CHAPTER I

BACKGROUND
Warfare is as old to this planet as is human civilization on its surface. War is a protracted clash of arms among rival political groups or states; civil wars and insurrections are within its periphery whereas riots are beyond its encompassment. The idea of war essentially stems from the human nature, whatever the anthropologists might have to say. War has been the arbiter in disputes when negotiations have failed; basing its judgements on Might rather than Right; although at times Right could prevail.¹

Hobbes' contention that the state of nature was of quarrelsome liberty and anarchy in perpetuity, 'nasty and brutish' is upheld by several writers. The law of fish (matsya nyāya), according to which the strong devours the weak, finds occasional mention in ancient Indian literature.²

Man has been waging wars in response to one or both of the basic and innate human tendencies of self preservation and self expansion or self assertion.³ Bernard Shaw, supported by Malthus, felt that war was a biological necessity and it served as an effective check against population explosion. Since war is an organised affair, its roots may better be

¹ Montogomery of Alamein, A History of Warfare, pp. 13-14
² Indra, Ideologies of War and Peace in Ancient India, p.3
³ Chakravarty, P.C., The Art of War in Ancient India, p. 1
traced in the group behaviour or cultural conditions and not in the individual propensities.

From the times of the Rāvāṇa almost to the end of 12th century A.D. wars were fought from time to time in the rich plains of northern India. As a result kingdoms rose and fell in never ending succession. About one fourth of the hymns of the Rāvāṇa are devoted to Indra, the god of war.

The two great epics - the Rāmāyana and the Mahābhārata, and the Purāṇas eloquently speak of wars of various types.

War involves the destiny of nations and lives of millions. It is not a simple affair and its proper study bristles with various complex problems. To do justice to the study of warfare, one has to view it in the light of major geographical, socio-philosophical and political factors. Therefore, before elaborating on warfare in the early medieval period of Indian history, it would be worthwhile to peruse these factors.

We first take up the geographical factor. Geography has been defined as the science of the earth and all life upon it. Its scope is extremely wide. For the assessment of warfare in a particular country, a broad knowledge of its geography will suffice. The major elements which are to be considered are: location, size and shape, climate, physiography, people, economic development and communications. This is necessary

4. Ibid.
5. Indra, p. 4
because every aspect of geography affects military operation strategy as well as tactics. Military geography, embodies the study of the physical geography with a view to assessing its suitability for strategic and tactical manoeuvring. The layout of the land and distribution of vital resources are as vital as are the means of communications, essential for their exploitation for national sustenance and war purposes.

A medieval Arab writer thus speaks of this country - "India -- is the most agreeable abode on the earth, and the most pleasant quarter of the world. Its dust is purer than air, and its air purer than purity itself; its delightful plains resemble the garden of paradise, and the particles of its earth are like rubies and corals."

Shape and Size:

The accounts of Greeks testify that the Indians had very accurate knowledge of the shape and size of their country. The whole of India was described to Alexander by Indian who knew it well. Patrokles, who held the government of the north-east satrapies of the Syrian empire under Seleukas Nicator and Antiochus soter, himself collected information about India which was lauded by Eratosthenes and Strabo for its authenticity. The register of Statthi (or 'marches from place to place') prepared by a Macedonian Amyntas and confirmed later by the writings of other Greeks provided another account of India.

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7. Rajendra Singh, Brigadier, History of Indian Army, pp 1-2
On the authority of these accounts Eratosthenes has described India as a "rhomboid or unequal quadrilateral in shape with the Indus on the west, the mountains on the north and the sea on the east and south."9

Diodorus reckoned the extent of India from east to west as 28,000 stadia and from north to south 32,000 stadia. This comes to 60,000 stadia, all put together. The Mahābhārata mentions the shape of India like an equilateral triangle, which was divided into four smaller equal triangles, the base of which is formed by Himalayas and the apex by Cane-comerin. Astronomers, such as Pārāśara and Varāha-Nihira divided India into nine divisions (Nava-Khandas). This division was adopted by several authors of the Purāṇas and other books. These divisions along with their chief regions in brackets were, Central (Pañchāla), East (Masadhā), South East (Kalinga) South (Avanti), South West (Anarta), West (Sindhu-Sauvīra), North West (Hārshāra), North (Madra) and North East (Kuminda). The Purāṇas generally agree with the nine-fold division of the country. But the three early Purāṇas, viz. Vishnu, Vayu and Matsya stick to the Mahābhārata's division of India into five regions. The latter was the generally accepted division in the early centuries of the Christian era. It was also adopted by the Chinese pilgrims, including the celebrated Yuan-Chwang who visited India in the seventh century A.D.10

Five divisions or "Five Indias", as they are termed by

10. Ibid., pp. 4-5 and 9
the Chinese are given below:

I. Northern India included Panjab, Kashmir, the neighbouring hill states and the whole of eastern Afghanistan.

II. Western India comprised western Rajasthān, Gujarāt, Kachh, portion of the adjoining coast on the lower course of the Narmadā river and Sindh.

III. Central India included the whole of the Gangetic soil from Thanesvar to the head of the Delta and between Himalaya mountains and the river Narmadā.

