CHAPTER I

Locating Ancient Maharashtra Geographically

The present state of Maharashtra was formed on 1st May, 1960, as a part of the process of reorganization of the constituent states of the Union of India on a linguistic basis. It comprises 30 Marathi speaking districts of the former Bombay state, with an area of 1,18,459 square miles and a population of 62 million people approximately. It is bounded by Gujarat and Madhya Pradesh on the north-west and north-east, respectively and by Karnataka and Andhra Pradesh in the south and Arabian sea on the west. It is one of the most industrialized states of India and Bombay is its capital.

Though Maharashtra as a state is three decades old, Maharashtra has a history and a rich cultural heritage going back to more than 2,500 years. "The terms Maharathi and Maharathini occur in the inscriptions of the Buddhist establishments at Kanheri, Kuda and Bedsa assigned to a period between 1st century B.C. and 2nd century A.D. The term Maharathi seems to have had both a tribal connotation and an official or bureaucratic designation. The land occupied or controlled by them may have come to be called Maharashtra."¹

"From the time when Indian history emerges from confusion and uncertainties of semi-historical legends and traditions to a more definite historical plane, that is, from about the time of the Buddha to about the time of Asoka, the great, the literature of the early Buddhist is certainly, the main, if not only, source of the historical and geographical information of Ancient India, supplemented, however, by Jain and Brahmanical sources here and there. Pali literature in fact, one of the ancient literature of India, is a vast treasure house of information with regard to the geographical condition and situation of the numerous countries, cities, villages and other localities as well as of rivers, lakes, parks, forests, chaityas, vihāras etc. of the vast sub-continent of India."²

The Dighanikāya reveals that the contemporary Indians knew very accurately the shape of their country. The text assigns it a shape of a cart, 'Sakata' which is really quite correct, specially when we take into account such an old period. The text describes India as "Uttareṇa Āyatam dakhinena Sakatamukham."³

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Pali Tipitaka and its commentaries give us the divisions of Jambudipa, that is India, in three kinds. The first division is in the form of Solasa Mahājanapadas. We learn from Anguttara-Nikāya that there were sixteen great states of considerable extent and power, known as 'Solasa Mahājanapadas'. These states were —

1. Kāsi
2. Kosala
3. Anga
4. Magadha
5. Vajji
6. Malla
7. Cetiya (Cedi)
8. Namisa (Vasta)
9. Kuru
10. Pāncala
11. Maccha (Matsya)
12. Surasena
13. Assaka
14. Avanti
15. Gandhāra

The second division is in the form of three Mandalas (three circles). Their names are given as -

1. Mahāmandala (big circle),
2. Majjhimamandala (middle circle) and
3. Antomandala (the last circle).

This division has been made in respect of the tours of the Bhikkhus for preaching the Dhamma. This practice was followed by the Buddha himself. It describes when the Dhamma tours should be started and be completed within the prescribed period.

Regarding these Dhamma tours, The Samantapāsādikā states that the Buddha used to start his Dhamma tours of Mahāmandala on the Mahāpavāranā day (full moon day of October) and complete the same within nine months. The area covered by Mahāmandala was 900 yojanas. The area of Majjhima-mandala or central circle has been given as 600 yojanas. The Buddha required nine months to complete this tour. The area of Antomandala or last circle was 300 yojanas and the Buddha required only seven months to complete the tour of this mandala.

The third division was in the form of five territories of Jambudipa that were:

1. Majjhima desa (middle country)
2. Pubba or Pubbanta, Pacina or Purathamadesa (east country)
3. Uttarāpatha (way north)
4. Aparānta (western country) and
5. Dakhlināpatha (way south)."^5

Thus from the information we gather from various Pali Suttas and commentaries, it is very easy to prove beyond doubt, that the Buddhists were fully acquainted with the geography of the whole of India from the Himalayas to the last border line of the south and from the Arabian sea to the last border line of the east.

In Sutta-Nipāta we find the mention of Assoka's country in the Dakhlināpatha. In the Text it is said, "From the beautiful city of Kosala i.e. Sāvatthi, a Brahmin well versed in the hymns, went to the south (Dakhlināpatha) wishing for nothingness."^6

D.D. Kosambi has given the story of Bāvari Brahmina in detail in the following words, "One story from the

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archie Buddhist canonical work, the Sutta-Nipāta, is worth detail report for the spread of Buddhism and about contemporary India. The Kosalan Brahmin Bāvari had left the capital Sāvatthi to go down the southern trade route (Dakkhināpatha or the modern Deccan). He settled with a few young disciples at the junction of Mula and Godavari rivers; in the territory of the Assakas 'Horse People' the tribe that later developed into the Sātavāhanas). There he lived by food gathering, taking wild grain and nuts from plants and tubers or roots from the earth. Eventually a good sized village (Gāma) came into being in the neighbourhood. With whatever he could gather from the surplus of this village, Bāvari arranged to perform one of the major Yojna sacrifices in Vedic style. The ceremony, upset by a Brahmin who turned up after the gifts had been distributed and cursed Bāvari for not having anything more to give. Then Bāvari sent sixteen of his Brahmin acolytes north to question the Buddha, whose fame had reached far down to the trade route and who seemed to be the only person who might enable the curse to be foiled. These pupils first went to Paithana, the terminus of the Dakkhināpatha trade route (which lay to the south-east of the hermitage) then presumably with some trade caravan past Aurangabad to Mahesvar on the Narmada; Ujjain, Gonaddha (unidentified) but in Gond
country, Bhilasa, Kosambi, Saketa (Faizabad), Sāvatthi. There they joined the eastern section of the Northern route (Uttarāpatha) to go to Setavya, Kapilavatthu, Kusinārā and Pāvā, Bhoganagara, Vesali (modern Basarha) then chief town of Liechavis Rājgiri. They found the Buddha at the stone-Chaitya outside the city. It is clear that there was no agriculture on the Godavari till the middle of the sixth century, after which village settlement spread rapidly. Presumably because of iron and iron-working as well as the heavy northern plough had then just reached the region.\(^7\)

The Brahmin Bāvari was born in the family of Pasenadi's Purushita and was a teacher of Pasenadi during his boyhood. When Bāvari built his hermitage near the Pancavati during the reign of Pasenadi, there came into existence a high road connecting Rājagaha with Ratitthāna (Paithana). Thus the hermits and vanacarakas co-operated in exploring the forest regions and gradually bringing into existence high roads and trade-routes. Bāvari's hermitage on the Godavari was one such institution in the Buddhist time.\(^7\)

\(^7\) Kosambi D.D. - The Culture and Civilisation of Ancient India, p. 111.

