

Administration under Harsha

Harshavardhan's administration was personal government without despotism. He believed that constant exertion by the king himself was the secret of administrative efficiency. From Hiuen T-Sang we come to know that the Harsha was indefatigable in his activities as a king. A day was too short for him, such was the task he would perform.

For the control of his extensive empire Harsha relied on his personal supervision executed with untiring energy rather than upon the services of the bureaucracy. He was constantly on the move punishing the wrongdoer and rewarding the meritorious. It was only during the rains when travelling was impossible in those days that he would stop going to different parts of his empire. His itinerary was a big affair, for like the Moghul emperors he would have a very extensive number of camp followers all marching beat of the drum.

From the evidence of Hiuen T-Sang and Bana, we may doubtless come to the conclusion that Harsha was a ruler of versatile ability and wonderful personality. Like his predecessor Fa-hien, about two centuries earlier, Hiuen T-Sang was highly impressed by the benign character of the government.

Theoretically the government of Harsha was an autocracy but a considerable measure of autonomy was left at different levels down to the village and the most characteristic feature of his government was the cooperation of the central government with popular bodies. It was, therefore, a government which was a mixture of autocracy and popular elements.

The empire was divided into provinces (*Bhuktis*), provinces into districts (*Visayas*) and the districts into village (*gram*). The government had two parts: the central government and the provincial government.

The emperor was the supreme head of the State. He was assisted by a Council of Ministers. The Council seem to have enjoyed the power of choosing the king when the normal line of succession was disturbed or when the throne fell vacant without an heir-apparent. We know how the Chief Minister, Bhandi, convened a meeting of the Council of Ministers and after deliberating on the suitability of Harsha being placed on the throne and what is more important that the people at large would trust him that Harsha was called upon to ascend the throne after it had fallen vacant due to the death of Rajyavardhan. That the Council of Ministers also exerted its influence on the king in

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dealings with foreign potentates is evident from the fact that Rajyashana accepted the invitation of Sasanka to meet him and got himself killed. Beal remarks that "Owing to the fault of his minister, Harsha had a well-organised Secretariat through which the orders of the government were acted upon. Besides minister-in-charge of foreign relations and war, Commander-in-Chief, Chief Commandant of war elephants, there were keeper of Records, and high officials of the state called Mahasamanta, Maharaja, Paramatara, Rajasthaniya, Kumaramatyas, Uparika, Visayapati, etc. The top ranking civil service was manned by Kumaramatyas. It was from the Kumaramatyas that Ministers, district officers, and secretariat officers were appointed. According to Hiuen T-Sang high officials were assigned portions of land, and their maintenance was the responsibility of the cities assigned to them. Lower grade officers were, however, paid in cash or assignment of land. Bana enumerates the high officials each of whom was in charge of a department.

Harsha was a great warrior and quite in keeping with the royal tradition of ancient India, maintained a huge army for military conquests. From Hiuen T-Sang we learn that his army comprised 5,000 elephants, 2,000 cavalry, and 50,000 infantry but with acquisition of more territories he raised the strength of the army to 30,000 cavalry, 1,000 elephants, and 600,000 infantry. Dr. R. C. Majumdar remarks that "The Statement of Hiuen T-Sang is certainly open to grave doubts". But great attention paid to the cavalry by Harsha, is borne out by Bana.

The system of provincial government, by and large, continued to be as it had been under the Guptas. The high officials already mentioned above, such as the Mahasamantas, Maharajas, were officers who were hereditary local chiefs. Other provincial officers were the Kumaramatyas, Uparikas, etc. Visayapati was the district officer and Gramika, the village officer. The central and provincial government maintained keeper of records called Karanika.

Revenue

The royal revenue was derived from three kinds of taxes, namely, the Bhaga, Bali, and Hiranya. The major source of revenue was the Bhaga, i.e., the land tax. The term Bhaga means 'Share'. Tax was one-sixth share of the produce of the land taken as revenue. Tax paid in cash realised from the merchants and farmers was called Hiranya. The nature of the tax called Bali is not very clear, but it is supposed to be an extra tax. Besides these major sources of revenue, there were ferry tax, customs duties, etc. Taxes on merchandise,

i.e., customs, were levied with reference to the weights or measures of the merchandise. Forced labour was resorted to, but it was paid for. The burden of taxation, we learn from Hiuen T-Sang, was light.