IV. Assam, Bengal, together with Sambhalpur, Orissa and Ganjam formed Western India.

V. Southern India included the whole of the Peninsula from Nasik on the West and Ganjam on the east to cape Kumari on the South.\(^{11}\)

This arrangement is simpler than that of the nine divisions. The Chinese borrowed their system from the Hindus who likened their country to the lotus flower, the middle being the central India, and the eight surrounding petals being the other divisions.\(^{12}\)

According to the Vishnu Purana, "the country that lies north of the ocean and south of the snowy mountains is called Bhārat.\(^{13}\)"

India lies in the North of Equator, the tropic of Cancer girdles her in the middle. Himalayas and its off-shoots form

\(^{11}\) Ibid., p. 10
\(^{12}\) Ibid., p. 11
\(^{13}\) Vishnu Puran, 3.1
the mountain barrier of the sub-continent. On the west it separates the Indus valley from Persia, Seistan, Makran and Baluchistan with the help of the Kirthar, Sulaiman and Safed-koh ranges; further north the Hindukush safeguards the borders. Pamirs and Karakoram intervene between Kashmir and Turkestan. Radiating from Pamirs, the Himalayas extend throughout the north unto Brahmaputra. On the eastern most limits of India, the mountains fold round, run from North to South separating Bengal and Assam from Burma.  

Whereas the natural boundaries of India in the north and the south are well marked. On the west they have often been changing. For quite sometime Western Ariana or the large part of Afghanistan formed part of India. During his visit to India (629-645 A.D.) Yuan-Chwang found that the king of this country was of Kshatriya caste. During the whole of tenth and early years of the 11th Century A.D. the Kabul valley was ruled over by a Brahmaṇa dynasty. No wonder that the population of eastern Afghanistan is of Indian descent. The Indian element which had braved the foreign aggressions for centuries, could no longer subsist thereafter the slaughter began at the hands of the Chaznavids.

Area:

Yin-tu or India, according to Yuan Chwang, measured 90,000 in circuit, "which is more than double the truth."  

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14. Tara Chand, *A Short History of the Indian People*, p. 4  
18. Cunningham, A., *The Ancient Geography of India*, p. 10
India encircles an area of about fifteen hundred thousand square miles and is thus equal in extent to the whole of Europe excluding Russia. The coastline stretches beyond three thousand miles and the length of its mountains is 1500 miles. India has the highest mountain on the surface of earth. Its plains are low and alluvial, high table-lands dense forests as well as vast sheets of dry deserts. It has hottest of the plains as well as coolest of the hill stations.

Climate and products:

There is almost every variety of climate and natural product in India. Its mountains have lofty summits eternally covered with snow. The lower mountainous region abounds in thick green forests. The plains have extremes of temperature and fertility, there being hot, arid deserts in South-West, the rich alluvial plain of the Ganga lay between the Himālayas in the north and the Wārmadā in the south. The plains alternate with wild hilly regions and table-lands. Seasons vary from the extremely hot to the bitterly cold. The rains bring nourishment to the soil, but hamper military operations on a mass scale.

GEOGRAPHY AND WARFARE

In India the course of warfare has to an exceptional degree, been dictated by its geography, particularly its climate and influx of population. Although there is lack of natural

19. Majumdar, R.C., Ancient India, p. 2
20. Tara Chand, A Short History of the Indian People, p. 6
boundaries within her frontiers yet the invader has to be extremely careful. The Indus valley which is a world in itself, has on its east a mighty desert which would lead the invader into an inhospitable region where parched soil and merciless sun make survival extremely difficult, and whose inhabitants were hardy, restless and ferocious fighters. Across the Aravalli range, only a few hundred miles away from the heart of arid desert, is the Ganga valley, which has the means of supporting the densest population. It has been the centre of Indian civilization from very early times and the bounties of nature have made the man averse to the toils for earning bread. To this valley of gold, there is but a narrow entrance. "The Aravalli hills from the South-West and the Siwalik (Sabaddalakṣa) from the north-east approach each other across the plain separating the Panjab from the Ganga Valley leaving a conveniently narrow gap, not more than a hundred mile in width." 22 Through this battle-neck alone the Ganga Valley, popularly called Hindusthan, could be approached from the West by the attacking hordes. The fate of Hindusthan was decided right at the entrance to the valley—the plains of Karnal district of Haryana, comprising the famous battle-grounds of Panipat and Tarain. "For once the invader set his foot inside the flat river-country of the Ganga, defence was necessarily at a disadvantage." 23 "Vast cavalry forces can easily sweep as they have done age after age in the past—through the green belt from the Khaibar Pass via Delhi to Bengal's Capital; without meeting with any natural obstacle, if the forts on the way are

22. Habibullah, A.B.M., The Foundations of Muslim Rule in India, p. 54
23. Ibid.
by-passed. In these plains, empires have fought empires, and India's fate has been decided by one single gigantic clash of arms."

Bengal, which is a country of 'plenty', is remarkably well-provided with natural defences. Entrance to it has also been made narrow by the northern spurs of Vindhayas and the southern ones of the Tarai. Her climate, numerous swift flowing rivers and rivulets with seasonal flood, are a great obstacle to the northerners. On the west, almost an unbroken chain of hills and trackless forests extend to a great length towards the sea; on the east he is shut off by a similar barrier pierced only by the Brahmaputra which leads to another narrow valley, equally fertile but whose uneven soil, flooded streams and moist air are a death trap to the western invader."

Lack of adequate knowledge of Indian geography on the part of a foreign invader was to count disaster. Mohammed Ghori's earlier attempts at invading India provide a good illustration of this.

