5. SOCIAL CHANGE

Routes from Karnataka and Andhra to the Gangetic valley passed through the western Deccan and once the ports of the west coast were opened to external maritime traffic in the Mauryan period, this strategic location could be profitably exploited to control commercial traffic (cf., l.9.9). An increase in the volume of trade provided immense opportunities for geographical expansion into fertile areas. This prosperity, however, had an enormous impact on social relations. The accumulation of wealth in the hands of specialised groups increased their vertical mobility and called for a realignment of hierarchy within the jātis. At the same time there was perhaps an influx of merchants or trading groups from the cities of the north as well as of foreigners loosely categorised under the title of yavanas. The situation was further complicated by the presence of strong influences of both Buddhism and Brahmanism. The former on account of its liberal attitude towards social mixing was better suited to traders who had to travel long distances and often accept hospitality from people of all categories. As such they could in no way maintain ritual purity or follow taboos on sharing of food. At the same time the varna structure of Brahmanism could not be ignored. This was perhaps more so for the ruling classes who had to enforce authority and could no longer rely on tribal alliances for doing so. Inscriptions in the western Deccan caves are significant barometers of this phase of transition and social change, but for a proper appraisal of the situation, we shall have to digress and to start with the Megalithic period. This when studied in corroboration with the earliest literary references to peninsular India would indicate the nature of correspondence between the two.

Archaeological data indicates a dying out of Chalcolithic
settlements in the western Deccan by about the middle of the first millennium B.C. and the region appears to be very sparsely populated till the rise of the Sātavāhanas.

Interestingly, the subsequent Megalithic habitation is centred not in the western Deccan, but in the Vidarbha region which had hitherto been an area of isolation. This shift to Vidarbha may be explained on account of the region's rich deposits of iron ore, an invaluable metal in the Megalithic period. Recent excavations in the Vidarbha region suggest that this area may provide clues to explain the rise of the Sātavāhanas. Both at Bhagi Mahari and at Khairwada in district Nagpur, there is a continuity of occupation from the Megalithic to the Sātavāhana period, with definite indications of an overlap between the two, suggesting possible links between Megalithic society and the Sātavāhanas.

5.1 References to the Daksināpatha in Literary Sources:
Peninsular India is first mentioned as daksināpatha in the Aitareya Brāhmaṇa (VII.18) dated to the pre-Buddhist period. The text describes the southern frontiers as the place where the fifty sons of Viśvāmitra migrated, they being the older ones among the hundred sons and it was from these that the dasyus, i.e. the Andhra, Pundra, Sabara, Pulinda and Mutiba tribes were descended. These names are repeated in the Sānkhyāyana Śrauta Sūtra (xv), the Mahābhārata (Āraṇyaka parva. 186.30) and the Rāmāyana (IV.40.13). This account has been regarded as an early example of priestly ingenuity in the invention of genealogies for non-Aryan peoples in order to assimilate them into the lower ranks of Brahmanical society (Sharma, 1980:72). Some of these tribes such as the Andhras, the Pulindas and the Pitinikas formed subject tribes at the time of Asoka (rock edict XIII). A similar expression -

I am grateful to Dr. S.B. Deo, Director, Deccan College for information on the latest finds from the district of Nagpur.
daksinapada - used in the Ṛgveda (X.618) refers to a place where the exiled went (Macdonell & Keith, 1912:337). Panini (Astādhyāyī, IV.2.98) mentions a daksinātya as a person from the south and Patanjali commenting on Panini's I.1.19 refers to daksināpatha as the region where the word sarasi is used to denote large lakes. The Vinaya Piṭaka (I:195-6; II:298) refers to the daksināpatha as a remote settlement in the upper reaches of the Godavari, while the Mahāvagga (V:12-3) and the Divyāvadāna (21-2) mention daksina janapada located to the south of the village Satakamika in the daksināpatha.

While Pliny (Natural History, VI.22) borrowing from Megasthenes refers to the 'Andarae as a still more powerful race which possessed numerous villages and thirty towns defended by walls and towers and which supplied an army of 100,000 infantry, 2,000 cavalry and 1,000 elephants', the Manusmṛti's tenth chapter ascribable to the late Gupta times theorises about the legitimisation of tribes and occupational groups in the varna structure (Sharma, 1980:333) and denigrates the Andhras to the position of outcastes dwelling near well known trees and burial grounds, on mountains and groves (X.36; 50). The Purāṇas include the names of the Sātavāhana kings in the genealogical lists and refer to them as Andhras, Andhrajātiyāh or Andhrabhṛtyāh (Pargiter, 1962a:38-9).

Apart from the established kingdoms of the south, Sangam literature recognises tribal chieftains who ruled independently in the less fertile pasture lands corresponding to a wide belt between the 14th and 17th degrees of latitude. In addition to their main pursuit of animal herding, a small amount of agriculture was practised by them in settled pockets of cleared land (Leshnik, 1974:19). Mention is also made of the Cola king Karikal who undertook to suppress the turbulent tribes who were ravaging his northern borders. These tribes included the Andars who are described as shepherds and skilled
horsemen. Aiyangar (1941:1,46) has identified the Andars with the Andhras.

5.2 Archaeological Evidence: Literary references dated to the second half of the first millennium B.C. thus describe the western Deccan as a region inhabited by tribes loosely organised into petty chiefdoms, but provide no precise details about their social organisation. Unfortunately archaeological data is equally skimpy. A majority of the Chalcolithic settlements had come to an end by about 1,000 B.C. as a result of a severe famine (Deo, 1982:5) and only a scatter of settlements continued thereafter, the epicentre in the subsequent Megalithic period having shifted further east to the Vidarbha region. In the western Deccan itself, Megalithic sites are few and include Ranjala in the west Tapti valley (IAR, 1960-61: 32) and Pimpalsuti near Inamgaon (Ansari & Dhavalikar, 1976-7: 84-8). At a few sites like Tekwada (IAR, 1956-57: 18) and Inamgaon, Megalithic Black-and-Red Ware has been found in the upper levels of the Chalcolithic period, viz. the late Jorwe culture.

An extraordinary feature of the western Deccan is the widespread occurrence of microliths. These have been found at several places in the Narmada and Tapti valleys and on cliffs along the rivers, the Godavari and the Pravara, from Nasik to Paithan. Around Pune, microliths occur on hill slopes, flat hill tops and the areas around Ellora, Ajanta, Pitalkhora and Karle caves. Natural caves located in the steep escarpments of basaltic hills overlooking the Konkan coast are known to have been occupied by microlith users (Sankalia, 1974: 247). Typologically these microliths have been derived from the blade and burin industries of the Upper Palaeolithic period, though it has not been possible to determine a time-bracket for them. It is quite likely that many of these sites continued well into the Chalcolithic and Early Historical periods. An
analysis of tool types shows that lunates and geometric microliths predominate at these sites. Their association with hunting is known and ethnographic parallels show that they were frequently hafted as points or barbs in arrow and harpoon heads (Allchin & Allchin, 1974:56).

In the other regions of the peninsula, notably the Vidarbha region, eastern Deccan and Karnataka, there is a spread of Megalithic settlements in the first millennium B.C. In Karnataka, Megalithic burials include several types such as dolmens at Motebennur, Hunur and Coorg (Sundara, 1975:167); pit-burials and circles in the Raichur doab; and passage chambers in north Karnataka. The Kolar district known for its gold deposits, is the richest in Megalithic monuments. Similarly, there is a big Megalithic settlement at Hire-Benkal near Hospet known for its rich iron ore reserves and at Maski, located in the band of Dharwar rocks with an auriferous quartz reef noted for its ancient gold-working pits. The Kappatgudda range, where there are a number of Megalithic sites is rich in gold as well as in iron and has many gold-working pits and sites strewn with iron slag (ibid.:156). Though no direct evidence concerning smelting activities has so far been found in Karnataka, circumstantial evidence cannot be ignored. Allchin has shown the great antiquity of the M aski goldfields and the large number of crushing and rubbing stones found there indicate that these mines were worked since the Neolithic period (1962:195-211).

The presence of an iron-smelting furnace in Vidarbha and a study of the artefacts suggests that local iron ores were used in the Megalithic period. An analysis of the iron objects shows that they contain a very high percentage of iron with little impurities of admixture. For instance some of the iron objects from Takalghat and Khapa showed 99.6% of iron, while an axe from Mahurjhari had an iron content of 99.1%, the carbon...
element contributing 0.9% with a small trace of chromium. The evidence from Naikund indicates that Megalithic smelters used about 10 to 12 kgs. of iron ore for a single smelting operation producing 3-4 kgs. of iron (Deo, 1982:29).