According to Hiuen T-Sang the crown land was divided into four parts, the income of first part was used for the affairs of the State, that of the second part for payment of officers, the third part for rewarding men of genius, and the fourth part for grant to religious communities.

Penal System

We learn from Hiuen T-Sang that the number of criminals and rebels was too small but should any law be broken, any crime committed or any rebellion staged, the offenders used to be punished severely. For certain officers' mutilation of limbs, such as cutting off the nose, ears, etc. of the offender and turning him out of the city is to live a forlorn life in the jungles for the rest of his life. For certain offences only small fines were imposed. There was no system of repression for exacting confession from the offenders. For some kinds of offences trial by ordeal was resorted to.

Character of the Administration

Hiuen T-Sang speaks well of the character of Harshavardhan's administration. It is mentioned as a very generous administration and absolutely non-interfering with the lives of the people. But Dr. Altekar does not think that the administration of Harsha was as efficient as that of the time of the Mauryas or of the Guptas. Hiuen T-Sang's eulogy of Harshavardhan's administration is, according to Dr. Altekar, is rather unjustified. In fact, Hiuen T-Sang himself had fallen in the hands of robbers and lost much of his belongings and narrowly escaped with his life. Yet, after taking all things into consideration, it must be conceded that Harshavardhan's administration is not a model one from the point of view of efficiency, it was sufficiently solicitous of the welfare of the people and was based on benign principles.

Religion

One distinctive feature of the Pushyabhuti family was that the kings had their individual preferences in regard to religion. While Prabhakarvardhan was worshipper of the Sun, Rajyavardhan was a Buddhist and Harshavardhan was eclectic in matters of religion and worshipped Siva, Sun and Buddha. Harshavardhan appears to have been deeply impressed by the religious ideas of Hiuen T-Sang and by listening to the latter's discourses on Mahayana Buddhism. Harsha himself turned in favour of Mahayanism.

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influx of prosperity under Kadphises-II. Pliny bitterly complained against the drainage of Roman gold to India. In order to stop the drainage of Roman gold to India, import of Indian goods was banned in Rome by legislation.

Kadphises-II became a zealous convert to Pasupata or Mahavehism before his formal accession. This is presumed from the fact that the reverse device of his coins almost invariably consists of Siva with a trident and some times accompanied by a bull. His coins with a bull on the obverse of his coins depicts him as the *Lord of the Worlds*, the *Great King*, *King of Kings*, etc.

There is a difference of opinion as to the succession to the Kushana throne after Kadphises-II. Some scholars suggest a period of confusion and confusion soon after the death of Kadphises and Kanishka-I had to suppress the disorder before accession. Dr. D. C. Sarkar, however, remarks that "it is not altogether impossible that the issuer of the *Soter Megasthenes* coins was the semi-independent governor of the Indian possession of Wema and is mentioned in the Panjtar inscription of A.D. 65, and that Kujala Kara Kadphises, probably identical with the Kushana ruler mentioned in the Taxila inscription of A. D. 79, was the governor's son and successor". According to him for a short period after the death of Wema, Kujala Kara and probably also his father towards the end of his life ruled independently. Some nameless coins of the period have also been taken by Dr. Sarkar and some other scholars to justify the contention that there was a period of turmoil when the local governors assumed independence and even extended their influence over Kabul and Kandahar region. They were ultimately overthrown by Kanishka-I.

KANISHKA

His Date

There is a sharp controversy about Kanishka's date centering round two points (1) whether the Kanishka group preceded or succeeded

preceded the Kadphises group, and (2) whether Kanishka started his rule in 78 A.D. or later or earlier.

(1) Cunningham was the first writer to sponsor the theory that Kanishka's era started from 58 B.C. which came to be known afterwards as *Vikrama Samvat*: Cunningham, however, gave up this theory later on, but Fleet and after him Kennedy held this view with all earnestness. As a corollary of the above contention it follows that Kanishka group of kings preceded Kadphises group of kings.

But on a careful analysis of the archaeological and numismatic evidences scholars have come to the conclusion that there can be no doubt that the Kanishka group of kings did not precede but followed the Kadphises group of kings.

In support of this view scholars point out if the series of coins issued successively by alien rulers of India upto Vasudeva-I, are carefully studied it will be evident that the coins of the Kadphises kings were issued immediately after those of the Sakas and the Parthians.

Again, the coins of Kanishka and Huvishka, although differ in some details, they seem to be largely prototypes of Wima Kadphises.