At this juncture a word about the route from Afghanistan to India will not be out of place. The familiar route was not through the well-known Khaibar-pass or also the Bolan or the lesser known Kurram and Tochi, but through the Gomal which led

24. Sarkar, J., Military History of India, p. 4
26. Ibid.
to Derā-Ismail Khan and from there to upper Sind-Sāgar-Doāb. This is borne out by the fact that during the 13th century the first military target was Multān or uch and not Lahore or Peshāwar. Kurram, Tochi and Gomal passes provided shortest route to the Panjāb. Such is not the case with the Khaibar pass, which involved a long detour through the north and also this route had been made unsafe by the perpetually hostile tribes inhabiting northern Sind-Sāgar-Doāb. In his first expedition Muhammad Ghori could conquer Multān and Uch. In his next expedition he tried to penetrate through western Rājasthān. Pressure from the Turks had kept the Rājputs preoccupied during the last half a century. The defeat and destruction of 'Turushka' army by Anahīlādeva, a contemporary of Bhima I of Gujarāt and also at the hands of Kalhara, whose inscriptions range from 1161 to 1179 A.D. bring out clearly the importance of geographical factor in the warfare of Northern India. Unmindful of the fate of his predecessors on the treacherous track of conquest, Muizzuddin directed his forces against the Chalukyas of Gujarāt, which he reckoned, could provide him a key to the Indian hinterland and facilitate his plan of out-flanking Chazmavids of the Panjāb. Passing through Multān and Uch in 1178, he dashed across the great desert and arrived at the foot of Mt Abu with an army exhausted and worn out. There, he found the Rājputs under the standard of Mūlrāja II, eager to thwart his designs. In the ensuing action fought near the village of Fāyadra on the ground of enemy's choosing, he suffered a signal defeat and was lucky to escape to his home. The geography had thus given its dictates by showing to him
that there was only one feasible approach to Hindusthan and that lay through the Panjáb. Accordingly, the next few years witnessed his steady advance through Khusrav Malik's dominions. Peshawar fell in 1179; Sialkot in 1185 and Lahore in 1186. Three years thereafter he could advance his ambitious designs against India proper.

Before him also the Arab arms had woefully crashed and sunk to the sands of Sindh. This was not because the Arabs had lost their martial vigour by which they had conquered mighty empires of Europe and Asia, but because they had failed to grasp the true geographical factor for conducting war in India. The Arab invasion was a failure. "It attacked from the wrong quarter, entered on the least productive province." To drive the point home we have other examples as well. After Bahram, the governor of Panjáb had captured Nasārūr and accompanied by ten sons set out against his master Bahrām, he was "swallowed up in a quick sand near Mullān" after having been defeated by Bahrām. And again, Muslim soldiers having been defeated by Arñorāja of Sakambhari and Ajmer died of exhaustion — "and not a few perished of thirst in the waterless desert. Some found their graves in the shifting sands of Rājasthān." The valour of man has therefore to reckon the forces of geography.

The last major geographical factor of war in India is the climate. Since the monsoon rains and before that burning heat

27. Habibullah, The Foundations of Muslim Rule in India, pp.56-57
28. Lane-Poole Stanley, Mediaeval India Under Muhammadan Rule, p.14
29. Sharma, Dashrath, Rajasthan Through the Ages.
of India, made military operations virtually impossible, the best campaigning season was between October and November when "the crops were ripe, the herbage green and it was possible to live off the country."30

Social and Religious Conditions:

During the period of our study, social conditions had undergone numerous changes. The caste system was beginning to become more rigid and we find distinguished rulers attempting to keep people confined to their spheres of duty as enjoined by their respective castes. Harivarman and his son Mityavarman of the Maukhari dynasty have been depicted (in the Varaha inscriptions of 555 A.D. of Iṣanavarman) as perpetuating and enforcing moral laws and the laws of Varṇāśrama in the country. The injunctions of Smṛtis were proudly being implemented by the Maitrakes of Vaiṣṇava. That Prabhākarvardhana employed his army to enforce caste system, is shown by the Banskhera inscriptions. The enforcement of the system became such a vital duty of the kings that 'Parivarjita-Varna-Saṅkaraj' became almost a stock-expression in the description of rulers particularly of north India.31

The division of society into classes was not peculiar to India alone. According to Montgomery of Alamein, the Norman as well as the entire European Society was divided into classes of those who fought, those who prayed and those who laboured.32

30. Montgomery, A History of Warfare, p. 383, and also see Military History of India by Sir Jagunath Sarkar, p 4
31. Sharma, Dashrath, Rajasthan through the Ages, pp. 98-100.
32. Montgomery, A History of Warfare, p. 166
It is worth mentioning here that the division of society into four categories decided by the birth has its roots in the "Vedic doctrine of Divine creation of the social order."

The specific features of the later caste system, like ascendancy of Brāhmaṇas, determining details of dress and etiquette and the segregation of lowest class to the untouchables, can be traced back to the oldest Smṛtis. The system came to be accepted by the people as there are no traces of any class-struggle excepting the founding the Lingayat sect in Kanara in the 12th century as an anti-Brahmana movement.

The later restrictions on inter-caste marriages, degradation of Sudras to the lowest rung of the social ladder and impurity of the 'Sudra-food' were in accordance with the preachings of the older Smṛtis and not any radical innovations. The tightening of the old social restrictions and disabilities mark "India's supreme effort on the intellectual plane to meet the challenge (the most formidable she had encountered so far) to the existence of her soul and her culture presented by the destructive inroads of the new invading races with their programme of wholesale subversion of the indigenous social and religious order."