A similar correspondence can be seen in Andhra Pradesh where Megalithic communities show a preference for fertile tracts and river valleys and areas rich in gold or diamonds\(^1\). The lower Krishna valley appears to be more intensively settled than other parts of Andhra; there are fairly large clusters of megaliths in Anantapur and Cittoor districts in the vicinity of the gold-bearing Dharwar schists and at a now exhausted mine at Ramagiri in Dharmavaram taluka (Chatterjee, 1976:216). As in Karnataka, here also megalithic remains are varied and include stone-circles, menhirs, port-holed cists, dolmenoid cists and a ram shaped sarcophagus (Gururaja Rao, 1972:181-5).

To the north of the Andhra region, no megalithic remains have been found in Orissa; this would suggest that the inhabited corridor in the Megalithic period extended via Nalgonda and Medak districts of Andhra Pradesh to central India, past the sites of Pochampad and Peddabankur in the middle Godavari valley. Hundreds of megalithic stone-circles have been found in the Vidarbha region of Maharashtra, viz., the districts of Nagpur, Bhandara, Chandrapur, Wardha and Amaravati (ibid.:212-5) and in the Seoni, Raipur and Durg districts of Madhya Pradesh (ibid.:216). In Vidarbha, the predominant megalithic type is the stone-circle (Deo, 1970:59) and the sites are spread over an area measuring 150 kms. east-west and 50 kms. north-south (cf., l.9.7).

It is doubtful if much reliance can be placed on burial types

\(^1\)Diamond mining is a late phenomenon on the Indian scene, for there is no trace of the gem in Vedic literature, but its use becomes widespread from the period of Pali literature and the Arthaśāstra (Ladd, 1978:293).
for working out social and ethnic distinctions in society. The *Manimekhalai* of the early centuries A.D. lists several methods of disposing of the dead: cremation, exposure, burial in pits, entombment in subterranean vaults and interment in urns (VI.67-8) and makes no distinction between these modes. Ethnographic parallels also indicate the prevalence of more than one method of disposing of the dead in several societies. Similarly an unequal distribution of grave goods need not reflect the actual wealth of an individual as grave offerings are often subordinated to social and ritual sanctions (Ücko, 1969:266). The localisation of certain burial types in particular regions, as indicated above, would, however, suggest the existence of smaller units within the larger Megalithic culture.

Irrespective of the location, the discovery of iron swords, daggers, arrowheads, celts, bill-hooks, chisels, axes, spades, sickles and to a lesser extent horse-bits, trident spears and tripod ring-stands in the graves is a recurrent theme. These together with bronze bells, jingles, jewellery and pottery vessels define the characteristic assemblage (Lesnik, 1974:1). Thus the widespread influence of a single technological tradition is evident. The cemeteries further have in common a group of three pottery wares. The most distinctive is the Black-and-Red Ware and the plain red and plain black wares, both polished. In spite of the overriding general unity, local differences in form and type are sometimes observable (ibid.). The micaceous red ware is predominant in the Vidarbha megaliths, red ware in the passage chambers of Karnataka, all black and Black-and-Red Wares in the Hallur region, while in the Maski-Sanganakallu-Brahmagiri area, the Black-and-Red Ware and red ware occur more or less in equal proportions (Sundara, 1975:221-2). Apart from the localisation of burial types and ceramic wares certain regions show characteristic features as well, e.g. in the Vidarbha megaliths, the lower
extremities of the skeletons are missing; the horse is also buried in the graves; and cup marks are found on certain stone-circles.

Anthropological studies show that some form of distribution of services or goods exists between tribes and this process set in a non-economic matrix takes the form of gift and ceremonial exchange. Social position, religion and family organisation are all factors that give a firm texture to this complex of relationships (Herskovits, 1952:155). An example from the Nilgiri hills would help elucidate the nature of these complexities and we may postulate some interdependence between the Megalithic groups also.

The general opinion among scholars tends to describe the megalith builders as sedentary agriculturists on account of the presence of ploughshares among the grave goods and owing to the proximity of megaliths to tanks used for irrigation in peninsular India. Leshnik (1974:247) has challenged this view on the ground that in contrast to village cemeteries in the subcontinent today, megalithic burials are frequently beyond arable lands and that in many cases there are no

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The members of the Kota tribe were musicians and artists for the neighbouring folk of their area, the pastoral Toda, the jungle dwelling Kurumba and the agricultural Badaga. Each tribe had clearly defined and ritually regulated obligations and prerogatives with respect to all the others. The Toda provided the Kota with ghee for certain ceremonies and with buffaloes for sacrifices at their funerals. The Kota furnished the Toda with the pots and knives they needed in their everyday life and made music essential to Toda ceremonies. The Kota provided the Badaga with similar goods and services, receiving grain in return. They stood in the same exchange relationship with the forest Kurumba, but these latter, who could only provide meagre material compensation – honey, canes and occasionally fruit – were able to offer the Kota supernatural protection, since the Kurumba were dreaded sorcerers, so feared that every Kota family must have their own Kurumba protector against the magic which others of their tribe might work against them (Herskovits, 1952:157).
associated habitation remains either. He states that the average size of the cemeteries is small implying relatively small social groups more readily applicable to an itinerant society. The nature of grave goods also reflects a pastoral economy, the horse being more suitable for transport rather than as a draught animal for which role the buffalo is better adapted. Similarly iron implements found in the graves are more suited as instruments of aggression rather than defence; the so-called ploughshare being identified as a pick-axe (ibid.: 249). Besides a nomadic pastoralist society does not rule out an agricultural component within it. We support Leshnik's argument for the presence of pastoral nomadism in the Megalithic culture, but feel that agriculturists formed an equally important element, the two groups being tied together in a symbiotic relationship. There is a cluster of Megalithic settlements in the fertile lower Krishna valley where agriculture formed a significant component of the economy (Chatterjee, 1976:204). This seems to be the case in Vidarbha also where two habitation sites have been excavated - Naikund and Takalghat (Deo, 1982a:28). Due emphasis has also not been given to other occupational tribes such as itinerant blacksmiths, potters and the like. The general similarity of iron implements found at Megalithic sites suggests a single technological tradition which was perhaps carried on by itinerant tribes of blacksmiths. A similar case can be made out for tribes specialising in gold-working, bead-making and pottery-making. The last mentioned perhaps falls in a different category as a certain amount of pottery is likely to have been locally made.

Right through to recent times wandering occupational tribes in India have been a complement to settled agriculturists. This nomadism is unlike the nomadism of pastoral people in so far as the dependence is not so much on animals and their movements are guided by the needs of trade rather than by
The needs of food for the animals reared. The case of the Gariya Lohars is well known. In Birbhum district one comes across roving groups of brass workers and the Lambardi or Banjara tribe of north Gujarat and central India are a labouring tribe who settle in one place as long as work is available there (Bose, 1956:1-6). A similar position of interdependence may be postulated for the Megalithic period and this would help explain the concentration of sites in areas of varied mineral resources.

5.3 Early Historical Contacts: This balance seems to have been disturbed by penetration from the north which perhaps started in the pre-Mauryan period but was established during the reign of Asoka. An earlier tradition mentioned in the Rgveda (I.179.4) refers to the journey of Agastya southwards and his marriage to Lopamudra daughter of King Nimi of Vidarbha. On the testimony of the Tibetan historian Taranath political relations between Bindusara and the chiefdoms of the Tamil region have been postulated (Narayanan, 1975:246). A thirteenth century inscription refers to the conquest of Kuntala identified as the western Deccan by the Nandas (Ray, 1963:7-8) and tradition associates Candragupta Maurya with Jainism in Karnataka (ibid.).

On the basis of literary references to Andhapura on the river Telavaha in the Jātakas, some scholars have suggested a pre-Asokan penetration into peninsular India (Chakravarti, 1947: 15-25). This view seems to be supported by C14 dates from Dharanikota which provide a range from 475±100 B.C. to 205±100 B.C. for the NBPW spread at the site (Sarma, 1974:49-56). Similarly Gupta has also indicated that the punch-marked coins from Raichur, Karimnagar and Gulbarga districts are of pre-Mauryan origin (1960a:2), though this is disputed by Kosambi (1961a:92) and Mitchiner (1973:103) who state that a majority of silver coins found in peninsular India belong to
the Magadha-Mauryan series. Maloney (1968:227) has indicated that gold from the peninsula reached the west coast as early as the fourth century B.C. We are, however, on firmer grounds when dealing with Mauryan contacts (cf., 1.9.8).