It must also be noted that the practice of issuing bilingual and by scriptural coins introduced by the Indo-Greek kings was continued throughout the Saka-Pahlava period upto the time of Kadphises. The continuity of the practice without break till the time of Wima Kadphises was broken only at the time of Kanishka who gave up the practice of issuing bilingual coins. The legend of his coins was Greek but most of them were not, however, in Greek. Hurishka and Vasudeva followed the practice of Kanishka. Thus we find that while there was a continuity in the method of the striking coins followed upto Wima Kadphises from the line of the Indo-Greeks a different method was followed and continued by Kanishka and his successors. These two different sequences when compared leave no doubt that the Kushana group followed Kadphises group of kings.

Turning to the second point, we find that scholars like Sir John Marshall, Sten Konow, Vincent Smith, Van Wijk and some other scholars are of the opinion that Kanishka began his rule in the first quarter of the second century A.D., some time between 125 to 128 A.D. which lasted for about a quarter of a century. But Ferguson had held long before that Kanishka started his first regnal year in 78 A.D. and inaugurated an era from that date which came to be known as the Saka era (*Sakabda*) which is still current in different parts of India. Ferguson's view has been supported by scholars like Oldenberg, Thomas, Rapson, R. D. Banerjee, Dr. Raichaudhuri and others. One of the latest scholars to support the view that Kanishka started his rule in 78 A.D. which was also the beginning of an era is Van Lohuizen-de Leeuw.

It has been argued against the above view held by most of the scholars, that if we agree that Kadphises-I reigned about 50 A.D. and Kanishka about 78 A.D. then we are left with only 28 years roughly for the two reigns of Kadphises-I and Kadphises-II which is a very short span for two reigns. But when we remember that Kadphises-I died at the age of eighty, his son Kadphises-II must have ascended the throne at pretty old age. This makes accession of Kanishka in 78 A.D. quite tenable.

Marshall, Sten Konow and others who are of the opinion that Kanishka ruled in the first quarter of the second century A.D. are directly against the evidence of Junagarh inscription of Rudradamana. Dr. Raichaudhuri draws our attention to the fact that it is clearly mentioned in the Junagarh inscription that Rudradamana held sway over the lower Sindhu region in the first half of the second century A.D. The South Bihar (*Sui-Bihar*) inscription of Kanishka mentions the lower Sindhu area as within the dominions of Kanishka. Obviously, both Rudradamana and Kanishka were not rulers over the same region simultaneously. This proves the untenability of the view that Kanishka ruled in the second century A.D. There is also no evidence to show that there was the inauguration of any era in the second century A.D.

Dr. Majumdar's contention that Kanishka was the founder of *Traikutaka-Kalachuri-Chedi* era of 248-249 A.D. is absolutely untenable in view of the Chinese evidence that An-Shi-Kao who lived during the second century A.D. translated a work *Margabhumi-sutra* written by Sangharaksha, chaplain of Kanishka. This precludes placing Kanishka in the third century A.D. as Dr. R. C. Majumdar has done. Dr. R. G. Bhandarkar's view that Kanishka ascended the throne in 278 A.D. is untenable on the same grounds.

Thus most of the scholars are of the view that Kanishka started his rule in 78 A.D. which was also the year from which the Saka era is counted.

It has been contended by some scholars that if the era was founded by Kanishka why should it have been named *Saka era* and not *Kushana era*, after all the Kushanas were not Sakas. But it may be pointed out that the close association of the Yue-chi people of which the Kushanas were a branch, with the Saka-Pahlava made them a composite people with a composite culture in which the contributions of the Sakas was quite large. Further, the Kushanas were not Greeks but some of Kanishka's coins bore Greek legend on them. It is therefore no conclusive argument to say that since the era was called *Saka era* Kanishka could not be its founder. Likewise the contention that the Saka era was not followed in northern India although Kanishka was a ruler of the north is untenable. Facts are, however, otherwise. This era was abandoned temporarily during the Gupta rule when it

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was confined to the south where its use was spread by the Jainas. But with the end of the Gupta rule the Saka era came back into use and continues to be used even today in different parts of India.

Thus after an analysis of evidences, literary, numismatic as well as epigraphic, the balance of arguments remains in favour of placing the Kanishka group of kings after the Kadphises group of kings and fixing 78 A.D. as the starting point of Kanishka's rule, and also the beginning of the era known as *Saka era* or *Sakavda*.