\(^8\) Law B.C. - India as described in the early Texts of Buddhism and Jainism, pp. 157, 218, 219, 183.
The Sutta-Nipāta, an early Buddhist work, narrates the story of a Brahmin teacher named Bāvari as we have already seen in the above paragraphs, who with sixteen of his own pupils and their pupils, left Sāvatthi and migrated to the Assaka state on the bank of the Godavari. "There are among the Brahmins of the south two sects named the Brihaccharanas and the Mulakinātis. The former seems to have been so named because they travelled a long distance before they settled in the south. The Mulakanātis were so called because they came from Mulaka, a region that lay on the bank of the Godavari. These few instances are sufficient to indicate how gradually the Deccan came to be freely and frequently colonized in course of time by the Aryans." 9

We obtain a clear glimpse of the conditions of the Dekkan immediately before the rise of Buddhism in the land. Rama Rao explains the point in these words, "The process of Aryan colonisation was complete by this time and period of settlement had already begun. A number of states came to be established on the northern and the eastern fringes of the Dekkan. Kalinga was a flourishing state on the east coast with Dantapura or Kanchanapura as its capital. Assaka on the bank of Godavari was

another flourishing state and it included Asika and Mulaka which became famous later on. To the west of it was the state of Bhojas or Bhojakas. Further west was Dandaka. A little to the north existed the powerful state of Vidarbha. Thus the Dekkan states flourished during the days of the later Videhas of the north contemporaneous with the great Mahā-Janapadas."\(^{10}\)

Rama Rao further points out thus, "The sixth and fifth centuries B.C. witnessed remarkable events in Northern India - Buddhism and Jainism came to be widely propagated all over the country and the message of the 'Enlightened One' echoed in thousands of hearts in the distant Dekkan."\(^{11}\)

The Buddhist Chronicle Mahāvamsa states, "that one, Thera Mahadhammarakkhita, was sent as a missionary to Maharattha by Asoka, the Great, at the conclusion of the third Dhammasangiti or Pataliputra Council."\(^{12}\)

Again the whole of Chapter XII of Mahāsamśa titled, "The conversion of different countries' describes in verses 1-52, how the missionaries converted people to

10. Ibid., p. 12.
11. Ibid., p. 15
Buddhism by thousands and in verses 29-39, specifies what Suttas they preached in Mahisamandala (Mysore), Vanavāsi (North Canara), Aparānta (Konkan) and Mahāra-ttha (Maharashtra) and adds that they bestowed ordination on thousands. The names of the missionaries and the countries to which they were deputed were Yona Dhammarakkhita to Aparāntaka and Mahādhammarakkhita to Maharashtra. \(^{13}\)

Another Pali Text, Dipavamsa, confirms the information given by Mahavamsa and mentions the same missionaries by their names and records somewhat briefly their achievements. "The wise Thera called Yonakadhammarakkhita converted the Aparāntaka country by preaching the Aggikhandhopama Sutta. The Thera Mahādhammarakkhita who possessed the great (magical) powers converted Mahāra-ttha by preaching the Nārada-Kassapa Jātaka." \(^{14}\)

It further gives information about Supparā - the famous sea-port. The ship in which the men had embarked went, sailing on the sea, losing her way and her bearings to the port of Supparā. The people of Supparā then invited those seven hundred men to disembark and offered them lavish hospitality and honour. \(^{15}\)

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15. Ibid., p. 161.
"Archaeology has confirmed the historicity of Tissa's mission. In a stupa No. 2a at Sanchi were found two relic caskets, probably deposited there in the second or first century B.C. on which some of the names of missionaries are inscribed." 16

Inscriptions of Asoka, the Great, are very valuable documents, in giving details of the regions where he sent his ministers of religion. Famous Indologist Sir R.G. Bhandarkar elaborates the point as under, "In the middle of the third century before Christ, Asoka, the great king of Murya dynasty reigning at Pataliputra in Magadha, speaks in his rock-inscriptions, which are found at Girnar in Kathiawad on the west, and Dhauli in Kataka and Jamgad in Jangam on the eastern coast and also at Khalsi in the Himalayas and Shahbazgiri in Afganistan, of his having sent his ministers of religion to the Rastikas and the Petenikas and to the Aparantas. The last which we know best is Northern Konkan, the capital of which was Surpāraka (Pali Supparaka), Petenikas is not unlikely the name as Paithanakas i.e. the people or the country round about Paithan on the Godavari. The vernacular pronunciation of the name of the city, which in Sanskrit is Pratishthāna (Pali Patitthāna) was in those days, as it

now is, Paithana or Pethana, for both the authors of
the Periplus and Ptolemy call it Paithana or Baithana.
The Rastikas, the Sanskrit name Rashtrikas, were very
likely the people of Maharashtra, for a tribe of a
name Rattas has from the remotest times held political
supremacy in the Dekkan." The author further adds,
"One branch of it assumed the name of Rāshtrakutas and
governed the country before the Chālukyas acquired power.
It re-established itself after about three centuries,
but had to yield to the Chālukyas again after some time.
In later times, Chieften of the name of the Rattas
governed Sugamdhavarti or Soudatti in the Belgaon dis-
trict. In the thirteenth edict the Petenikas instead
of Rastikas, Bhogas, we know, ruled over the country of
Vidarbhā or Berar and also in the other parts of the
Dekkan. In the inscriptions in the caves of Kudā, the
name Mahābhoja or Great Bhoja occurs several times and
once in the inscription at Bedsā. Just as the Bhojas
called themselves Mahābhojas, the Rashtrikas, Rattis,
Ratthis or Ratthas called themselves Mahāratthis or
Mahāratthas as will be shown below and thus the country
in which they lived came to be called Maharattha, the
Sanskrit of which is Maharashtra. Thus about a hundred
years before Patanjali, the whole of the southern Pe-
the north and the Dekkan or Maharashtra had regular kingdoms governed by the Ratthas and Bhojas."\textsuperscript{17}