Mauryan inscriptions and settlements show a close correspondence with Megalithic sites and this proximity itself would suggest some form of contact. Indeed at sites like Maski, Brahmagiri and Amaravati, Asokan inscriptions are found in the vicinity of Megalithic settlements. We know that Kautalya propagates the association for administrative purposes of people dwelling beyond the frontier: 'trappers, Sabaras, Pulindas, Candalas and forest dwellers should guard the intervening regions between them' (II.1.5), while the Jātakas mention foresters guiding caravans through wooded regions (Bk.XVI: no.513). Material evidence of this contact is hard to come by.

It is difficult at this stage to theorise about the similarities between the Vidarbha Megaliths on the one hand and north-western India or central Asia on the other to indicate a possible route along which the Megalithic communities may have spread. Radiocarbon dates from Vidarbha provide a time-bracket ranging from 690±80 B.C. to 262±80 B.C. for the Megalithic period; elsewhere in Andhra or Karnataka firm dates for Megalithic settlements are few. The state of our knowledge is rather nebulous, though it does seem likely that the opening up of the peninsula for commercial exploitation by the Mauryans led to the gradual transformation of the Megalithic settlements.

The change, however, was neither sudden nor uniform and several Megalithic sites are known to have continued till the early centuries of the Christian era. About 100 B.C. a rājan named Kuberaka appears to have ruled in the region around
Bhattiprolu not far from Amaravati. Kuberaka was the son of Sarira who appears to have had no royal title and the king's commercial connection is implied in the statement that he headed the gothi (committee) of nigamaputas (Lueders, 1912:1335). In Vidarba there is an overlap in the Megalithic and Satavahana levels indicating continuity of occupation. Insufficient data makes it difficult to delineate the trajectory of change and transformation which resulted in the formation of an institutionalised political authority vested in the king. It would seem likely though that the Mauryans opened up tremendous possibilities of commercial expansion in the peninsula. This development may have led to the accumulation of wealth or resources in the hands of a few who were now in a position to pay bands of loyal retainers to enforce their authority within the erstwhile segmentary tribal groups. Anthropological studies provide several examples of this process of change and it is possible to identify a similar situation in the western Deccan in the centuries prior to the Christian era.

A word of caution is necessary at this stage. We are aware that the available data is far too meagre to be of any use in plotting the individual stages in this process of transition nor are we trying to suggest that this change took place uniformly all over the western Deccan. As in the historical period, it is likely that in several pockets Mauryan impact was negligible or that certain areas took longer to react than others. It is equally difficult to hypothesise on the precise nature of exploitation of the mineral resources of the peninsula. Did the Mauryans import manpower in the peninsula for the working of the mines or did they use local labour? While Kautilya refers to all mines as state property, he also states that only a light mine should be worked by the state directly. 'A mine costly in its working should be leased out for a fixed share of the output or for a fixed rent'.
At the same time there is mention of forest tribes who are well organised and a great danger to the state (VIII.4.43). Hence even voluntary cooperation from the tribes may have been worthwhile as the cost of maintaining peace with the help of the state's armed might may have been enormous. This may have resulted in the accumulation of restricted resources in the hands of either middlemen or maybe certain occupational groups. Increase in trade and the commercial use of the ports of the west coast may have accelerated this process. Some of these groups may then have challenged tribal authority, aspired for higher jāti status or even emerged into a ruling elite. As we shall study subsequently, varṇa identities are rarely mentioned in western Deccan inscriptions and there appears to be a plurality of political nucleii as well. Our hypothesis is further supported by the status accorded to mixed varṇas in the Dharmasastras and the possible tribal origins of some of these (Kosambi, 1951-2; Jha, 1970).

5.4 Rise of the Sātavāhanas: Literary references as we have seen indicate the presence of several jātis in the western Deccan, one of which - the अंध्र jāti - rose to power in the first century B.C. The Purāṇas refer to the Sātavāhanas as अंध्रas, अंध्रabhrtyas and अंध्रajātiyāḥ, though the Sātavāhanas do not mention the Andhra connection in their inscriptions. It is likely that the rulers belonged to the अंध्र jāti, Sātavāhana being their clan name. According to Srinivas Ayyangar (1913: 281) Andhra was first a tribal name, then it became the name of a dynasty who ruled in the western Deccan; the Mayi Adavolu inscription of the fourth century A.D.

1Each person belongs to certain groups within his jāti. One such group is the family. Families related by patrilineal descent form a lineage, while a clan is a larger group and consists of those who trace their patrilineal descent from a remote usually legendary ancestor. The clan is an exogamous unit within an endogamous jāti (Mandelbaum, 1972:16).
first associates Andhrapatha with the lower Krishna valley (EI,VI:84), while in the eleventh century it denoted a language. Kosambi (1960:221) states that the name Sātavāhana is derived from Sanskrit Saptivāhana, sapti meaning horses, perhaps the totem of the clan. The horse may have reached the tribes in the Deccan by way of trade. The tribe or family group who first used horses would gain superiority in warfare (Kosambi, 1974:19). Hence on acquiring power, it is likely to adopt the horse as its clan symbol. It is then not merely coincident that the horse occurs in the Megalithic burials of Vidarbha. Kosambi (ibid.) further explains Sātakarni or Saptikarna 'horse ear' as a split totem which sometimes develops when a 'primitive exogamous clan splits into two or more units'.

Mahadevan (1982:313) also sees a reference to the clan symbol in the term sāta + vāhana, i.e. bearer of the ritual vessel sāta. Sāta first occurs in Vedic literature (Satapatha Brāhmana, XII.7.2) and has been explained by later commentators as a word of mleccha origin. It has been suggested that the Andhra chieftains who must have been bilingual assumed their Sanskritised titles on the basis of their traditional clan symbols, whose original significance had been lost much earlier (Mahadevan, 1979:267). The author of a fifth century A.D. commentary of the Sutta Nipāta equates the Andhras with the Andhakas, while the Vinaya texts locate a city called Setakannika often believed to be associated with Sātakarni in the Vindhyan region (Sircar, 1968:193-4).

The term Sātavāhana has been variously explained by other scholars as 'one who rode a yakṣa called Sata'; 'one by whom conveyances were given' (sātāni vāhanam); or as a Prakrit form of saptavāhana (Sun or Visnu, Gopalachari, 1957:299-300). Adiyarkkunallar, the commentator of the Tamil work Silappadikaram equates Sātavāhana with Sāttan (a village deity), while Przyluski (1933:88-91) derives it from the Mūnda words
śadāṃ (horse) and hāpan (son). Bakhle (1928:44) would link the Satavāhanas with the satiyaputas mentioned in the second rock edict of Asoka. Bhandarkar, on the other hand, compares satiyaputo (the Kalsi version) with Satpute, a name current among the present Marathas (1909:398). The recent discovery of a Brahmi inscription at Jambai in the district of South Arcot by the Tamil Nadu State Department of Archaeology associates the satiyaputo with the Adigaimans of Tagadur mentioned in the Sangam literature\(^1\). A story in the Kathāsārītāgāra refers to Salivāhana (the Prakrit form of Sātavāhana) as the son of a brahmāna girl living at Paithan and a Nāga father (Bhandarkar, 1975, reprint:47-8).

The Satavāhanas refer to themselves as khatiyadapānānamadana (one who crushed the pride and conceit of the ksatriyas) and ekabamhāna (unique brahmāna) while the queen uses the epithet rājarisivādhu for herself (Burgess, 1964, reprint:60-2). Some scholars have interpreted ekabamhāna as the sole protector of the brahmānas though this explanation has evoked little favourable response from others (Yazdani, 1960:81-2). It has been suggested that the Satavāhanas were a priestly clan who on acquiring political power claimed brahmāna ancestry (Jaiswal, 1979-80:29). The Nanaghat inscription of Nāyanikā refers to the performance of yajñas by the early kings in which large donations were given to the brahmānas (Burgess, 1964, reprint:60), though later on the Buddhists were the sole beneficiaries of royal munificence. These early attempts to woo the brahmānas may be attributed to the ruling family's need to legitimise their status and to buttress the authority of the state. Buddhism, as we shall discuss later, was better suited to maintain cohesion within new settlements, hence the patronage given to it by the later Sātavāhana rulers. Usavata, on the contrary, possibly had both objectives in

\(^1\)Information gratefully received from Dr R Champakalakshmi, Centre for Historical Studies, JNU.
mind as he was faced with the need to consolidate territories recently acquired by the Ksatrapas and had to legitimise his rule on account of his foreign origin.