His Conquests : Extent of His Empire

Kanishka was alone among the Kushana kings who has left a name cherished by tradition and famous in India as well beyond her limits.

At the time of accession to the throne Kanishka's empire comprised Afghanistan, large part of Sindhu, portions of Parthia and the Punjab. He appears to have not forgotten to avenge the defeat of his predecessor Kadphises at the hands of the Chinese general Pan-chao. He also played the part of a conqueror in the early years of his reign. Dr. Smith credits him with the conquest and annexation of the Kashmir Valley. "He certainly showed", remarks Smith, "a marked preference for that delightful country. Here he erected numerous monuments and founded a town, which although now reduced to a petty village, still bears his honoured name".¹ We have, however, no details about the war with the king of Kashmir. *Rajatarangini* refers to three kings Hushka, Jushka and Kanishka who are described as descendants of Turuksha ruler and were given to acts of piety and built monasteries, *Chaityas* and similar other structures.

According to tradition Kanishka penetrated into the interior of India and attacked Pataliputra, the capital of Magadha. It is said that he carried away Asvaghosh, a Buddhist philosopher, after the capture of Pataliputra and Buddhist philosopher Asvaghosa fell into the hands of Kanishka who took the sage with him. Asvaghosa was indeed one of the luminaries that graced the court of Kanishka. We may, therefore, conclude that at least a part of Magadha including Pataliputra was conquered by Kanishka.

Kanishka seems to have waged war against the western Satraps of Ujjaini. Numismatic evidence proves the inclusion of Malwa in his empire. Sylvan Levi, D. C. Sircar and Rapson suggest that the western Satrap Nahapana who ruled over Kathiawar, Malwa and Gujarat had been a vassal of Kanishka. Some scholars hold that it was Chastana who was defeated by Kanishka and was compelled

to hand over a part of Malwa to him. According to Dr. Smith Kanishka also waged war against the Parthians. Kanishka also conquered Kashgarh, Khotan and Yarkhand. He is credited with defeating the Chinese and thereby avenging the defeat of his predecessor Kadphises II at the hands of the Chinese general Pan-chao and compelled the Chinese to surrender hostages to him.

From the Chinese source as also from Buddhist traditions we come to know Kanishka conquered Kajangal in the Rajmahal hills in Bengal, some parts of Malda, Murshidabad, Bogra, Midnapur, etc. In absence of any other evidences to support the indirect evidence furnished by the find spots of the coins of Kanishka it is difficult to come to any definite conclusion with regard to the inclusion of Bengal in Kanishka's empire.

Kanishka's empire comprised vast tracts of land extending from Afghanistan, and Khotan, Yarkhand, Kashgarh, etc. in Central Asia to Benares, and perhaps to parts of Bengal. His empire included Gandhara, Peshawar, Oudh, Pataliputra, Mathura. Inclusion of Kashmir is borne out by both the Chinese and Buddhist evidences. The western Satrapies seem to have been under his suzerainty. According to Hiuen Tsang "Kanishka Raja of Gandhara in old days having subdued all the neighbouring provinces and brought into obedience the people of distant countries, governed by his army a wide territory even to the east of the Tsung-ling mountains". All this proves that Kanishka's sway extended beyond the borders of India. The Buddhist tradition and Kanishka's own inscriptions are ample testimony to the vast expanse of his dominions within India. Selection of Purushapura, i.e. Peshawar, proves that Kanishka's imperial possessions spread far towards the west and north.

Administration

Kanishka was a mighty conqueror, but no less was his ability as an administrator and he was even mightier in peaceful pursuits and in his solicitousness of the welfare of the people. For an effective and efficient rule of the empire he resorted to the system of Satrapies and appointed *Mahakshatrpa* Kharapallana and *Kshatrpa* Vanaspara in the eastern part of the empire. The northern part was ruled by General Lala as *Mahakshatrpa* with Vaspasi and Laika as *Kshatrpa*. The seat of the Central Government was at *Purushpura* or Peshawar. This practice of rule through Great Satraps and Satraps was the continuation of the system followed by the Sakas and the Pahlavas.

We find a conscious emulation of the methods of Asoka by the Kushana king Kanishka. He pursued the policy of propagating Buddhism both within India and outside India. It was in connection with

his missionary activity cultural and commercial but also with Rome. The prosperity struck by Kadphises The unmistakable it could be noticed.

