an expedition for fresh conquest. They lived in gorgeous palaces. Mahanandi died early from the effects of excessive indulgence. His weak son Pinjamakha succeeded him to the throne (406 B.C.). But the heroic Nanda, the first-born son of Mahanandi, by a Sudra concubine, organised an army, attacked and captured Pataliputra, killed Pinjamakha and ascended the throne (405 B.C.) The Mahavansa iv, calls the last four of the dynasty parricide kings.