This need to acquire legitimacy would become crucial in a situation where a society was making a transition from a tribal structure to a varna structure, e.g. under the Sātavāhanas in the western Deccan. The adherence to Brahmanical rituals has to be studied in another perspective also. The varna system signified the official ideology justifying the changing social stratification and it was within this system that social mobility was sought. Those who aspired to a higher status did so within the restrictions of the social order and did not seek to change or alter it. Because the stable order had to be maintained, those who did rise engaged in certain practices of what has been called 'symbolic justification' (Mandelbaum, 1972:455). Hence on aspiring for brahmāna status, it became concomitant on the Sātavāhanas to stress ritual purity and to avoid pollution (varnasahākara, Nasik inscription Senart, 1905-6:60f).

A similar transformation occurred in the tribal belt of Central India with the Rajputisation of the tribes. It appeared that the relative position of the various orders of the so-called Rajput families were determined mainly by two factors: the priority in their entrance to ksatriyahood and the size of the territories politically and economically controlled by them. In order to achieve these, brahmānas of the right kind were employed to make fictitious genealogies and these were buttressed by ritual display and at times by marriage alliances with an already recognised Rajput ksatriya family (Sinha, 1962:49).

Another characteristic feature of Sātavāhana inscriptions, followed by the Vakāṭakas and Kadambas was the use of metronymys.
These may have been significant to distinguish between the progeny of different wives and were used by both the royalty and by ordinary people. Examples may be quoted from other regions as well, such as their mention in the Mathura inscriptions. A Vāsithāputa gifted a bamboo lattice work and a cave facade at Ajanta (Burgess & Indraji, 1976, reprint: 67). Other examples include the royal physician Vāchīputa Vinhuda at Pitalkhora (Burgess, 1964: nos. 5, 6, 7); Kosikīputa Vinhuda at Bhaja (Burgess & Indraji, 1976, reprint: no. 2); Kocchīputa Mahābhoja Velīdata at Kuda (ibid.: no. 23); and Gotīputa Maharathī Agimitrānaka at Karle (ibid.: no. 2). At the same time, donors mention the names of their fathers also, e.g. as at Bedsa no. 3; Junnar nos. 26, 28; Kuda nos. 13, 16; Karle nos. 4, 6, 11 (ibid.; also Lueders, 1912: no. 1271).

There is a divergence of opinion on the reason for the use of metronymy. Trautmann (1972: 9) suggests that a reference to the mother's patrilineage is made in order to establish the superiority of the king's claim over that of his half-brothers, to make flattering references to a major source of the king's power and to emphasise the special purity or illustriousness of the king's descent. Sircar (1976: 130-5) has questioned these assumptions and argued convincingly that the use of metronymy is in conflict with the injunctions of the Dharmaśāstras which lay down that in the approved forms of marriage the bride acquires the gotra of her husband and loses that of her father. The persistent use of metronymy suggests the prevalence of those forms of marriage which do not involve gotrāntara, e.g. the non-approved forms such as Āsura, Gandharva, Rāksasa and Paisaca.

Apart from having to maintain a unified political fabric, the Satavāhanas would also have had to contend with the Mahābhhojas and the Maharathīs, with whom they had marriage alliances. These titles suggest chiefly origins and perhaps these
alliances were in keeping with the clan affiliations of the rulers. The noble status of the Maharathis can be judged from the fact that Maharath Trakayiro is given precedence over the kumaras in the Nanaghat label inscriptions and Queen Nayanika is described as the daughter of a Maharathi (Burgess, 1883:60-1,64). Maharathis are known to have made independent donations to the monasteries as well. At Karle a lion pillar was given by Gotiputa Maharathi Agimitranaka (Burgess & Indraji, 1976, reprint: no.2) and a cistern donated at Bhaja by Kosikiputa Maharathi Vinhuda (Burgess, 1964, reprint: no.7). The Maharathis appear to have followed the rule of hereditary succession and to have wielded considerable power as they are known to have granted a rent free village to the Valuraka Sangha, undoubtedly with the king's approval. The Karle inscription of the time of Vasisthputra Pulumavi records the donation of a village to the Sangha of Valuraka by Vasithiputa Maharathi Somadeva, son of Kosikiputa Maharathi Mitadeva of the Okhalakiyas (Burgess & Indraji, 1976, reprint: no.14).

The Maharathis had marital relations both with the Satavahanas and the Mahabhojas. At Bedsa, an epigraph records the gift of Sāmadinikā, the daughter of a Mahābhoja and herself a Maharathini, the wife of Āpadevanaka (ibid.: no.2). A second example comes from Kanheri, probably of the time of Hāritiputa Vinhukada Cuṭukulānanda Satakarni, where a cave was excavated by Nāgamulanikā, daughter of a mahārāja and of a Mahābhoji, herself the wife of a Maharathi and the sister of a Mahābhoja (Burgess, 1883: no.29). The predominance of inscriptions of the Maharathis in the vicinity of Karle indicates the localisation of their influence in that region. As contrasted to this, inscriptions of the Mahābhojas are concentrated along the west coast.

Gupta has shown that the Kura kings whose coins have been
found in the excavations at Brahmapuri in pre-Satavahana levels adopted the title of Mahārathī. He is of the opinion that the term Mahārathī was a title and by no means implied that all the kings who used it belonged to the same family. 'It seems that after the disintegration of the Mauryan empire, the local administrators became independent rulers in their own territories ... but retained the title of the post they were holding as administrators on behalf of the Mauryan emperor' (1960-61:44).

Inscription 17 at Kuda records the gift of a cave by Vijayanika daughter of Mahābhoja Śadakara Sūdamsana (Burgess, 1964, reprint: 87). A large number of other inscriptions at the same site mention donations made by the family or upajīvi (retainers) of the Mahābhoja Mandava Khandapālita, son of Mahābhoja Sadageri Vijayā. These include inscription nos.1,9,14,17 and 23 (Burgess & Indraji, 1976, reprint:4,9,13,14,17). It has been suggested that Mandava may correspond to Sanskrit Māndavya or Māndapa. In the first case the epithet would characterise Khandapālita as a member of a brahmanical gotra, in the second it might indicate that he was lord of a town called Mandapa, possibly the Mandagara of Ptolemy (ibid.:4). Whatever the interpretation, the influence of the Mahābhojas is likely to have been restricted to parts of south Konkan. One of the inscriptions at nearby Mhar refers to a donation by Kumāra Kānabhoa Vhenupālita (ibid.:2) perhaps another line of the royal family. Further north, an inscription at Kanheri mentions the donation of a cave and a cistern by Dāmilā, Bhojikī of Aparānta, an inhabitant of Kalyan (Burgess, 1883:84).

5.5 Politics: The state thus had to keep in check tensions which might have been created by a plurality of political control. In spite of the injunctions of Kautilya in favour of an elaborate bureaucracy (Bk.II), Satavahana polity as is evident from inscriptions appears to have been comparatively
simple. This seems to be in keeping with the *Milindapanha* which states: a king has a 100 or 200 ministers, yet of these only six are counted as ministers, that is to say the general, the family priest, the judge, the surveyor of the storehouses, the bearer of the (state) sunshade and the bearer of the sword.... These ministers are exempt from taxation (Horner tr., 1964:159, 205).