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missionary activities that he established close relationship, religious, cultural and commercial, not only with China, Tibet and Central Asia but also with Rome and influx of gold from China and Rome in particular. The prosperity of the empire attested by the fine gold coins struck by Kadphises I appears to have increased under Kanishka. The unmistakable influence of Rome on the Indian coinage of the time would be noticed.

From the *Periplus* we know that gold and silver specie constituted one of the imports of Barygaza, i.e., Borach, a port on the eastern coast of India. Swell has also mentioned a huge hoard of Roman coins of the first five Roman emperors discovered in the Madras Presidency. The very name *dinara* of gold coins seems to have close affinity with the Roman *denarius* and *dramma* for silver coins has been adopted from the Greek *drachma*.

Kanishka assumed epithet like *Shaonauus Shao*, as found on his coins, was an adaptation of the Parthian title *Basileos Basileon*. From *Shaonauus Shao* the letter *Shaahan Sha* was derived.

Religion

As it is customary for the Buddhist writers to depict a person wicked before conversion and turned into saint after conversion to Buddhism. Kanishka has been described by them to be devoid of the sense of right or wrong before his conversion. This view of the Buddhist writers has not been accepted by most of the scholars who think that it is an attempt on the part of the Buddhist writers to glorify Buddhism.

Before conversion to Buddhism Kanishka was a believer in many gods, Persian, Greek, Hindu, etc. This is proved by the figures imprinted on his coins. The exact date of conversion of Kanishka is, however, not known. The conversion is supposed to have taken place after some years he had been on the throne. It is supposed that after his association with the Buddhist philosopher and Saint Asvaghosha, he must have come under his influence. Asvaghosha must have won the heart of Kanishka so completely that the latter gave up his allegiance to his previous gods and got converted to Buddhism. Here is a second instance of a great conqueror and emperor being converted to Buddhism and taken to the policy of peace and brotherliness in place of the policy of military conquests.

Kanishka was a close copy of Asoka. What is specially noteworthy about Kanishka is that he was the only foreigner who became a convert to an Indian religion and turned into zealous missionary. In his missionary activities we find him to an emulator of Asoka whose footsteps he tried to follow closely. We renovated the old monasteries

which were in a state of disrepair and built many a new one. He repaired the monasteries with liberal money grants for the maintenance of the monks who dwelt in them. Kanishka caused the construction of a number of *stupas* in the memory of Sakyamuni. He also sent missionaries for the propagation of Buddhism to China, Tibet, Japan and Central Asia. The sculptors, painters, as well as the architects of the time also became active propagandists of Buddhism. The celebration of *Chaitya* at Peshawar constructed under his orders excited the wonder and appreciation of travellers down to a late period and famous sculptures therein included a life-size statue of himself.

During his time there arose disputes about Buddhism, among the schools of Buddhism prevalent at that time, as we know from the Tibetan historian Taranath. It became necessary to restore the disputes and to that end Kanishka convoked the Fourth Buddhist Council to which was attended by 500 monks. There is a controversy with regard to the venue of the Council. According to some it was held at *Kundavana* in Kashmir but others hold that it met at Jullundur in Punjab. In the Council the entire Buddhist literature was thoroughly examined and commentaries on the three *Pitakas* were prepared, which were compiled in *Mahavibhasha* which is the greatest work on Buddhist Philosophy. This voluminous work is considered to be the encyclopaedia of Buddhism. The decisions of the Council were inscribed in copper plates and deposited in a *stupa* built for the purpose, packed in stone chests. Vasumitra acted as the President and Asvaghosha as the Vice-President of the Council.

Buddhist Council

The period of Kanishka saw the transformation of the *Hinayana* form of Buddhism into *Mahayana* form. In the *Hinayana* form the worship of Buddha was only by relics like footprint of Buddha, an empty seat of Buddha, that is, some sort of symbol used to be placed in front of the worshipper. There used to be no figure or image of Buddha to worship. This needed great concentration of mind on the part of the worshipper and the method was very subtle and could be followed by persons of great self-control, and of deepest religious bent of mind. This method of proceeding along the Path of Buddhist religion was called *Hina-Yana*, i.e., lesser vehicle, i.e., subtle mode of transport in the path of religion. But during Kanishka's time worship of the image of Buddha came into use. It became easy to concentrate by keeping as visible representation of Buddha in form. This was a greater and easier method hence called *Mahayana* Buddhism. In the *Hinayana* form of worship emphasis was laid on good action but in *Mahayana* system worship of Buddha and *Bodhisattvas* was emphasised.