Raychoudhari has also confirmed the statement made by Sir Bhandarkar. He says, "The Bhojas and the Ratthikas were evidently the ancestors of the Mahābhojas and the Mahārathis of the Sātavāhana period. The Bhojas apparently dwelt in Berar and the Ratthikas possibly in Maharashtra or certain adjoining tract."\textsuperscript{18}

According to Huen Thsang's account, southern India comprised the whole of the Peninsula to the south of the Tapi and Mahanadi rivers, from Nasik in the west to Ganjam on the east. It was divided into nine separate kingdoms. The whole of the kingdoms were visited by the pilgrim in A.D. 639 and 640. This account has been given by Mujumdar in the following words, "He (huen Thsang) reached Konkan and Maharashtra, the last of the nine kingdoms of southern India."\textsuperscript{19}

He further adds, "from Kalinga the Chinese Pilgrim proceeded about 1800 to 1900 li, or from 300 to 317 miles to the north-west to kingdom of Kiao-sa-la, or

\textsuperscript{17} Bhagndarkar R.G. - Early History of Dekkan, p. 20.
\textsuperscript{18} Raychoudhari H. - Political History of Ancient India, p. 314.
\textsuperscript{19} Mujumdar S.N. - Cunningham’s Ancient Geography of India, p. 590.
kosala. The bearing and distance take us to the ancient province of Vidarbha or Berar of which the present headquarter is Nagpur. All these concurring data enable us to identify the ancient Kosala with the modern province of Berar or Gondavana. The position of the capital is more difficult to fix as Huen Tshand does not mention its name but as it was 40 li or nearly 7 miles in circuit it is most probably represented by one of the larger cities of the present days. These are Chanda, Nagpur, Amraoti and Blichpur. 20

Huen Tshand, the Chinese pilgrim further gives an account of Ancient Maharashtra, he visited during A.D. 629. He says, "Going 200 yojanas from this is a country called Ta-Thsin (Dakkhina). Here is a Sanghārāma of the former Buddha Kāsyapa. It is constructed out of a great mountain of rock, hollowed to the proper shape. This building has altogether five stages." 21

He further says, "To the south-west about 300 li we came to the Po-lo-mo-lo-ki-li (Brahmagiri) mountain. The solitary peak of this mountain—towers above the

20. Ibid., p. 595.
21. Beal S., Si-Yu-Ki—Buddhist Records of Western World, P XVIII.
rest, and stands out with its mighty precipices as a solid mass of rock without approaches or intervening valleys."²²

Huen Thsand describes the land of Maharashtra in a very befitting manner and says, "Mo-ha-la-cho (Maharashtra) this country is about 5000 li in circuit. The capital borders on the west on a great river. It is about 30 li round. The soil is rich and fertile and it is regularly cultivated and very productive. The climate is hot, the disposition of the people is honest and simple. They are tall in stature, and of a stern vendicate character."²³

Again we get ample information regarding the people, the Sanghārāmas and the Bhikkhus living in those Sanghārāmas, as well as the sects of Buddhism followed by the people in the country. He says, "The men are fond of learning and study both heretical and orthodox (books). There are about 100 Sanghārāmas, Deva Temples in which very many heretics of different persuasions dwell."²⁴

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²² Ibid., p. 214.
²³ Ibid., p. 255.
²⁴ Ibid., p. 257.
Further we get the description of the mountain where Arhat Achara had built a monastery. "On the western frontier of the kingdom there was a great mountain with ridges rising one over another and scarped crests. In former days Arhat Achara had built a monastery, with rooms excavated in rock. The Vihāra attached to it was 100 feet in height and in the midst of the monastery there is a stone statue of Buddha about 70 feet high. The walls of the Vihāra were divided all round into panels in which were sculptured with minute detail of the great events of Buddha's life. Outside the north and south gates of the monastery there were stone elephants both on the right hand and on the left."\(^{25}\)

Alexander Cunningham has also described the ancient Maharashtra in the following words, "The circuit of the province (i.e. Maharashtra) is said to be 6000 li or 1000 miles, which agrees with the dimensions of the track remaining unassigned between Malwa on the north, Kosala and Andhra on the east, Konkan on the south and the sea on the west. The limiting points of this tract

\(^{25}\) Cunningham A. - Ancient Geography of India, p. 468.
are Daman and Vingarla (Vengurla) on the sea coast and
Idalabad (Adilabad) and Haidarabad (Hyderabad) inland
which give a circuit of rather more than 1000 miles."²⁶

The word 'Dakhkhina' as we have already seen ear-
lier represents the vernacular pronunciation of the
Sanskrit word Dakshina meaning southern, used to desig-
nate the portion of Indian Peninsula lying to the south
of Narmada, While giving more details of the region
which is known as Dakhkhina in Pali literature, R.G.
Bhandarkar says, "The name usually met with in Sanskrit
works and elsewhere is Dakshinapatha (Pali Dakkhinapatha)
or the southern region. In modern times it is the name
of the country between the Narmada on the north and a
variable line along the course of the Krishna to the
south, exclusive of the provinces lying to the extreme
east. It is thus almost identical with the country
called Maharashtra or the region in which the Marathi
language is spoken, the narrow strip of land between the
western Ghats and sea being excluded."²⁷

Sir R.G. Bhandarkar explains the above statements
very clearly and further adds, "The name Maharashtra also

²⁶. Ibid., p. 467.
seems at one time to have been restricted to this tract, for that country is in the Puranas and other works, distinguished on the one hand from Aparānta or Northern Konkan and from the regions on either side of the Narmada and the Tapi inhabited by the Pulindas and Sabaras, as well as from the Vidarbhas on the other."28