Satavahana kings were called *raja*, although Gotami Balaśrī claims that her son and grandson were *maharājās* (Senart,1905-6:60-2). The princes were referred to as *kumāras* (Burgess,1883:205). The major part of Satavahana polity perhaps comprised of *āmātyas* though in one instance there is a mention of the *samaṇa mahāmata* in the reign of Kanha (Senart,1905-6:93) reminiscent of the *mahāmatras* of Asokan inscriptions. Epigraph 16 at Kuda records the gift of a cave by Gautama, daughter of *rajamaca* Hāla (Burgess,1964, reprint:87). A royal minister perhaps also served as a treasury officer since an inscription at Nasik mentions the gift of a caitya by Bhaṭapālikā, daughter of the *rayamaca* Arahalaya and wife of the *rayamaca* Agiyataṇaka bhamdakārika (Senart,1905-6:no.19). The *āmātyas* also appear to have been responsible for maintaining land records and for writing the land charters. The Nasik inscription of Gautamiputra Satakarni commands the *amaca* Vinhupālita at Govardhana to grant the Ajakālakiya field to the Tekirasi ascetics and to grant it immunities. The deed verbally ordered by the king was written down by *amaca* Sivaguta (ibid.:no.4). A postscript to this inscription for a grant of 100 *nivartanas* of royal land is addressed to another *amaca* at Govardhana, Sāmaka (ibid.). The Karle inscription, probably also of Gautamiputra Satakarni is a command to the *amaca* Pariguta at Māmāda regarding the gift of the *gāma* of Karajaka and the deed was drawn up by Sivakhadaguta (Burgess,1964, reprint:no.20). The Kanheri inscription of the time of Vāsiśthiputra Satakarni mentions the gift of a water cistern by the *āmātya* Sateraka
A different amaca at Govardhana, one Sivakhadila is mentioned in the Nasik inscription of Vasisthiputra Pulumāvi (Senart, 1905-6:no.3). Vinhupala who proclaims the praise of the Lord Buddha at the end of this inscription may also have been a minister (ibid.). Bhandarkar has read the name of the amaca as Savakhadalana and that of the mahāsenāpati who engraved it as Aksatasattva (1933:242-3). This reading has been contested and Senart is of the view that a special category of officers was responsible for registering the withdrawal of former donations and it is they who are entrusted with the abrogation of the previous donation of Sudasana village.

The mention of four different ministers at Govardhana during the reigns of two kings may itself be taken to indicate the presence of several ministers in the administration; nor is there any evidence to suggest that the office may have been hereditary. The post continues under the later Sātavāhanas and the Kodavolu inscription speaks of the establishment of an earth dwelling of an amaca (Lueders, 1912:no.1341). The Dharanikota dharmacakra pillar inscription refers to the gift of an amaca perhaps named Virakhada, the reading being doubtful owing to the damaged state of the epigraph. It has been suggested on palaeographic grounds that the record belongs to the Sātavāhana period (Seshadri Sastrī, 1937-8:259).

Apart from the Nasik cave inscription of Vasisthiputra Pulumāvi, nowhere is the mahāsenāpati ascribed the menial task of drafting an inscription. During the reign of Śrī Yajña Sātakarni, the mahāsenāpetni Vāsu, wife of the mahāsenāpati Kosika Bhavagopa donated a cave to the Sangha (Senart, 1905-6:24). By the third century A.D. the mahāsenāpati appears to have acquired considerable power as the Myakadoni inscription refers to the mahāsenāpati in charge of a jenaṇapada, while under him the affairs of the gāma were conducted by the gāmika identified
by some with the *gaulmika* of later Pallava grants (Sukthankar, 1917-8:155). Another officer connected with the writing of land charters was the *patiharakhī* (Senart, 1905-6:73). The mention of several officials indicates that unlike the Gupta period, the drafting of royal records was not entrusted to any one official by the Satavahānas. In spite of this, an elaborate procedure was followed for the recording of royal land grants (cf., p.133). The Nasik inscriptions of Gautamiiputra Satakarni refer to Tapasa and Sujīvin as executors of land grants (*ibid.*, 72, 74). A similar function may have been performed by the *lekhaka* to the Mahābhoga Khandapālita (Burgess & Indraji, 1976, reprint:4).

Apart from these officers a few royal retainers are also mentioned such as the royal physician (Burgess, 1964, reprint: nos.5, 6, 7) and the foreman of the artisans of rājan Śrī Satakarni (Lueders, 1912: Sanchi no. 346).

Satavahana administration has been described as being coercive and its military character has been emphasised (Sharma, 1969: 108-21). The inclusion of *apāvesa* and *anomasa* among the immunities granted to lands donated to monasteries (Senart, 1905-6:71) have been taken to indicate that 'royal police, soldiers, retainers and officials freely operated in rural areas and formed an effective agency of exploitation'. This suggestion is said to be further strengthened by place names ending in *kataka* signifying that they were military camps, e.g. Benakataka. A third point cited in favour of the argument is the rise in status of the *senāpati* from being a minor official to one holding complete charge of a *janapada*, with a *gaulmika* subordinate to him. A *gulma* has been described as an army unit on the authority of Manu (VIII.114) who states that it should be stationed in the midst of two, three, five or hundred villages (Sharma, 1969:108-21).
5.6 Role of Religion: We feel that the military aspect of the administration has been overstressed. Given the conditions in which a heterogenous population had to be controlled by a monarchy which had little legitimacy to fall back on owing to its tribal background and which had to combat the threat of equally powerful feudatories, a certain show of force was inevitable. Much more important, however, was the peaceful consolidation of newly settled lands by the state with the cooperation of monastic establishments. This aspect can be clearly identified in the Nasik inscription of Gautamiputra Satakarni issued from the victory camp of the king in which he declares that the Ajakalakiya field in the village of western Kakkhadi previously owned by Usavadāta should be granted to the Tekirasi monks (Senart, 1905-6:no.4). What better way to diffuse a potential threat than to establish a 'religious zone' which has to be respected by opponents also. Besides the monks with their emphasis on the preaching of dharma were better suited to establish channels of communication with the villagers and hence to act as 'religious agents' providing authority to the king's commands. If perchance they did not succeed, the king reserved the power to revoke his orders. A subsequent inscription of Gautamiputra Satakarni at Nasik declares: 'We have here on mount Tiranhu formerly given to the pavajita bhikkhus dwelling in the cave which is a pious gift of ours in the village of Kakkhadi; but this field is not tilled nor is the village inhabited. Matters being so, that royal village of ours, which is now here on the limit of the town, from that field we give to the monks of Tiranhu one hundred nivatanas of land, and to that field we grant immunity' (ibid.:73). Similarly, Vāsiśṭhiputra Śrī Pulumāvi granted the village of Sudisana in place of Samalipada, to the bhikkhus, the reason for the change not being clear from the inscription (ibid.:65).

Besides being pace-makers of royal authority and agents of its
legitimation, religious establishments posed little threat of armed rebellion to the king. On the contrary, the sanctity of these religious centres had to be respected by the king's opponents and this may have helped in the creation of buffer zones in areas of strategic importance. There has been some debate on the question of the loss of revenue to the king. An important consideration is whether the royal donor could himself have exercised all those powers which he transferred to the monks. An analytical study of royal inscriptions granting land shows that they are concentrated at Nasik and Karle. The importance of both these centres in controlling trade routes from the interior to the coast need not be dealt with here as it has been discussed in some detail at several places in this study. What should be pointed out is that Nasik may have formed a part of the disputed territory between the Ksatrapas and the Śatavāhanas and Karle lay in a region controlled by the Maharathīs. Hence their strategic value to the Śatavāhanas.

Kosambi was possibly the first scholar to recognise that the influence of monasteries extended far beyond religious matters. Monasteries were important purchasers of cloth and other commodities for the monks and retainers and of costly material for ritual and ceremony. They possibly also supplied (for profit) essential provisions and loaned (at interest) much needed capital to trade caravans. Besides 'the monasteries were untaxed and their possessions not in danger of arbitrary confiscation by kings or officials as might be the lay merchant's hoard. A secondary economic function, the charitable use of monastic grain for the relief of famine, scarcity or individual distress among laymen gained them special reverence from the savage tribes and the earliest villagers. The sanctuary that would be given even to robbers who wished to renounce their evil ways rendered these foundations the more immune to attack by brigands' (Kosambi, 1956: 60-1).
As donations of land and money to Buddhist monasteries are
dated from the first century A.D. onwards, we feel that any
direct participation of monks in trade in the western Deccan
may have been a later development. In the initial stages
monasteries may have functioned more in the nature of pioneers
in undeveloped areas. Great authenticity for the story in
the Sutta Nipata (1011-13) of Bāvari who left Sravasti to
settle in the daksināpatha with his disciples. Initially they
subsisted by food-gathering but gradually took to agriculture
and a grāma developed in their neighbourhood. Other literary
references to the spread of Buddhism in the western Deccan
come from the Vinaya Pitaka which refers to a small community
of monks in Avantidakkhināpatha (Mahāvagga, V.13.2). The
Theragatha has verses attributed to Punna, Isidimma and
Vaddha natives of Sopara, Sunaparaṇa and Bharuch respectively
(73, 190-1, 338-42).