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Art and Learning

Kanishka's patronage of a cultural renaissance of the Guptas. A large and secular. A large part of Buddha Philosophy in the court of Kanishka was to the cultural life of music. *Buddhacharita* by Ashvaghosha has been regarded as a greatest exponent of the science of *Mathara*, a political science. Besides these works, "played a leading role in and artistic activities of Nagarjuna in his theory of relativity.

Another celebrated figure was Vasumitra who presided over the Fourth Buddhist Council during the reign of Kanishka.

Kanishka was a great patron of architecture. The famous *Stupa* found in Mathura in Taxila with its four *Statues*, sculptured by the Gandhara school of art during his reign. The *Amaravati* school of art was purely Indian. The art of the time of Kanishka's reign was the art of the time.

Estimate of Kanishka's reign came in as a religion, language

The use of Pali as the language of the Buddhist religious books was now replaced by Sanskrit.

Art and Learning

Kanishka's patronage of art and learning marked the beginning of a cultural renaissance which was to reach its peak and flower under the Guptas. A large volume of Sanskrit literary works both religious and secular, was produced during the period. Asvaghosha, the greatest Buddha Philosopher, saint and literary figure of the time adorned the court of Kanishka. He was a versatile genius whose contributions to the cultural life of the time centred round poetry, philosophy, drama, music. *Buddhacharit* and *Sutralankar* are his two most famous works. *Buddhacharit* on the life of Gautama Buddha in Sanskrit verse has been regarded as a Buddhist epic. Another great Buddhist writer of fame who adorned the court of Kanishka was Nagarjuna. He was the greatest exponent of *Mahayana* Buddhism. Charaka, the celebrated master of the science of medicine, was the court physician of Kanishka. Mathara, a politician of great acumen, was a minister of Kanishka. Besides these worthies, the Greek engineer Agesilaus and many others "played a leading part in the religious, literary, scientific, philosophical and artistic activities of the reign". It is of great interest to know that Nagarjuna in his celebrated work *Madhyamikasutra* expounded the theory of relativity in its preliminary form.

Another celebrity that adorned the court of Kanishka was Vasumitra who presided over the Fourth Buddhist Council held during the reign of Kanishka.

Kanishka was also a great builder and a patron of art and architecture. The works of architecture, art of sculpture of his time are found in Mathura, Peshawar, Taxila and Amaravati. The Sirsukh city in Taxila with its hall, buildings and monasteries was built by him. Statues, sculptures, monasteries added to the beauty of the city. The Gandhara school of art was the product of Graeco-Roman-Buddhist school of art and sculpture. Totally indigenous art also flourished during his reign at Amaravati. The ornamental sculpture depicted in the Amaravati medallion bear testimony to the excellence of purely Indian style uninfluenced by any foreign art. At Mathura find of Kanishka's headless statue is an example of the massive sculptural art of the time.

Estimate of Kanishka

Kanishka happens to be one of the few kings in history who came in as a conqueror and won an empire but was conquered by the religion, language and culture of the country of his conquest. He

was an intrepid warrior, a mighty conqueror but what was more was equally great as an administrator. If he was great in war in administration he was greater still in the arts of peace. He was a great patron of art and literature. He built a vast empire which extended from Central Asia to Mathura, Benares and probably to parts of Bengal but he gave it an administration which brought peace and prosperity to the country and the people, which conduced to peace of religion, art, architecture and literature. Before his conversion to Buddhism he was eclectic in his religious belief and was a polytheist. After becoming a Buddhist he became an ardent missionary of the *Mahayanism*. He rendered a great service to Buddhism by convening the Fourth Buddhist Council which resolved the disputes that arose among the Buddhists about Buddhist religion. He was a great patron of Buddhism as his predecessor of the Maurya Dynasty Asoka. Like Asoka he sent missions for propagation of Buddhism in China, Japan, Tibet, Central Asia, etc.

He patronised the Buddhist philosophers like Asvaghosha, Basumitra, Nagarjuna, Political scientist like Mathara, medical scientist like Charaka, engineer like Greek Agesilaus.

He was a great patron of art and architecture. The city of *Purushapura*, his capital, Taxila, Mathura were beautified by monasteries, stupas, etc. The tall Chaitya at his capital with its sculpture forced the admiration of visitors even after long time.