M.G. Panse locates Maharashtra in the following words, "Maharashtra is situated in the southern part of India which is known as Deccan Plateau. The land of Maharashtra is mountainous and rocky. The land of Maharashtra has been divided into three parts i.e. Konkan, Desh and Vidarbha by the mountain Sahyadri, standing from the north to the south; near Arabian sea, Balaghat and Satapuda mountains are on the north. In the middle of the Sahyadri and the Arabian sea, from Daman to Hanawar, the track of land is called 'Konkan'. The wide spread land from Sahyadri to the east upto Chanda and to the south upto Gulbarga and Belgaum is called 'Desh'. The territory to the north of Balaghat and in the belt of Tapi, and Purna rivers is called 'Khandesh' and 'Vidarbha'. Also the land to the east of Vardha and Vainaganga is called east Vidarbha. After the reign of Sālivāhana (Sātavāhana) many capital places were formed on the banks of Godavari and the land

28. Ibid., p. 10.
on both the sides of this river was highly civilized. Many remains of ancient civilization have been discovered on the river Godavari from Trimbakeshwar to Nanded. "29

Thus, "The expression Dakkhināpatha which occurs in the isolated passages, as we have already seen in one of our oldest documents cannot indeed possibly mean the whole country comprised in our modern phrase the Deccan. But it is used, in the very passage in question as descriptive of a remote settlement or colony on the banks of the upper Godavari." 30

Thus, from the paragraphs given above we can say today that the land which we call 'Maharashtra' is a part of India, and is called Maharashtra for the last 2500 years. We get a lot of information in Pali and its Atthakathā literature as well as in Vamsa literature regarding the regions like Assaka, Dakkhināpatha, Aparānta Sunāparānta and Mahārattha. The people like Rastrikas and Petenikas were known to ancient Indians.

In this connection, it is now easy to find out the details of the regions or the countries which are now the parts of Maharashtra, to supplement our study.

30. Rhys Davids - Buddhist India, p. 15.
Avanti - Dakkhinapatha - as a part of Maharashtra:

We get the country named by Avanti-Dakkhinapatha in Udāna. The same has been described as under - "At that time Avanti - Dakkhināpatha was in sacrilege of the Bhikkhus." At that time Bāhiya Dāruciriya was living in Supparaka on the bank of the sea. He was thinking himself 'One of the Arahatas and followed the path of Arahatas. Knowing his thought as wrong some Deva advised him to go to the Buddha who is in Sāvatthi and hear his Dhamma. Then Bāhiya Dāruciriya went to Sāvatthi and heard the Dhamma from the Buddha."  

Vinaya Pitaka also mentioned the country named Avanti-Dakkhināpatha.  

Assaka:

As we saw earlier from the Anguttara-Nikāya the sixteen states flourished in ancient times in India. Out of these states Assaka was situated on the banks of the river Godavari. Sutta-Nipāta narrates the story of Bavari Brahmana as follows - "From the beautiful city of the Kosala's (Sāvatthi) a brahmana well versed in the

32. Ibid. - Bāhiya Sutta - 1.10.19, pp. 69-70.
hymns, went to South (Dakkhināpatha) wishing for nothingness. In Assaka's territory in the neighbourhood of Mulaka, he dwelt on the banks of Godavari (living) on gleanings and fruits."\(^{34}\)

Mahāgovinda Sutta of Dīgha-Nikāya mentions Brahmādatta as the king of the Assakas. He was a contemporary of Sattabhu king of Kalinga, Vassabhu king of Avanti, Bharata king of Sovira, Renu king of Videha, Dhatarattha king of Anga and Dhatarattha king of Kāsi.\(^{35}\)

The stories from various Jātaka give us valuable information about the Assaka country. "Once upon a time, there was a king Assaka reigning in Potali, which is a city of the kingdom of Kāsi.\(^{36}\)

Culla Kalinga Jātaka describes Assaka country thus - "Once upon a time when Kalinga was reigning in the city of Dantapura in the Kalinga kingdom, Assaka was the king of Potali in the Assaka Country."\(^{37}\)

\(^{34}\) Sutta-Nipāta - Pārayana-Vagga-Vatthugathā, Gāthas 1-2, p. 419.


\(^{37}\) Ibid., Vol. IV, p. 2.
Sonadanda Jataka gives us some information about the kingdom of Avanti - Assaka." 38

Sarabhanga Jataka states thus - "So the great Being arose from his couch and without letting anybody know, he descended from the terrace and going out by the house door he went into the forest all alone, and repaired to a spot on the banks of the Godavari near Kavittha forest three leagues in extent. His seven chief pupils were Sālissara, Medissara, Pabbata, Kāladevala, Kisvaccha, Anusissa and Nārada. In the same on the third occasion he sent Pabbata saying, "In the great forest is the Anjana mountain go and settle near that." On the fourth occasion he sent Kāladevala saying, "In the south country in the kingdom of Avanti is the Ghansela mountain settle near that." 39

Sankhapāla Jataka outlines the story of Assaka in these words, "So not taking a creature he left the park and passing beyond the borders of the realms of Magadha he built a hut of leaves in the Mahinsaka kingdom, near mount Candaka, in the bend of the river Kannapennā, where it issues out of the lake Sankhapāla. A king of the Nāgas,

Sankhapāla by name issuing forth from the Kannapenna river with numerous company of snakes from time to time visit would, the ascetic and he instructed the Nāga king in the law."\(^{40}\)

Vimānavaṭṭhulu mentions, the king Assaka. The name of his son was Sujāta."\(^{41}\)

The countries known as Mulaka and Asmaka are mentioned in the Nasika eulogy of Goutamiputra Sātakarni."\(^{42}\)

Aparānta:

The Buddhist tradition recorded in the Sāsanavamsa tells us that Aparāntaka is, however, the region lying to the west of the upper Irawadi."\(^{43}\)

The Buddhist chronicle Buddhavamsa described that the relics of the Buddha were distributed among the devotees of the different countries and cities and the people erected the stupas on the relics. The Buddhavamsa further records that, "The remaining things used by the Buddha during his life time i.e. Ārikkhāras were

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40. Ibid., Vol. V, p. 84.
41. Vimānavaṭṭhulu 2.13.126, p. 91.
43. Sāsanavamsa, p. 11.
brought by the people of Aparānta Janapada and they also erected a stupa on that."\(^{44}\)

Sumangalavilāsini, the Atthakathā of Dīgha Nikāya states how the Janapada of Aparānta got its name. It tells us, "Aparagoyānato āgatamanussehi āvasitapadeso 'Aparantajanapado' ti nāmam labhi."\(^{44a}\)

The region inhabited by the people who came from an ancient island (Aparagoyāna) got the name Aparānta Janapada.