5.7 Cutting of Caves: At this stage we should perhaps examine
the nature of the authority who executed the actual cutting of
the caves. Each site in the western Deccan consists of one
or more caityas and several vihāras which were residential halls
for the monks. The typical early caitya was apsidal in plan
with a rock cut stupa at the far end and a row of pillars
dividing the interior into a central nave and narrow side
aisles for circumambulation. The earliest vihāra had the
standard quadrangular form and the general trend was for these
to become larger and at some sites, double-storeyed, indicating
perhaps an increase in the number of resident monks at the
site. The cells were provided with wooden doors not so much
for privacy, but for the protection of valuables, e.g. at
Ganesa Lena, Junnar (Kosambi, 1955:52). Occasionally a large
hole cut through the partition into an adjoining cell shows
that one of the pair was used as a treasury (ibid.).

It may be presumed that at any cave site one or more of the
viharas was excavated before the caitya. At Junnar work on the caityas at Amba, Bhima Shankar and Budh Lena was abandoned, while the viharas appear complete. Later additions to viharas seem to have been made at several sites, e.g. at Karle, where a double-storeyed vihara is a later addition (Dehejia, 1972:137). The cutting seems, in general, to have started from the ceiling moving downwards and there are indications that after a preliminary rough cutting, sculpting and polishing were undertaken simultaneously (Trabold, 1970:85). The unfinished carving of Manmodi 39 shows that in this small excavation several different kinds of relief carving were in progress at once, with a minimum of three sculptors working on the facade while yet more carved the interior (Williams, 1970:189). In the absence of definite evidence one can only estimate the time taken for the cutting of a cave from allied data. The period suggested for the completion of a caitya ranges from sixty years (Khandalavala, 1956-57:11-26) to 'just a few years' (Spink, 1958:99). As worked out by Dehejia (1972:138) and Barrett (1959:77), on the other hand, a period of ten to fifteen years would seem acceptable. On this basis, the excavation of a vihara would have taken less time.

Sculptural decoration in the western Deccan caves is rather limited and comprises mainly guardian figures, donor couples, capitals with animals, at times with riders and in several places the gaja-lakshmi motif. The large narrative bas reliefs at Bhaja appear more to be an exception rather than the rule. Many of the caves may have been painted though traces are now to be found only at Tulja Lena (Junnar) and Ajanta (Dehejia, 1972:124-7).

The actual process of rock-cutting may have involved the active participation of perhaps the state which accorded legal sanction, the monks who may have supervised the work and
specified the religious requirements and the artisans, some of whom may have been lay followers. An inscription at Sanchi refers to the foreman of artisans (avesanin) of Śrī Sātakarnī (Lueders, 1912: no. 346). A later inscription of the time of Haritīputa Vinhūkada Cuṭukulaṇānanda Sātakarnī at Banavasi mentions the gift of a nāga, a tank and a vihāra by the daughter of a mahārāja. In this case the amaca Khadasati was the superintendent of the work (kamamtika, ibid.: no. 1186).

An inscription at Kanheri refers to the building of a caitya supervised and executed by monks (pavajita) who are mentioned as navakamika1 and uparakhita (overseers). The artisans responsible for the work included stone masons (sela vadhakim), polishers (mithika) and some who have not been identified - nayakamisa, kadhichaka, mahakataka (ibid.: no. 987). The monks referred to in this inscription may have been professional architects before joining the Sangha.

In several places, we have discussed inscriptions engraved in the western Deccan caves recording donations made by devotees. Indeed at Karle each pillar is said to be the gift of a separate person. It is intriguing to speculate how it could have been possible for different people to donate different portions of a cave when the cave itself provides evidence of an unified plan. It is likely that as with present-day āsramas, donations in money were elicited either before or during construction and these gifts were appropriately recorded in inscriptions. A similar method may have been followed for the earliest caves as well, though at Bhaja, there is no mention of such donations. Perhaps these records may have been painted and have now been obliterated (Dehejia, 1972: 139). At the same time, it is possible that the monks would have lived for some time in the area in wooden and brick monasteries

1The Manikiala inscription of the Kuśānas also refers to a navakarmiga or superintendent of buildings (Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society, 1909: 645).
before embarking on the excavation of rock-cut caves. There certainly is evidence of pre-Satavahana brick stūpas at Maheshwar and Kasrawad.

Indications of royal patronage are perhaps recorded in the Mahāvamsa tradition which states that the Aparānta was converted by Dhammarkhita, a yavaṇa sent after the Third Council said to have been convened by Aśoka. Porphyrios (A.D. 233-305/6) writing on the samanas states: 'Their houses and temples are founded by the king, and in them are stewards who receive a fixed allowance from the king for the support of the inmates of the convents, this consisting of rice, bread, fruits and pot herbs' (McCrindle, 1971: 170).

5.8 Social Structure: The interdependence between the state and religion was evident. An equally important relationship existed between institutionalised religion and laity. The tribal nature of society in the Deccan was changed by a series of contacts as we have tried to show. As a result, accumulation of wealth in the hands of the chiefs or middle-men altered the tribal modes of redistribution, thereby placing tremendous strain on kinship ties. This led to the emergence of new loci of authority free of existing traditional controls and necessitating a restructuring of social ties. Within this fluid situation monastic establishments provided anchorage and a base for the development of fresh social networks. Before we study the western Deccan inscriptions which show an adherence to occupation groupings rather than a division based on the varṇa system, we would like to examine literary references to the nature of society at this time.

The varṇa structure has been referred to in several texts compiled during the centuries around the Christian era. Kautalya in his Arthasāstra maintains a four-fold division
of caste and ascribes agriculture, cattle-rearing and trade to the vaisya together with injunctions to bestow gifts, offer sacrifices and to study - duties which are common to the dvijas (I.3.7). The sudra, on the other hand, should engage himself in economic activities and in the professions of the artisan and the actor apart from the prescribed task of dvijati susrusa or the service of the twice-born castes (I.3.8).

A little later in the same section, Kautalya praises the beneficial qualities of agriculture, cattle-rearing and trade and stipulates that the king should encourage these (I.4.1-2). The Manusmrti (I.88-91) follows the Arthasastra in this division, the only difference is that it allows the vaisya to lend money, but prescribes only one occupation to the sudra: to serve meekly. The activities of artisans are listed by Manu among the occupations of mixed varnas. In spite of the injunctions to the brahmanas and ksatriyas warning them against the practice of agriculture, it states that learning mechanical arts, work for wages, service, rearing cattle, agriculture, receiving interest on money and alms are the modes of subsistence permitted to all men in times of distress (X.116)

Kosambi has suggested that sons by wives of different varnas would have to work for a living as servants or by some craft since they had neither gotra privileges nor the right of inheritance. This explains the curious presentation in the Smrtis of professional guilds as mixed varnas (1960:217). The non-Sanskritic names of many of these mixed varnas mentioned by Manu (chap.X) indicates that they were older tribes and occupational groups (Sharma,1980:336) who were now assimilated into the varna structure. The Vasistha Dharma Sutra (XVIII.7) shows an awareness of this complicated task when it asserts that men's sub-castes are to be known by their actions and occupations as it is difficult to assign particular derivations to groups of people. That this process of assimilation was continuous is sufficiently proved by the
variation in the number of mixed varnas mentioned in the 
Dharma Sūtras. According to Gautama their number was eleven, 
while according to Baudhāyana it was fourteen. Vasistha 
mentions six mixed castes and Āpastamba only three (Jha, 
1970:277). By the time of the Manusmṛti, chapter X being 
ascriptible to the late Gupta period, the number had risen to sixty-one (ibid.:287).

Rigid varna conditions are nowhere reflected in the Jātakas 
which indicate a flexible varna structure. Brāhmaṇas and 
princes are known to carry on trade to make money (Bk.XXI: 
nos.537,539). A brāhmaṇa dwelling near the gates of Varanasi 
earns a living by killing wild animals (Bk.XXII:no.543) and 
the Bodhisattva being born as the son of an outcaste woman 
becomes a king by his wise discourses (Bk.IV:no.349). There 
is a mention of brāhmaṇas working as field labourers (Bk.V: 
no.354); brāhmaṇa farmers (Bk.VI:no.389); a brāhmaṇa 
carpenter (Bk.XIII:no.475); and the daughter of the garland 
makers becoming the chief queen of the King of Kosala (Bk. 
VII:no.415).