The beneficence of his rule was seen in the prosperity of the people resulting from the influx of huge quantity of gold by way of trade with foreign countries like China, Rome, etc.

Kanishka has been likened to Asoka as a conqueror, preacher. But although he was definitely a lesser personality than Great Asoka, he was the nearest emulator of Asoka in his spirit of toleration of other religions, patronage of Buddhism, and missionary zeal. He, however, was not an apostle of non-violence as Asoka had been yet he had initiated a cultural renaissance which reached its zenith under the Guptas. Kanishka's reign constituted a brilliant epoch in the history of ancient India and the darkness that descended on the Indian History after the fall of the Mauryas was lifted during his reign. Kanishka rightly deserves a place among the best rulers of the ancient history of India.

Kanishka's Successors

Kanishka was succeeded by his son Vasishka. He is supposed to be the son Kanishka. His inscriptions have been found in the Mathura district of U.P. and in Bhopal State in Central India. There has been difference of opinion with regard to the identity of Vasishka, Vajishka, Jushka. If he is identified with Vajishka, father of

Kanishka II, and mentioned in Kalhana's *Rajatarangini* included in his dynasty. The 28 corresponding to the presumption that

He was succeeded by the founding of the Kushan Empire in 138 A.D. Kanishka II, son of Kanishka I, was a patron of Buddhism and counter-sponsors of Kanishka. He became the sole ruler of the Kushan Empire, the title of *Kaisara*, i.e. Emperor. According to

Kanishka II was an Indian name and was used in India. He appeared in the religious era. The religious era was derived from their coins. He was a shipper of Siva. He was the bull Nandin of the Kushan Empire to Vaishnavism. It is supposed to have been discovered much beyond an end soon after the fall of the Kushan empire. It is supposed to have been discovered

It is nearly certain to form a clear idea of the reign of Vasudeva I. The Kushan Empire for the period. After Vasudeva I it is supposed that Kanishka II appears that Kanishka II it is supposed to have been discovered in the interior of northern India. It is supposed to have been discovered

The downfall

The Kushan Empire and fell victim to the invasions of Kanishka II. It did not last long.

¹ Compre

Kanishka II, and Jushka, founder of Jushkapura in Kashmir as mentioned in Kalhana's *Rajatarangini* then Kashmir must have also been included in his dominions. His only two inscriptions dated 24 and 28 corresponding to 102 and 106 A.D. discovered at Mathura raise the presumption that he ruled for four years only.

He was succeeded by Huvishka or Hushka who was credited with the founding of the city called Hushkapura. He ruled from 106 A.D. to 138 A.D. He is supposed to have ruled conjointly with Kanishka II, son of Vasishka. The confusing maze is of suggestion and counter-suggestion about the relations between the successors of Kanishka. After a conjoint rule with Huvishka, Kanishka II became the sole ruler after the death of Huvishka and assumed the title of *Kaisara*, i.e., Caesar in imitation of title of the Roman emperors. According to some Kanishka II predeceased Huvishka.¹

Kanishka II was succeeded by Vasudeva I. This was a purely Indian name and denotes the complete naturalisation of the Kushanas in India. He appears to have ruled between 138 A.D. and 126 A.D. The religious eclecticism of Huvishka and Kanishka II as notified from their coins is less evident under Vasudeva I. He became a worshipper of Siva. Most of his coins represent the figure of Siva with the bull Nandin although his name Vasudeva indicates his nearness to Vaishnavism. There is no clear evidence of Vasudeva's extent of empire. It is suggested that in all probability his rule did not extend much beyond a portion of modern U. P. His rule, perhaps, came to an end soon after 176 A.D. for no coin subsequent to this date has been discovered. With his death the Kushana empire melted away.

It is nearly impossible in the present state of our knowledge to form a clear idea of the history of the Kushanas after the death of Vasudeva I. There are neither archaeological nor literary evidence for the period. There are only coins that give us an inadequate idea. After Vasudeva I we come across Kanishka III, Vasudeva II. It appears that Kanishka III succeeded after Vasudeva II. From the coins it is supposed that Kanishka III and Vasudeva II lost their hold on the interior of India and their rule was confined to north-western and northern India. The final break up of the Kushana power seems to have been complete during the rule of Vasudeva I's successors.

The downfall of the Kushana Empire

The Kushana empire went the way of all other empires in history and fell victim to decay and fall, the inexorable law of Nature. Kanishka III saw the Kushana empire reach its meridian but in the final setting. Huvishka was the