The Brāhmaṇas, who were at the top of the social ladder, were fond of the refinements of learning and were satisfied in

23. Ghoshal, U.N., Studies in Indian History and Culture, p.513
24. Ibid., p. 514.
25. Ibid., p. 515
living a life of continence in seclusion. Although they remained unmoved by 'honour or reproach', their fame spread far and wide. They were treated ceremoniously by the kings and could not be ordered to attend the court. Relying on perfect virtue they concentrated on the cultivation of arts and sciences and did not mind to lead a hard life. "Though their family be in affluent circumstances, such men make up their minds to be like vagrants and get their food by begging as they go about. With them there is honour in knowing truth (in having wisdom) and there is no disgrace in being destitute...."36

During the period under review among the Kshatriyas the Rajputs became the shield anchor of the Hindu society. In fact, many obvious complications in the caste system were due to their emergence as a class in the Indian society. The Rajputs included a section of the foreigners whose influx had been admitted into the Indian frame work of caste. Some of the earlier foreign-immigrants rank as low grade kshatriyas in the legal codes. But those who came after the eclipse of the early Gupta empire and established principalities independent or semi-independent, normally found a place among the thirty-six classes of the Rajputs.37

Sharply distinguished from the upper classes were the Chandelas, who lived in separate quarters, away from others and struck a piece of wood to warn people when they entered the

36. Watters, On Yuan Chwang's Travels in India, pp. 160-161
37. Raychaudhuri, N.C., An Advanced History of India, p. 196
market place. The existence of impure or untouchable castes is vouched by Al Biruni. Even the foreigners were regarded as Maleccha or impure, any connection with them was forbidden "be it by sitting, eating and drinking with them, because thereby, they (Hindus) think, they would be polluted." This assertion of Al Biruni may be stretching the point too far because contrary to this we find that one of the chief distinctions of Indo-Aryan culture was its Catholicity and a great power of assimilation. After coming in its touch the Greeks, the Sakas, the Parthians, the Kushans, and the Rūpas, had all merged in the mainstream of Indian society. The last crowning act of Hindu catholicity was its absorption of Buddhism.

Nevertheless, the caste system did have its far reaching evil effects. The division of people into close compartments hit at the very root of national and patriotic feelings. Even some regions of India came to be regarded as foreign countries by inhabitants of other regions. For example, when Harsa of Kashmir (1089-1101 A.D.) wanted to get rid of Kandarpa and besieged him at the fort of Lahora, he thus spoke to the King's emissaries: "The king, whose mind is ruled (by others), should send my family (to me). Then I shall deliver the castle and go abroad." Having been joined by his relations he proceeded to Vārānasi. The alleged invitation extended to Muhammad Ghori by Rāja Chakra Deo of Jammu towards the close of our period, may also prove the point. Like Mediaeval Europe India also came to be divided horizontally.

38. Sachau, *Alberuni's India*, p. 20
40. Kalhana's *Rajatarangini* VII, 1006-1007
Whereas, in European countries, class interests came to be subordinated to national interests, nothing of the sort happened in India. The class interests were perpetually kept alive by the caste-system. To cap it all, "The caste system with its superstitious outgrowths and purificatory ceremonials, brought about that narrowness of outlook and haughty exclusiveness which have been noticed by Alberuni," Prohibiting foreign travel and inter-relation with outsiders causing among other things, the political downfall of India. The question will be discussed fully in a later chapter.

Religion and outlook to Life:

The Gupta Age is usually regarded as an era of Brähmanical revival. Although some of the rulers claimed to have revived Hinduism, yet truly speaking, it was a period of 'Culmination, of florescence rather than of renaissance'. The most important feature of religious life during the Gupta period was the commencement of Bhakti - intense devotion to God, and the love of fellow beings. These became most manifest elements of Saivism and Vaishnavism, expounded by the Gītā and the Svetāsvatāra upnishad. There was widespread feeling of toleration, peace and amity among various sects. People practised charity and had, except the low castes, accepted non-violence as the creed.

Bāna Bhatta the celebrated court writer of Harshavardhana, mentions Jains of both sects Dīkṣābaras and Śvetāmbaras.  

41. Ghoshal, U.W., Studies in Indian History and Culture, p. 505
42. Raychaudhuri, An Advanced History of India, p. 199
Vaishnavas, both Bhāgavatas and Pāñcharātras. He also mentions Saugatas or Buddhists, Vaiskarins, and adherents of various philosophical schools including Sāmkhya, the Lokāyatika, the Vaiśeshika, the followers of Vedānta and Nyāya. Buddhism was gradually losing ground; their monasteries in the North-West might have been destroyed by the Pūṇas, with the defecation and acceptance of Buddha by the Vaishnavite Pantheon as an incarnation of Nārāyana-Viṣṇu, there was little of distinction between the Buddhist laity and his Brahmanical gods. The growth of Tantricism reduced a great deal of distinction between Vajrayāna, Buddhism and certain types of Saivism and Sāktism. The rise of saint-poets who were also zealous reformers and worshippers of Viṣṇu and Śiva, did yeomen's service to Hinduism. With the demolition of once imposing Buddhist establishment by a new race of conquerors in the 12th century and thereafter, Buddhism vanished from the land of its birth. Although Buddhism was now dead and gone, the legacy of abject surrender to the invaders that it left in India continued to have its reverberations, atleast in the first two centuries of our period.

In this connection it is of interest to narrate an episode recorded by Yuan Chwang. When the Pūṇa tyrant Mihrādkula attacked the Kingdom of Rāḍāditya, the latter said to his ministers: "I hear that these thieves are coming, and I can not fight with them (their troops); by the permission of my ministers, I will conceal my poor person among the bushes of the morass." 43

Vihikula did come following him to the Morass and was himself taken prisoner. However, his liberty was restored and he was allowed to go. What a devastating influence this episode could have had on the military history and the thought currents in North India, can be better imagined than explained.