There is a dichotomy of views on the subject and one group 
of scholars regards the varna structure as the official 
ideology which explained the superiority of higher groups in 
terms of a moral evaluation. The varna divisions were never 
the functioning groups of the social order, the principal 
groups of social interaction being families, lineages, clans 
and jatis. Thus within the varna structure, social mobility - 
both upwards and downwards - of jatis and jāti groups was an 
accepted fact (Mandelbaum,1972:23). The opposing view 
regards varna as being based on class divisions. 'It is 
likely that the whole thing as it was embodied in the 
Brahmanical law books may not have been applied literally, but 
unless evidence to the contrary is forthcoming it is difficult 
to believe that it was not observed in essence' (Sharma,1953: 
321).
The Nasik inscription of Balaśrī refers to Gautamiputra Satakarni as dījāvarakutubavivadhana (one who made the families of the twice-born and the low caste people prosper), vinivatitacātuvanasāṅkara (one who prevented the mixing of the four varnas) and satavāhanakulayasapatithāpanakara (one who restored the fame of the Satavāhana family, Senart, 1905-6: 60-2). This adherence to the varna structure is in conformity with the need to ensure ritual purity. In private inscriptions varna identities appear to be tenuous and a majority of donors mention only their occupations and professions together with their places of residence. The few exceptions include an inscription at Kuda recording the gift of a caitya by Bhayila, wife of a brahma upāsaka (Burgess & Indraji, 1976, reprint: no.15). A hexagonal pillar inscription of the first century B.C. at Vadgaon-Madhavpur speaks of the performance of the Vajapeya sacrifice by a brahma of the Kaśyapa gotra (Sundara, 1981:88), while inscription 25 at Junnar records the gift of a mandapa and a cistern by Ayama of the Vacha gotra, an āmatya of the Mahāksatrapa Nahapāna (Burgess & Indraji, 1976, reprint: 51-2). The Kondivate caitya inscription records the gift of a railing by a brahma of the Gautama gotra (Jadhav, 1981:108).

Nor does varna seem to play a significant role in the choice of a profession. An epigraph at Amaravati mentions the gift of a slab by the leather worker (cammakara) Vidhika, son of the teacher (upajhaya) Naga (Lueders, 1912:no.1273). An inscription at Kanheri records the construction of a caitya by the merchants (vānijaka) born of .... khatiya brothers Gajasena and Gajamita (ibid.:no.987). However, too much emphasis should not be placed on this inscription because the middle portion is damaged and it is difficult to accept the continuity of the two halves.

A majority of the donors stress only their occupations and represent a large cross-section of the society. These include:
seni (guild, Burgess & Indraji, 1976, reprint: Junnar no. 31); the rājaveja (the royal physician, ibid.: Pitalkhora no. 4); the setthi (ibid.: Karle no. 1, Kuda nos. 21, 28, 29); the negama (Burgess, 1883: Kanheri nos. 16, 18); artisans like the manikara (ibid.: Kanheri no. 20); the suvanakokāra (ibid.: Kanheri no. 3); the kamara (blacksmith, ibid.: Kanheri no. 30); the lohavani (ironmonger, Burgess & Indraji, 1976, reprint: Kuda no. 20); the carpenter (ibid.: Karle no. 6); the gadhika (perfumer, ibid.: Karle no. 4, Pitalkhora no. 1); the fisherman (Senart, 1905-6: Našik no. 8); the mālakāra (gardener, Burgess & Indraji, 1976, reprint: Kuda nos. 16, 26); and the writer (ibid.: Kuda nos. 1 and 9). Of these, the physician and the gardener followed their hereditary professions. The prosperity of the donors can be judged from the gifts which included caves (ibid.: Kuda nos. 1, 8, 9, 16, 20; Burgess, 1883: Kanheri nos. 14, 16, 18, 19, 20), paths (Burgess, 1883: Kanheri no. 30), cisterns (Burgess & Indraji, 1976, reprint: Junnar no. 28, Kanheri nos. 3, 10) and a caitya (ibid.: Junnar no. 4).

The Paraskara Grhya Sūtra states that śarman is a proper term in a brāhma name, varman in that of a ksatriya and datta in that of a vaisya (I, 17). A study of the western Deccan inscriptions shows little correspondence with this rule. Bodhisamā (Bodhisarma) is the mother of a merchant (Lueders, 1912: 1001); the occupations of Sivasama (ibid.: 1173) and Asasama of Bharukaccha (ibid.: 1169) are not mentioned and Bhadasama is a bhiksu (Burgess & Indraji, 1976, reprint: nos. 15, 16). An Amaravati inscription mentions a Bodhisarman as the father of vāniya Mulasirī (Lueders, 1912: 1213). Agnivarman is a Śaka and Viśvavarman is mentioned as a ganapaka (ibid.: 1137). Datta appears to be a popular suffix. Sulasadata and Sivadata are mentioned as sons of the brother of a writer of Mahābhoja (Burgess & Indraji, 1976, reprint: no. 9); Sivadata is related to a sārthavāha (ibid.: no. 30); Purisadatta is the daughter of a gehepati negama (Senart, 1905-6: no. 6); Sihadata is a perfumer.
of Dhenukākata (Burgess & Indraji, 1976, reprint: no. 4); Indragnidatta is the name of a yavana (Senart, 1905-6: no. 18) and Sulasadata and Samidata are heranikas of Kalyan (Burgess & Indraji, 1976, reprint: no. 30; Burgess, 1883: no. 3). The occupation of Ramadata is not mentioned (Burgess & Indraji, 1976, reprint: no. 23).

As expected, a majority of the names suggest Buddhist affiliations followed by Sivaite and Visnuite, though very few of the traditional names of the latter two occur (Sankalia, 1942: 349-91). An aspect largely neglected and overlooked is the influence of southern languages in the derivation of these names. The name Đamila occurs in three instances in the inscriptions at Kanheri (Burgess, 1883: nos. 24, 25, 27) denoting three different people - the Bhojikī of Aparanta, a bhikkhunī of Kalyan and the third referred to only as a wife. Đamila is used in the Mahāvamsa and the Jātakas for the Tamils (Malalasekara, 1937: 1061). A detailed discussion on this topic would entail a study of linguistics and is beyond the scope of this work.

An analysis of the list of donors can give an idea of their financial status. Thus it is not surprising to find that a majority of the caves are donations by sethis, gahapatis or negamas. An increase in opportunities led to the prosperity of several occupational groups as is evident from the gift of a cave each by a malakāra at Kuda (Burgess & Indraji, 1976, reprint: no. 16), a lohevarij also at the same site (ibid.: no. 20), a fisherman at Nasik (Senart, 1905-6: no. 8) and a manikara at Kanheri (Burgess, 1883: no. 20). Donations by monks and nuns and the sources of their wealth (cf., p. 134) have already been discussed.

Women, both as nuns and as lay worshippers frequently occur in the inscriptions as donors and make gifts either on their
own (Burgess & Indraji, 1976, reprint: Kuda nos. 18, 19; Karle no. 5; Kanheri no. 10; Senart, 1905-6: Nasik no. 19) or together with their husbands or sons (Burgess & Indraji, 1976, reprint: Kuda no. 30; Shedarwadi no. 1; Senart, 1905-6: Nasik no. 6). The Nanaghat inscription of Nayanika describes the Vedic sacrifices performed by her and the large donations bestowed as daksina (Burgess, 1883: 60). The donation of Queen Balaśrī consisted of a cave on Mount Tirānāhu to the community of monks. For the embellishment of the cave, the Queen's grandson granted a village (Senart, 1905-6: 60).

5.9 Yavanas: A category of donors which calls for an explanation is that of Sakas and yavanas. Nasik nos. 26 and 27 record the gift of a cave and two cisterns by the Saka Damachika Vudhika, a lekhaka (ibid.: 94-5). A majority of the donations by yavanas occur at Karle and have been made by the inhabitants of Dhenukākaṭa (Vats, 1925-6: nos. 4, 6, 10; Burgess & Indraji, 1976, reprint: nos. 7, 10) and one by a yavana from Umehanakata which remains unidentified so far (Vats, 1925-6: no. 1). At Nasik, Indragnidatta, son of Dhammadeva, the yavana, a northerner (otarāhasa) from Dattamitri donated a cave, a caitya and cisterns (Senart, 1905-6: no. 18). The inscriptions at Junnar record gifts by yavana donors of the Gata country, corresponding to Sanskrit Garta, i.e. part of Trigarta or Kangra (Burgess & Indraji, 1976, reprint: nos. 5, 7, 33). Unlike other donors of the western Deccan, the yavanas do not mention their occupations. It has been suggested that a reference to their occupation may have been considered unnecessary as they were probably exclusively traders (Dehejia, 1972: 143).