The Nasik eulogy of Goutamiputra Sātakarni refers to the country called Aparānta which corresponded to North Konkan and North Maharashtra inclusive of Nasik and Karle districts. Kanheri Buddhist cave inscription conveys the definite information that an inhabitant of Kalyana (Thana District) was an Aparānta. Aparānta also included modern Sopārā (Pali Suppāraka) about six miles to the north of Bassein (modern Wasai).\(^{45}\)

The Chiplun grant of Pulakesin II refers to the district (Visaya) called Avarētika, which comprised the

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44. Buddhavamsa - Dhātuvibhājanakathā, 29.27, p. 384.
Chiplun Taluque of Ratnagiri district of Maharashtra."

Sunāparānta:

The Punnovāda Sutta of Majjhima-Nikāya gives an account of Sunāparānta district and says, "The people of Sunāparānta were fierce and rough." 47

Sunāparānta was one division of Aparāntacountry. Bhikkhu Punna was a native of Suppārakacity which was in Sunāparānta Janapada. He came to Sāvatthi with five hundred carts for trade. But after hearing a sermon of the Buddha he was converted to Buddhism and became a Bhikkhu. 48

A city by name Suppāraka was the capital of Sunāparānta. This city has been identified with modern Sopārā, 37 miles away to the north of Bombay and in Thana district. 49

In the Bodhivagga of Udāna 50 we see a monk staying in Suppāraka Tittha. In Mahāvamsa 51 and Dipavamsa 52 we

46. Ibid., p. 46.
47. Majjhima-Nikāya - Horner T.B., p. 320
49. Upadhyaya Bharatsinha - Buddhakalina Bharatiya Bhoogola, p. 488.
50. Udāna - Bodhivagga 1.10.19, p. 70
51. Mahāvamsa - Gāthā - 553, p. 52.
find references to Suppāraka. The Dhammapada Atthakathā tell us that the Suppāraka was at a distance of 120 Yojanas from Sāvatthī.

According to the Pāli tradition the Buddha never visited the Suppāraka. But the great poet Asvaghosa states that the Buddha after going to Suppāraka preached a setthi named Stavakarnī. Impressed by the Buddha he then built the highest Candanasāla Vihāra for the Buddha in Suppāraka.

According to Sāratthapakāsini, Atthakatha on Samyuttanikāya, the Buddha visited the Mankulakārāma Vihāra in the Sunāparānta Janapada and returned from there. While returning to Sāvatthī he crossed the Narmada river.

Sudama Misra gives an account of Suppāraka Janapada in the following lines, "The Janapada of Suppāraka occupied the area round about Sopara as the place still reminds us of the people through its name."
Konkan - as a part of Maharashtra:

While describing the boundaries of Konkan Alexander Cunningham says, "Its actual limits are not mentioned, but as it was bounded by Dravida on the south, by Dhanakataka on the east, by Maharashtra on the north and by sea on the west, it may be described as extending along the coast of Vengarla to Kundapur near Bednur and inland from the neighbourhood of Gulbarga to ancient fortress of Madgiri, which would give a circuit of about 800 miles. This was the ancient kingdom of Kadambas which for a time rivalled that of the Chalukyas of Maharashtra."  

The Chinese Traveller visited the country Konkan and saw there a temple with the image of Avalokitesvara. In another temple he saw a similar image about 70 feet high. There were 100 monasteries with 10,000 monks of either Hinayana or Mahayana school. There was also a temple with a sandal wood image of Bodhisattva Maitreya which is said to have been made by Srona Vimamsatikoti, of whom also there was a stupa.

Taranath, the famous historian of Buddhism in India has given an account of Konkan as follows, "Shri

57. Cunningham A. - Ancient Geography of India, p. 466.
58. Dutt N. - Buddhist Sects in India, p. 277.
Chandrakirti was born in Samanta in the south. He was ordained in the same place in the south and became a scholar of all the Pitakas. At last he went to the south again and in country called Konkana defeated many Tirthika rivals, converted most of the Brahmanas and householders into the followers of the Law and established many big centres for the Doctrines. 59

He further adds, "This Acharya Devasram (Devasarman or Devasarma) was born in Lanka - Sinhala. Once he went to Konkan in the south. In this region there was the famous Mahābimbha Chaitya which was unapproachable by the miraculous reflection of which could be seen in the sky. He lived in the country and preached the Guhya - Trantra-Yāna thoroughly to some of the disciples." 60

Ksemankarasimha (Sankar - Simha) had three sons. The eldest of them was called Vyāghraraṇa because he had eyes and strips like those of a tiger. He ruled Tala Konkan and built two thousand temples there. The second of them was called Buda (Budha) i.e. planet mercury. He ruled Uppara Konkana and Tulurati. He used regularly to worship five thousand monks. The youngest of them was


60. Ibid., p. 330.
Buddhasuca expelled from his own country, he eventually became the ruler of Dravati. He used always to entertain ten thousand Brahmanas and ten thousand Buddhist teachers."61

Alberuni in his account of India describes the countries he came across in south India. He has pointed out that, "Marching from Dhar southward you come to Bhumikara 20 farsakh, from Dharkand 20 farsakh, Namavar on the bank of Narmada (Nerbudda) 10 farsakh, Alispur 20 farsakh, Mandagir on the bank of the river Godavari 60 farsakh. Again marching from Dhar southward you come to the valley of Namiyya 7 farsakh, from Dhar Maharatta Desh 18 farsakh, the province of Kunkan and its capital Tānā on the sea-coast 25 farsakh."62

Vidarbhā:

In Maharashtra the Vidarbhas are enumerated in the list of Janapadas of India, belonging to the southern sector. Kundinapura again is described as the capital of the Janapada. Kundinapura may be identified with the

61. Ibid., p. 335.
city of Wardha. The Janapada occupied the region around modern Bodhana in Hyderabad, which seems to be a survival of Paudanya the capital of Asmaka Janapada. 63