Jainism continued to enjoy popularity for a long time in Bengal, certain regions of Uttar Pradesh and Western India. Amogavarsa (A.D. 815-77), one of the greatest Rāṣṭrakūṭa rulers liberally patronised the sect. Kujala Kalaśurva of Kalyana (1156-1167) and Kumāranāla Chaulukya of Anhil-Vara (1143-1172) were also patrons of Jainism.

The multiplicity of religious sects is attested by Al-Idrisi, an Arab traveller of the 11th century A.D. According to him, "Among the principal nations of India, there are forty two sects. Some recognise the existence of a creator, but not of prophets; while others deny the existence of both - some acknowledge the intercessory powers of graven stones, and others worship holy stones on which butter and oil is poured. Some pay adoration to fire, and cast themselves into flames. Others adore the sun and consider it the creator and director of the world. Some worship trees; others pay adorations to serpents, which they keep in stables, and feed as well as they can, deeming this to be a meritorious work. Lastly, there are some who give themselves no trouble about any kind of devotion and deny every thing." Liberally the people and the rulers were deeply

44. Ibid., pp. 201-202
45. Elliot and Dowson, Vol. I, p. 76
religious. But at times motivated by intense greed, one could cross all imaginable limits in the denial of God and his representations—idols. At least one such instance is available in the recorded history of Kashmir. King Harsa (A.D. 1089-1101) was extravagant in spending huge sums on the maintenance of his army. Failing to cope-up with the state expenditure, his thoughts became firmly fixed upon the spoliation of temples. He robbed the temples of their treasures. Not satisfied with this, he wanted to get hold of the statues and appointed Udyaśa as prefect for the overthrow of divine images. "In order to defile the statues of gods he had excrements and urine poured over their faces by naked mendicants whose noses, feet and hands had rotted away. Divine images made of gold silver, and other (materials) rolled about even on the roads, which were covered with night soil, as (if they were) logs of wood. There was not one temple in a village, town or the city which was not despoiled of its images by that Turushka king Harsa."

By the close of the 9th century A.D. the rigidity of caste system had grown up. There may be some truth in the assertion of Elphinstone that the religion of Hindus had become debased and their caste restrictions rigid.

In spite of this social change Indians were not only inclined to justice but they never departed from it in their action. Well known were their good faith, honesty and fidelity

46. Kalhana's Šaṅkarpīṭha, VII, 1089-1095.
47. Elphinstone, History of India, p. 222
to engagements. This is the reason why, Al-Idrisi in the 11th century wrote: Peoples from all countries flock to India; hence there was all round prosperity. To bring out their characteristic love for truth he states that when a man meets another, who owes him something, he draws a circle on the ground and asks his debtor to enter the same, which the latter always does and he cannot leave that circle, without satisfying his creditor or obtaining necessary remission.

Alberuni dilates upon the customs of Hindus on Punishments and compares them with those of the christians. These customs according to him, are based on the principles of virtue, abstinence from wickedness and nonviolence, so much so that, they would make over their shirt to the robber of their coat and offer to him the second who has beaten the first cheek, and also to bless and pray for the enemy. "Upon my life this is a noble philosophy," bemoans the distinguished traveller, "but the people of this world are not philosophers .... Who cannot be kept on the straight road save by the sword and the whip. And indeed ever since constantine the victorious became a christian, both sword and whip have ever been employed, for without them it will be impossible to rule."

Non-violence, self abnegation and self-sacrifice had become the guiding principles of life, which came to be viewed as transitory, and not of much consequence and avail. Yuan

48. Extracts from the Works of Al-Idrisi, Reproduced by Elliot & Dowson, Vol.I, p. 88
49. Sachau, Alberuni's India, Chapter LXXI, p. 161
Chwang, in his travels relates the story of Prince Mahārāsaṭṭava who gave up his body to feed a hungry tigress. Stone tope had been built on the spot where the prince pitying the feeble state of the tigress pierced his body with a dry bamboo, gave away his blood and the body for the tigress to eat. To the pilgrim the spot and its vegetation appeared red as if blood-dyed. The Arab traveller Al-Idrisī records that when a king dies they make a vehicle raised two palms above the ground; place the bier on it along with the king and his crown and drag it round the city, with his head uncovered and the hair falling on the ground. The herald goes in front of the vehicle saying: "People behold your king, so and so by name .... He lived happily and mightily ... He is no more, and all that he possessed has escaped from his hands, Nothing now remains to him .... Remember, he has shown you the way which you must follow."

D.C. Ganguly, quotes a passage pertaining to the same theme, from the Prabandhachintāmani of Harutunga. When Bhoja was a child and about to be put to death on behest from Vākapati Mūntja of Mālva, he composed the following verse, after reading which Vākapati withdrew his earlier orders:

"Māndhātā, that lord of earth, the ornament of the kṛta age, passed away; where is that enemy of ten-headed Rāvana, who made the bridge over the ocean? And many other sovereigns have there been, Yudhīṣṭhira and others, ending with thee, O king; Not

50. Watters, T., On Yuan Chwang's Travels in India, p. 253
51. Extracts from the Works of Al-Idrisī Tr. and Published by Ellior & Dowson, Vol.I, p. 89
with one of them the earth passed away; I suppose it will pass away with thee."52

**Belief in Superstition and Astrological Forecasts**

In this caste ridden and religion dominated society superstition and astrology clouded the minds of all sections of society, common citizenry, soldiery and the ruling elite. When Sind was invaded by Muhammad Kāsim, Dāhir sent for the soothsayer, who after compounding astrological calculations replied that the victory shall go to the Arab army, because Venus was behind the Arab leader and right in front of Dāhir. On hearing this, Rai Dāhir became furious. Upon this the astrologer advised him to order a gold image of Venus. That was duly made and fastened to his saddle in order that the Venus might be behind him to bless with victory.