Stein argues that from a social point of view 'yavanas whoever they might have been' were absorbed by Indian society and it is unlikely that Greek colonies existed around the beginning of the Christian era (1934-5: 356). Kosambi has, however,
opposed this view and suggested that Deogadh on the opposite
curve of hills from Karle be identified as Dhenukākāṭa and
that a Greek settlement may have been situated at the site
(1955:59). He has also read one of the donor's name as
Milinda the physician instead of Mitidasa and has suggested
that he may also have been a yavana (ibid.). Sircar (1976:
132) has pointed out that Dhenukākāṭa should not be confused
with Dhānyakāṭaka the ancient name of Amaravati.

It may be relevant here to point out certain motifs which
appear in the early sculptural art of our period. Fleur de
lis armlets may be seen at Bhaja vihara XIX, Pitalkhora
(the sculpture is now in the Prince of Wales Museum, Bombay),
paintings in caitya X at Ajanta and at Sanchi and Bharhut
(Dehejia, 1972:134). It has also been noticed at Begram on
a ceramic vase shaped in the form of a sphinx (ibid). The
centaur motif occurs at Bhaja, Sanchi and Bodh Gaya (ibid.),
while the sphinx is to be seen at Pitalkhora, Karle, Junnar
and Nasik (ibid.). Kosambi (1955:57) considers these motifs
to be of foreign derivation, though this view is questioned
by Dehejia (1972:221, fn 31).

On the evidence of Ptolemy who mentions sixteen emporia
situated along the western and eastern coasts of India, Wheeler
(1955:151-2) suggests that these may have been commercial
ports with certain rights and privileges. The Periplus
mentions Leuke Kome, an emporium on the eastern side of the
Red Sea where a military post under a centurion was stationed
to ensure that the Arabs respected Roman trading rights and
to collect a duty of 25% on imports (sec.19). It is evident
that the privileges of western traders were differently safe-
guarded in the various foreign ports. It is likely enough
that in the emporia were normally posted permanent agencies
of the Graeco-Roman traders organised on lines not unlike
those of the Portuguese, Dutch, Danish, French or British
'factories' in the India trade of a much later date (Wheeler, 1955:152).

Strabo in his Geography states that commercial traffic to India considerably increased after the Roman invasion of Arabia Felix and that the merchants of Alexandria sailed with their fleets by way of the Nile and the Red Sea to India. He goes on to add that 'as many as one hundred and twenty vessels were sailing from Myos Hormos to India, whereas formerly, under the Ptolemies only very few ventured to undertake the voyage and to carry on traffic in Indian merchandise (2.5.12).

It is necessary to quote Kauṭalya with regard to the policy of the state vis-à-vis the foreign merchant. The word 'foreign' is to be treated with caution and not to be interpreted in its present day nationalistic meaning, but more in the sense of one who does not belong to one's own state. The nāyadhyakṣa should encourage the import of goods produced in foreign lands (parabhūmijn panyam) and to those who bring these goods in ships or caravans (nāvika-sārthavāhebhyaśca) he should grant exemptions. No law suit in money matters should be allowed against foreign traders (āgantūnām), except such as are members of native concerns and their associates (Arthasastra,II.16.11-3).

Throughout the ancient world from China, India, Arabia and Mesopotamia to Greece and Rome, the movement of foreign merchants or travellers was considered a legitimate area for governmental, municipal or imperial interference. Regulations and customs duties and various tolls were levied at each major town (Raschke,1978:642). Alexandria was reputed to be the major market and distribution centre for the Roman trade with the east. The reputation of Alexandria is justified but should not detract from the importance of Coptos. Available
evidence indicates that most of the commerce was in the hands of Roman subjects. The merchants of Egypt and Palmyra sailed directly to East Africa, Southern Arabia and India. There were Arab ships engaged in the coastal trade, as well as Indian vessels, but the Romans appear to have possessed the largest and most sea-worthy ships. Enclaves of western merchants grew up on the littoral of the Indian Ocean: on Socotra, where Greek merchants had lived with Arabs and Indians since Ptolemaic times; at Charax Spasinou and finally in the ports of south India where Sangam literature speaks of settlements of the yavanas (ibid.).

5.10 The rise of the Gahapati: Another factor in the development of trade that has not been sufficiently emphasised is the close relationship between landed wealth and commercial capital. It was the possession of the former which made large-scale investment in public contracts, money lending and trade possible. The actual day to day matters may have been in the hands of lesser men, some probably very wealthy (ibid.). The rise of the grhapati in the north amply supports this contention. In Vedic society the grhapati was the head of a household consisting of three or four generations of the family together with some labourers and slaves who cultivated the family unit of land. Gradually the wealth of the grhapati increased and Buddhist literature contains several references to rich grhapatis and prosperous brahma grhapatis (Samyutta Nikāya, I.74) who invested their resources in trade eventually to become Ārāhins (Anguttara Nikāya, IV. 282; Mahāvagga, I.7.4; Cullavagga, VI.4.1).

A similar combination of occupations perhaps occurs in the inscriptions of the western Deccan also. Several epigraphs mention donations by negama gahapatis (Senart, 1905-6: Nasik no.6; Burgess & Indraji, 1976, reprint: Junnar no.4); gahapatiputa sethi (Burgess & Indraji, 1976, reprint: Kol no.1, Kuda
no.21) and gahapati sathavāha (ibid.: Kuda no.27). These householder-traders possibly carried on the occupations both of a landowner and of a merchant. An inscription at Shelarwadi provides further evidence of this change. It records the gift of a cave by Siagutanīkā, wife of the ploughman-householder (hālika kuṭubika) Usabhaṅaka resident at Dhenukākata made jointly with her son gahapati Nanda. Kosambi interprets hālika kuṭubika to mean a person who had occupation rights to the land which he worked and was not a labourer. He was succeeded by his son, a gahapati, who obviously had a higher status than his father (Kosambi,1955:69). The Jātakas refer to the Bodhisattva as being born in a kutumbhikakula and earning his living by selling grain (Bk.II:no.249). This would then imply that merchants described as negama gahapatis owned land in the Deccan.

The merchants appear to have obtained considerable cooperation from the state. Usavādāta mentions the construction of rest houses and the establishment of free ferries by boats on the rivers Iba, Parada, Damana, Tapi, Karabena and Dahanuka (ibid.:78-80). Other inscriptions record investments of money in guilds, the interest to be paid to the Sangha (ibid.:82-5, 88). It has been suggested that the frequent occurrence of 'gupta' in the names of the āmātyas e.g. Śivagupta (ibid.:no. 4), Parigupta and Śivaskandha gupta (Burgess,1964,reprint: no.20) would indicate that they were vaisyās and possibly merchants (Sharma,1969:112). Similarly negamas or merchants may have been associated with the civic administration of towns and in the management of nigamasābhās. The authority of these bodies seems to have been accepted by the state as well. The Nasik inscription of Usavādāta refers to the proclamation of a land grant in the nigamasābhā and its subsequent registration and embodiment into archives kept in the phalēkavāra (Senart,1905-6:82-5). Towns are also known to have made donations collectively, e.g. the nigama of
Karahakāta gifted coping stones at Bharhut (Lueders, 1912: nos. 705, 891), while the nīgama of Dhānyakāṭaka made donations at Amaravati (Chanda, 1919-20: nos. 4, 5).

Unfortunately inscriptions provide no information on the rate of duties levied by the state on merchants or the revenue obtained by taxing traders. Strabo indicates the presence of officials for collecting taxes. The market commissioners kept the roads improved, collected taxes, supervised crafts and made roads, while the city commissioners were in charge of products made by artisans, sales and barter and collected a tenth part of the price of things sold (Geography, XV. 1. 50-1). The Arthasastra states: on ksauma, dukula, armours, yellow orpiment, red arsenic, antimony, metals of various kinds, sandalwood, ivory, etc. the duty to be charged is one-tenth or one-fifteenth (II. 22. 6). On clothes, perfumes, medicines, wood leather goods and grains, etc. the duty is one-twentieth or one-twenty-fifth part (II. 22. 7).

The expansion of agricultural settlements and trade both internal and external thus helped transform society in the Deccan from a loose congregation of several tribes to a unified political system under the Sātavāhanas. While this process may have commenced with the commercial exploitation of the region under the Mauryans, it perhaps accelerated with the increasing participation of ports along the west coast in the rising external demand. The growing power of the Sātavāhanas patronised both Buddhism and the Brahmanical religion in a bid to establish firm control and to counter attacks by the Kṣatrapas. The resultant peace and efflorescence of trade is reflected in the inscriptions of the western Deccan which record donations not only by royalty but by prosperous occupational groups such as blacksmiths, ironmongers, carpenters and fishermen as well.