D. C. Sircar has given the boundaries of ancient Vidarbha in the following words, "The country of Vidarbha lay on both sides of the river Varadhā (modern Wardha). Its ancient capital was at the city of Kundina, which has been identified with modern Kaudinyapura on the Wardha in the Chandur Taluque of the Amraoti district of Berar. Vidarbha therefore included at least the Amraoti Region in the west and the Bhandara area in the east. It appears to us that the Asmakas under reference are no other than the Vākātakas of Vatsagulma which is mentioned separately from Vidarbha in the Kamsutra (V-5, 33-34). The capital city of this branch of Vākātaka family has been identified with modern Basima in the Akola district about the southern fringe of Berar; but their dominions certainly included the Ajanta region in the Aurangabad district and probably also Nandikata identified with the Nander district." 64

63. Misra S. - Janapada States in Ancient India, p. 162.
The author further adds, "Vatsagulma, like those localities, appears to have been sometimes a separate state, some times a part of Asmaka, and some times a part of Vidarbha. It is well known that Mulaka or the land around Paithana in the Aurangabad district was a separate country but was often regarded as a part of Asmaka."  

We get reference to the Bhoja country in Pali literature. In the Samyutta-Nikāya we find a mention of a Risi named Rohitassa Bhojaputta. Also we see the story of sixteen Bhojaputas in Pali Jātaka. B.C.Law, therefore gives a clear opinion in this regards thus - "The Bhoja coincides with Berar or ancient Vidarbha and Chammaka four miled south of Ellichpur in Amraoti district was its capital." 

The concurring data provided by Huen-Tsang enables us to identify the ancient Kosala with the modern province of Berar or Gondavara. The position of the capital is more difficult to fix as Huen Tsang does not mention its name, but as it was 40 li or nearly 7 miles in circuit, it is probably represented by one of the larger

65. Ibid., p. 159
68. Law B.C. - Geography of Early Buddhism, p. 62.
cities of the present day. These are Chanda, Nagpur, Amraoti and Elichpur.

From the account which has been given by the Chinese Traveller, Mujumdar tries to fix Chanda as the capital of Kosala i.e. modern Berar or Vidarbha. He says, "Chanda is walled town, 6 miles in circuit, with a citadel. It is situated just below the junction of the Painganga and Wardha rivers. Nagpur is a large traggling town, about 7 miles in circuit, but as it is 85 miles to the north of Chanda, its distance from Rajamahaendir is about 70 miles in excess of the number stated by the Chinese Pilgrim. Amraoti is about the same distance from Rajamahaendir and Elichpur is 30 miles still further to the north. Chanda is therefore the only place of consequence that has a strong claim to be identified with capital of Kosala in the seventh century." 69

From the above references we can conclude that Vidarbha comprised the modern districts of Akola, Amraoti, Buldana, Yeotmal, Nagpur, Chanda, Bhandara and Wardha, all in present days in the State of Maharashtra and its ancient capital was Chanda.

Besides the above regions and countries we get the

69. Mujumdar S.N. - Cunningham's Ancient Geography of India, pp. 595, 596.
mention of Manadesa in ancient days, which is now a part of modern Maharashtra.

D.C. Sircar describes the ancient Manadesa in these words, "The country around the city of Manapura, founded by Manaka appears to have been known in the early medieval period as Manadesa, which included modern Velapur about 11 Kosa to the west of Pandharpur in the Sholapur District of the south Maratha country. In that case, the dominions of the Rashtrakutas of Manapur comprised the parts of Ratnagiri, Satara and Sholapur districts of Bombay".70 (now in Maharashtra).

Various ancient Janapadas also included in Maharashtra. Sudam Misra has pointed out some of these Janapadas. He says, "The Janapada of Sirala, probably occupied the region around Shirpur in the district of Dhubra, in Khandesh on the northern side of the river Tapti."71

He further adds, "The Janapada of Kolavana occupied the region round about the small town Kalavana on the Guna river, a tributary of Tapti in the modern part of the Nasik district. The town Kalavana situated in the mountainous forest area seems to be the survival of the name of the Janapada."72

70. Sircar D.C. - Studies in The Geography of Ancient and Medieval India, p. 159.
71. Misra Sudama - Janapada States in Ancient India, p. 83.
72. Ibid., p. 84.
Karle cave inscription mentions the province of Māmala or Māvala. It is represented by Māvala hilly portion of Poona and Satara districts. Māvala lay to the east of the most heavily populated section of Maharashtra, the Konkan coastal strip. 73

**Trade Centres:**

There were many trade centres, important cities and places in Maharashtra which were famous throughout India and abroad for the trade and rich culture. Some of them have preserved their high cultural heritage and provoke us to remember their past glory in modern times.

Paithan and Varanasi were the famous market places in ancient Desh. In the Konkan there were famous ports like Thane, Chola and Dabhola from where the business of export and import was arranged. Silk, cotton and other quality cloth was exported from sea-ports of Konkan. The Arabian horses and other goods were imported from foreign countries, was received in these sea-ports and was sent to different important places and capitals in the Desh. The communication between Konkan and Desh was possible through the Ghats. Thus the Konkan was connected with Desh through these sixty Ghats. Some of them are found in the modern times. 74

73. Burges and Bhagwanlal Indraji - Inscriptions from the cave-Temples of Western India (fn.), p. 36.
74. Panse M.G. - Yadavakalina Maharashtra (Marathi), pp. 1-2.
Aurangabad district was a centre of artistic and cultural activities from the second century B.C. to the tenth century A.D. as shown by numerous caves excavated and decorated at several places such as Pitalakhōrā, Ajanta and Ellora.  

Pitalakhōrā lay on the trade-route from Tagara (modern Tera in Osmanabad district) to Ujjeni in the north and Surparaka (Sopara) in the west. Ajanta, another important Buddhist site in this district, lay on the trade route from Ujjeni to Pratisthāna (Paithan).  