This faith in stars remained undiminished through out the period down to the days of Prithirāja III. He was given Mangal Panchami as the day of battle; he made incantations to Rāhu and Ketu to remove evil and produce auspiciousness. Ashta Chakra Yogini and the transit of Bharani are auspicious for war; Guru Panchami and Ravi Panchami are in auspicious for the white marked (Ashta Mangal, a horse with white mane, face, tail, breast and hoofs) horse of the lord. Indu and Budha make war prosperous with the trident and the disc in their hands. An auspicious hour the king selected, and marched forth; the valiant one at

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52. Ganguly, D.C., *History of Parmam Dynasty*, p. 82
53. Elliot and Dowson, Vol. I, p. 169
the rising of Krur (Mercury or Saturn)."\textsuperscript{54}

It may be of interest that faith in astrological computations was not peculiar only to Indians but was equally strong among their Muslim adversaries. When Umar bin Abdullāh made a request that the government of Hind may be conferred on him he was rebuked by Rajjaj and was informed that the astrologers, had declared that the conquest of Hind could only be affected by Muhammad Kāsim.\textsuperscript{55}

The picture of Indian society of early medieval period will remain incomplete if we did not make a passing mention of the overall economic situation as well as literary and artistic activities of the period.

\textbf{Economic Conditions}

During the period preceding Turkish conquest, the economic prosperity of the country has been attested at all hands. Agriculture was highly developed and is established by the variety of cereals grown and classification of crops and fields in standard lexicons. Irrigation works like that of Anicut across cauvery were being established. According to Marco Polo the pearl fisheries of Pandya Kingdom supplied rare varieties of pearls to the whole of the world. Gujarat produced cotton stuffs and dressed animal - skins were imported by the Arabs. Its ports along with those of the Coromandal coast were centres of international trade. The richness of the Indian cities and

\textsuperscript{54} The Indian Antiquary, Vol. III, 1874 Tr. of the 27th canto of the Prithviraj Rāsa of Chand Bārdai by Rev. A. F. Rudolf.

\textsuperscript{55} Elliot & Dowson, Vol. I, p. 432
elegance of courts of Indian princes has been applauded by a number of foreign travellers and has been testified by the records of the age, including the evidence provided by the recorded details of plunders of the Arabs and later of Mahmud of Ghazni.

Rashiduddin, on the authority of Al-Biruni, paints a picture of the Muslim knowledge of India at the end of 10th century A.D. He writes that Gujarat comprised 80,000 flourishing cities, villages and hamlets; the inhabitants were rich and happy. Yuan Chwang in his travels makes repeated references to the fertility of land, the luxuriant crops, 'good' and affluent circumstances of the people.

It is, therefore, absolutely correct that in normal times the land tillers had enough to eat and the land did not suffer at the hands of Malthus' ghost of over-population. However, immediately after the close of our period, the evidence of gross neglect of people during the famines of early and mid thirteenth century forcing them to choke the Yamuna with their dead bodies and to eat not only hides and carcasses but also human flesh, has been furnished by the Muslim writers. This fact has been quoted with approval by Dushrath Sharma. It, however, does not provide us with any facts to make even a vague surmise that

56. Ghoshal, U.N., Studies in Indian History and Culture, pp. 521-22
57. Elliot and Dowson, Vol. I, p. 67
59. Elliot and Dowson, Vol. III, p. 146
60. Dushrath Sharma, Early Chauhan Dynasties, pp. 208-310
there was inadequate protection of the common man against natural calamities in the 12th century A.D. The miserable plight of the famine affected people in the year 1212 could be a direct outcome of the war-ravaged and completely shattered economy of the country when the old order had changed and the fates of the people were in the hands of alien master with their hearts and thoughts firmly fixed to their home land and that too when they were not yet acquainted with the fiscal system of their newly acquired dominions in India. No such instances had even been recorded by the distinguished travellers like Yuan Chwang and Alberuni whose knowledge and impressions about Indian conditions were not the result of a superficial and casual or hurried studies. In any case, if the people of Sapādlaksha were to commit suicide as a result of their sufferings, there was no need for them to travel hundred of miles, to Delhi; the sacred Jamuna was quite near their own homes.

Literature:

Although the literary excellence of the post - Gupta period did not compare well with the standards of Kalidāsa, Viśākhadatta or Śūdraka, the age did produce outstanding writers like Bhāravi, Māgha, Śrī Harṣa, Kabemendra and Kṛṣṇa Misra. Lyric poetry continued to flourish long after Bhartṛhari, and the 12th century saw the composition of Jayadeva's Gīta-Govinda. Creditable works in other fields continued to be produced such as Dandin's prose romance Dāsākumārācarita. Somadeva's Kathā Saritasāgara, Saṅtideva's ethical compositions, and several works
on political thought by Sukra and others.

In the field of historical literature contribution of the past Gupta period is worth mention. Notable among these are Narsa charitra of Bana, Ramcharita of Sandhyakara Nandi, the Vikramankadeva Charita of Bihana and the Rajatarangini of Kalhana. Bhaskaracharya, a distinguished astronomer, flourished during the Yadava rule. Towards the close of the Age we have a number of polymaths like Bhoja of Dhara, Somesvara III of Kalyana and Kshemendra of Kashmir, who showed their interest in diverse subjects. 61. It would, therefore, follow that during the period under review, there was no dearth of literary and scientific activity in the country.

Art and Architecture:

Art and architecture provide a fairly accurate yardstick by which a nation's greatness can be measured. During the period 600-1200 A.D., architecture in India assumed an important role in the development of fine arts. Three major schools of architecture, viz. Nagara, Besara and Dravida developed in the period. The testimony to an intense outburst of architectural activity is borne by the elegant temples of Orissa, Khajuraho, Rajasthan and Malwa, Gujarat and Kathiawar. The Kandariya Laksmana and other temples at Khajuraho and the Lingaraja and Rajarani temples at Bhuvalnesvar may be noted as the finest specimens of the architecture of the period. The elegance and refinement of the two temples at Dilwara on Mount Abu is simply remarkable. "The

61. Raychaudhuri, Advanced History of India, pp. 209-10
rich exuberance of their decorative displays, almost super human skill, entitles them to rank as priceless treasures of art.”  

Several schools of sculpture also developed in the period with their distinctive characteristics. Apart from the decorative patterns of plastic art we notice an exuberance of the cult images and other sculptures made in stone and metal. “Indian art offers the most vivid testimony to the wonderful resources in men and money possessed by the rulers ...... Amid the luxuries and comforts of worldly life, the thought of the world beyond, never ceased to exercise a dominant influence.” Gradually the original artistic sense diminished under the influence of religion, whereby artists became merely the instruments in rendering to order, the complicated concepts of religion.” U.N. Ghoshal thus comments on the deterioration in the field of fine arts: “By the end of 12th century A.D., Indian people appear to have undergone a lamentable decline. Literature and art, it would seem, lost much of their old creative power, while religion lay encumbered by a mass of forms and ceremonies and society was fixed in a rigid mould.”

HINDU MILITARISM

“In your false egotistic pride you say, 'I will not fight' but you are wrong in that Human nature will make you fight.”

62. Majumdar, Advanced History of India, Chap. XVI, pp. 244 & 253-5
63. Ibid.
64. Ibid.
66. Yadaśajñakāramāśritva na votṣva iti māyāse, Mithaisā vyavasayaste prakṛitīstvā nivṛksyati. Bhāṣyadīka, XVIII, 59
The Vedas regarded wars as instruments of progress as they alone could clear off the enemies from the road to prosperity. The Atharvaveda (XI, 10, 5) goads men for the holy war, thus: "Ye men, rise up with your banners. Get ready, your foes are like deadly serpents. They are like monsters. Get on them .... "Ye bravemen make your enemies mad and kill their general with the help of your army." Manu and Yajnavalkya lay down that dying in war was an act of highest merit. The Ramayana and the Mahabharata equated it with a religious sacrifice; even the meanest earned salvation when killed in battle. According to all most all writers on Niti war was ordained to be mandatory for the king.

The war was to be declared when own troops were loyal and ready, even without a provocation offered by the opponent. This was rank militarism. Prof. Rapson writing in Indian Antiquary observes that military expeditions formed part of the ordinary routine in a state where war was regarded as a profession and the soldiers were hereditary members of the professional caste. The all-pervading spirit of vengeance played havoc, "Let widows weep, break their breasts; let women with untied hair strike their thighs and bewail." "Let wolves and crows eat the enemies ....," so said an incantation of the Atharvaveda.

In their heyday, Buddhism did exert a softening influence on national mind and kings like Asoka eschewed war and

67. Indra, Ideologies of War and Peace in Ancient India, p. 13
68. Ibid., p. 39
69. Ibid., p. 9
aggression. But Asoka's was the lone voice in the wilderness of Aryan militarism. The only converts to the creed of non-violence were the mercantile classes who stood to lose from internecine wars. But it may be remembered that even Buddhism did not preach against war-craft. It is said that when Ajatasatru of Magadha wanted to annihilate Vajjians, he was dissuaded from his design by the Buddha not because it was aggressive act but because the Vajjians were a democratic people. Obviously, the great lord did not oppose the idea of war.  

Therefore, war as an instrument of state policy was never rejected in India. In the centuries following the death of Asoka migratory influx continued into India aggravating the frequency of wars which reached its climax under the imperial Guptas to be followed by Harsha. Yuan Chwang narrates that whenever a general was defeated in war, he was asked to put on woman's garments. Many a general committed suicide with a view to escaping this ignominy. The death of Harsha once again threw India into the cauldron of internecine warfare and the spirit of Indra - the war God - did not in any way suffer. The Garuda Purana enjoined that "A king shall protect his subjects with the cultivation of sciences of money making and warfare." Even Jainism did not abhor warfare when the prestige of the country was involved. Some of the Rashtrakuta and Chalukya rulers were inclined towards Jainism they did not discord warfare. Again writing about Prithviraja III the author of Prithviraja

70. Ibid., pp. 6-7
71. Ibid., p. 18
Vijaya, states "Good fortune furnished him with opportunities to undertake several wars." 73

Death held no scare for a warrior. In a battle against Mahmūd of Ghazna Beej Ray, when deserted by most of his followers, was about to be captured by the Muslims, killed himself with his own sword. Remnants of his garrison died fighting in a bid to avenge the death of their brave chief. 74

The martial tradition virtually permeated into the very blood vessels of the Indian nation. Ramji Upadhyaya quotes a mother who declared that she would mutilate her breasts if she ever learnt that her son had deserted the battle-field. The learned author also mentions an old Tamil custom according to which when a warrior was about to breathe his last at his home, he would be removed to a grass-bed and cut to death by a sword to the accompaniment of the chanting of sacred mantras by the priests. This death was equated in merit with the one met in the battle-field.