The author of the Periplus of the Aerythraean sea says, "In the Dakkhan two most notable trading places are Paithan, distance twenty days journey southward from Barugaza (Bhoroch) and of a distance of nearly ten days from that place, towards the east, there is another very great city Tagara. From these is brought down to Barugaza by Waggon roads and over extremely bad tracks, -from Paithana, abundance of Onyx stones, and from Tagara very much fine linen cloth, and muslins of all sorts, and mallow-coloured stuffs, and several other kinds of

75. Maharashtra State Gazetteers, Aurangabad district, p. 38.  
76. Ibid., p. 39.
merchandise which are taken thither from the coast districts.\textsuperscript{77}

Historically speaking another important place is Junnara. Karve and Jogalekar have pointed out that, "After crossing the range of Sahyadri through Nāneghat we get Junnara as the first trade city. The trade route, going from Kalyana and Sopārā, the ancient important seaports, was connected to the Desh, was going from Junnara. 130 caves belonging to Hinayana Buddhism have been found here which were excavated from the first and the second century B.C. to the first and the second century A.D. and some important inscriptions. In Nāneghat, 16 miles away from Junnara to the north-east, an inscription of Sātavāhana queen, Nāganikā, belonging to 220 B.C. has been found."\textsuperscript{78}

Subārā is mentioned by seven writers from Masudi to Abula Fida. Masudi says, "That subārā (Pali Supparaka) is neighbouring town of Kanbaya where Kanbayan sandals are made and lirriyya language is spoken."\textsuperscript{79}

\textsuperscript{77} Burges James - Report on the Antiquities in the Bidar and Aurangabad districts, p. 54.

\textsuperscript{78} Karve C.G. and Jogalekar S.A. - Maharashtra Pariṣchaṣya (Marathi), p. 451.

\textsuperscript{79} Nainar S.M.H. - Arab Geographers Knowledge of Southern India, p. 78.
Tānā is mentioned by four writers, Masudi, Idrisi, Dimsque and Abula Fida. Masudi says, that Tānā is a place on the coast of Larawi Sea.\(^{80}\)

Besides Paithan and Tagara as we have already seen above, there was Nasik, which is mentioned in an inscription in one of the caves at the place and at Beda. The district about the town was called Govardhana. Further south, there was the town of Kharhātaka, the modern Karad, which is mentioned in the inscription at Kuden. Kolhapur also must have been a flourishing town in those days, since a Buddhistic stupa containing the coins we have already noticed and other remains of antiquity have been found there. The old name of the place is unknown.\(^{81}\)

The city of Acalapura is mentioned in the Nagardhana plates of Swamirāja (A.D. 570) as well as in the Tiwar-khed plates of Nannarāja (6th century).\(^{82}\) It is a village identified with the modern Ellichpur in the Amraoti district.

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80. Ibid., p. 80.
82. Law B.C. - Geography of Early Buddhism, p. 57.
Bhogavardhana is mentioned in the three of the Sanchi stupa inscriptions and in one of the Bharhut inscriptions. It was the headquarters of a Visaya of the same name. It has been identified with Bhokardhana in Bhokardhana taluque in Aurangabad district.\(^{83}\)

The ancient town of Bhogavardhana stood on the ancient trade-route from Ujjayini to Pratisthāna. The route from Ujjayini, after crossing the Narmada and proceeding towards Burhanpur came to the ancient town of Ghatotkacha from where the caravans either went south to Pratisthāna or to west towards Nasik. Bhogavardhana lies half way between Ajanta and Aurangabad.\(^{84}\)

The town of Dahānuka-nagar is mentioned in one of the Nasik cave inscriptions. The place may be identified with Dahānu in Thana district.\(^{85}\)

Suvarnagiri is mentioned in the Minor Rock Edict I of Asoka. It was a viceregal seat of Asoka’s provincial government in the Deccan and here Kumara was posted as viceroy. H.C. Roychoudhari thinks that, "a clue to the

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83. Ibid., p. 57.
84. Deo S.B. and Gupte R.S. - Excavations at Bhokardan, p. 3.
85. Law B.C. - Geography of Early Buddhism, p. 57.
location of this city is probably given by the inscrip-
tions of the later Mauryas of Konkan and Khandesh, ap-
parently the descendants of the southern Vice-roy (Ip.
Ind. III 136). As these later Maurya inscriptions have
been found at Vāda in the north of the Thana district
and at Wāghali in Khandesh, it is not unlikely that
Suvarngiri was situated in the neighbourhood. Curiously
enough there is actually in Khandesh a place called
Songir."86

B.C. Law has given the information of another impor-
tant city named Isila. He pointed out that "Isila was
another seat of government in the Deccan ruled over by
Maharashtra. Isila is not yet identified but may have
been the ancient name of Siddhapura."87

Vatsagulma, like those localities appears to have
been sometimes a separate state, sometimes a part of
Assaka and sometimes a part of Vitarbha. Vatsagulma has
been identified with modern Washim in Akola district."88

Nandikata was another ancient city in Maharashtra.

86. Ibid., p. 66.
87. Ibid., p. 66.
88. Sircar D.C. - Studies in the Geography of Ancient
and Medieval India, p. 159.
It is mentioned in the Basim plates of Vâkâtaka, Vindhyâsakti II. It may be identified with Nanded, the chief town of a district of the same name in Nizam’s dominions (now in Marathwada region of Maharashtra State). "

Karhâtaka, Karhâtanagara or Karahâta is mentioned in the Bharhut inscriptions. It is a town identified according to E.I. (XXVI, p. 323) with modern Karad in Satara district. "

Another ancient important city was Nandivardhana. This may be identified with Nagardhana or Nandardhan near Ramtek in the Nagpur district (E.I. XXIV). "

Bhândaka is also an ancient place in Vidarbha. "The Nachne-Ki-Tarai stone inscription of Maharâja Prithivisena mentions that it is the ancient name of the modern Bhandaka, the chief towns of the Bhandak Paragana in the Chanda district."

We get another reference of the city by name Bhaddavati. This Bhaddavati or Bhaddavatikâ was a trade centre.

89. Law B.C. - Historical Geography of Ancient India, p. 177.
90. Ibid., p. 285.
91. Ibid., p. 289.
92. Ibid., p. 311.
This was near Kaushambi and was situated in the Chetiya country. Bhaddavatiya Seththi, the father of Sāmāvati was living in this city. Udayana the king of Kosambi married to Sāmāvati. There was a trade route going from Bhaddavati to Kosambi.\textsuperscript{93}

According to Dr. Bharatsinha Upadhyaya, "The ancient city named Bhaddavati can be identified with modern Bhandak in Chandrapur district of Maharashtra State."\textsuperscript{94}

Pauni is an old town situated on the right bank of the Wainganga river about 32 miles south of Bhandara, where the inscription of the Bhara king Bhāgadatta was discovered.\textsuperscript{95}

Excavations carried here in modern days, show that the place was very famous by its rich cultural heritage as the remains of Buddhist stupa are found near the city.

Nevāsā was an important historical place. Nevāsā is situated on the Pravara a major tributary of the Godavari. Sankalia and Deo have described the history of the town in the following words, "Nevāsā in truth

\textsuperscript{93} Ibid., p. 326.

\textsuperscript{94} Upadhyaya Bharatsinha - Buddhakalina Bharatiya Bhoogola, p. 431.

\textsuperscript{95} Law B.C. - Historical Geography of Ancient India, p. 326.
has been a Nivāsa" - habitation of man - right from Early Stone Age. With the progress of man it came to occupy such a strategic commercial position in the Gavarga valley that it might have become one of the inland markets during the Satavahana period, and constituted one of the 30 walled towns mentioned by Pliny though at present no traces of any fortification exist and it is doubtful if any wall was there originally."  

Kaundinyapura in Chandur taluque of Amraoti district is situated on the western bank of the Wardha river. Vidarbha from ancient times formed part of the Dakshinapatha."  

It is natural that the Bhojas should be remembered here in connection with the Bhojikas mentioned in the Asokan inscriptions. The Vidarbha country is therefore called Bhojakata, the country of Bhojas."  

N. Gupta while giving the cultural history of Vidarbha says, "It has been proved by research and Archaeological surveys in modern times, that Buddhism had spread  

96. Sankalia H.D. & Deo S.B. - From History to Pre-History of Nevasa, p. 10.  
97. Dixit M.G. - Excavation at Kaundinyapura, p. 1.  
98. Ibid., p. 4.
extensively throughout Viśarbha in ancient times. Kaundinyapura (Amraoti district), Junapāni (Nagpur district), Pawanara (Wardha district), Takalgāth, Khapa, Gangapur (Nagpur district), Pāuni (Bhandara district) etc. were the important Buddhist places." 99

Thus the well known cities in Maharashtra were Paithan, Ajanta, Pitalakhora, Nasik, Junnar, Tera, Nevasa, Kollapur, Karhātaka, Kaundinyapūr, Bhaddavati, Nandikata, Junnara, while the well known sea-ports were Kalyana, Thane and Sopara.

Mountains :

Saccabaddha - Saccabandha :

"A mountain between Sāvatthi and Sunāparanta. The Buddha stooped there on his way to see Punna in Sunāparanta, and preached to the hermit who lived on the mountain, and who also was called Saccabaddha. At the end of the sermon the hermit became an Arahanta. From Saccabaddha the Buddha went to Sunaparanta. On the way back to Sāvatthi he stopped at the river Nammā and from there he proceeded to Saccabaddha, where he left his footprints on the hard stone as clear as on kneaded clay. From Saccabaddha he returned to Jetavana." 100 Three important


ranges stretch eastwards from the Sahyadri. From south to north, they are the Mahadeo Range, the Balaghat Range and the Satmala-Ajanta Range. The Satpuras form a chain of mountains in the extreme north of Maharashtra. Vindhya Mountain is on the border of Madhya Desh and Dakhinapath. We have seen earlier that near the mouth of Kannapenna river there was Chandaka mountain. There is again one mountain named Mekala or Maikhali which connects the above two mountains. According to Bharatsinha Upadhyaya Mekala is modern Maikal mountain."101

Rivers in Ancient Maharashtra:

The main rivers which flow in Ancient Maharashtra and whose names are found in Pitaka and Atthakathā literature are Godavari and Kannavenna.

The Godavari:

The Godavari is the most important river of Maharashtra. Its source is in the Sahyadri. According to Pali sources the Godavari rises in the Brahmagiri mountain, 20 miles away from Nasik. The Sarabhanga Jataka shows this river near Kapitthavana. The kingdoms namely Mulaka and Assaka were on the north and south banks of Godavari.

The hermitage of Bavari, which was 5 yojanas wide, was situated on the bank of this river. The river Godavari was divided into two flows near Bavari's hermitage and formed a island which was 3 yojanas round. Dense forest was grown in this island. This was the Kapitthavana or Kavitthavana. 102

Kannavennā or Kannapennā:

The most important river in the eastern region of Maharashtra is the Vainganga. This river rises in the Sankhapala lake and flows in Mahinsaka kingdom. There is Chandak mountain near the source of this river. In the opinion of Dr. Jayswal, Kannapennā is modern Vain-gangā. Its chief tributories are the Kanhan, the Wardha and the Pengangā. The Kanhan meets the Vainganga at Bhandara. The Wardha has its source in the Belul district in Madhya Pradesh. It flows south and meets Vainganga at the borderline between Chandrapur and Gadchiroli. The Penganga rises in the Ajanta range and meets Wardha river near Ballarpur.

The Tapi-Purna:

The Tapi rises in the Satpura range in Madhya Pradesh and flows through the districts of Jalgaon and Dhule. The Purna is its main tributary.

The Bhima:

The Bhima rises near Bhimashankar in the Sahyadri. The Indrayani, the Mula, the Mutha, the Nira, the Ghod and the Sina are all tributaries of the Bhima.

The Krishna:

The Krishna rises near Mahabaleshwar. The Yerla, the Varana, the Koyana and the Panchganga are its tributaries.

The rivers of Konkan:

The main rivers in the area are the Vaitarna, the Ulhas, the Savitri, the Vasishthi and the Karli.

Thus the Janapadas or the regions named Assaka, Aparanta, Avanti - Dakhinapatha, Sunaparanta, Konkan, Maharattha, Vidarbha, Mānadesa, Sirāla, Kolavana, Māvala were famous and well known to the people of India in ancient times. Now these regions are included in modern Maharashtra as a cultural unit.