Therefore, we tend to agree with V.R.R. Dikshitar's rejection of reputed Maxmullar's contention that "the Hindus were mainly a community of philosophers whose mind was bent towards the other world, and who did not attach any importance to things mundane..." 76

73. Journal of Royal Asiatic Society, 1913, p. 279
74. Epitaphs, Tr. by Briggs, Vol.I, pp. 22-23
75. Upadhyaya, Ramji, Prachin Bhārtīya Sahitya ki Sāṃskritik Bhumikā (Hindi), p. 663
76. Journal of Cangelath Research Institute, Vol. III, 1945, p.264
The Indian martial traditions could be maintained with ease throughout the age because of the caste system only. While the intellectuals could keep contemplating on philosophical doctrines in the hills and forests, the traders in their shops and the tiller in his land, the life went on without competition. Life included a warrior's life. It was a genius of Hindu culture to have set apart a whole community for warfare, which became a standing army of the nation. Every warrior was a knight by himself and while the war came there was no disturbance of the economic set up. There were no food shortages. "There was no necessity for planning a new world order. For the old order was not affected in the least. It was not a people's war in which the king representing the whole nation plunged."  

Although it is true that the war was the primary concern of the warrior caste, the idea that it was the concern of only that class is not correct. We shall quote at an appropriate place numerous instances to show that the other castes were not at all wanting in martial spirit.

Causes of War:

Thus, in a nation where militarism was a philosophy, holiest of holy, where there was a standing professional army in the shape of a large Kshatriya caste or the Rājmats of the later period; where conscription was unheard of; to start a war no specific cause or pretext was required. At all times conquest was the chief ambition of the Indian kings. The peace was to be maintained only by weak, who was strong must wage war; as war was a conti-

77. Ibid., p. 265
nation of state policy by other means. Kāmandakya has enumerated quite a few motives of war among the Aryans: "Surpation of provinces, abduction of women, carrying away of vehicles and treasures, arrogance, morbid sense of honour, molestation of dominions, extinction of erudition, destruction of property, violation of laws, prostration of regal powers, influence of evil destiny, the necessity of helping friends and allies, disrespectful demeanour, destruction of a friend and so on." 79

However, the chief motive of war amongst the Aryans was the love of war-glory. War was considered to be warrior's Dharma and was good for its own sake. Battles were fought to appease sense of vanity besides territorial aggrandizement, and were embarked upon without ever questioning their legitimacy or propriety. Excuses used to be concocted when required for waging war. For example Kalināraja expressing his desire to fight asked his ministers to find out an excuse. They advised him to send his daughters, seated in a chariot, to various villages, and capital towns: The war could be declared on a person who would like to keep them in his house. It was done and the war was fought with the Assakarāja. 80

On the authority of Kādambarī (p.109), Dr. Ramji Upadhyaya quotes a custom by which a son ascending the throne of his father was required to reconquer whole of his dominions. 81 Indians were

78. Basham, A. L., The Wonder that was India, p. 126
79. Quoted by Indra, Ideologies of War and Peace in Ancient India, p. 5
80. Chalukkaling Jātak 23 and Bhimsen Jātak 80 (Hindi).
81. Upadhyaya, Ramji, Prachin Bhārtiya Sāhitva ki Sanskritic Bhūmika, p. 645
not alone in having strange customs of war. Montgomery of Alamein says that Tahitans thought it a sufficient excuse to go in for war for a custom which demanded that a youth might not marry unless he had the tattoo which signified that he had killed a man in battle. The Red Indians went in for a war because it was exciting and amusing. In support of this Montgomery sites the practice of the Red Indian Tribe's holding of mock-wars, often resulting in numerous casualties. 82

The women and particularly the Svayalimbhara ceremony was another potent cause of bloodshed in North India. It is a sad commentary, says, R.C. Majumdar, on Indian Kings Durlabhāja son of Chaumundarāja in particular that when Mahmūd of Ghazni was devastating North India, they should have quarrelled over a bride. For, when Durlabhāja won the hands of Chāhamāna princess in such a ceremony he had to fight with a number of Indian rulers who were disappointed suitors. 83 And again, according to Prithvirāja-Vijaya, Kalāvatī sister of Gūvaka II (9th century) had 12 suitors. She chose the king of Kanauj and married him. Gūvaka had to defeat the remaining princes and gave their wealth to his sister as dowry. 84 In this connection the story of Prithvirāja III's war with Jaichand over the abduction of his daughter is too well known to be recounted. The wars were fought not only for expansion of one's own territory but also to checkmate the designs of a menacing enemy, who is equated with a

82. Montgomery of Alamein, A History of Warfare, p. 30
83. Majumdar, R.C., Ancient India, p. 328
serious malady.

What could be a better cause of war than the one related in the Prabandhakosa. Kumārāpāla had a sister who was married to Arṇorāja. Playing chess one day with his wife, Arṇorāja while lifting one of the pawns said in a jest, "kill these Mundikas, kill these Mundikas." This was taken as an insult by the queen as the word Mundika could also mean Gujarātīs who wore no headdress and also their gurus whose heads were shaven. Being reported of the matter, Kumārāpāla at once vowed to right this insult.

The result of this all embracing rank militarism was devastating for the country, which had no supernatutional organisation act as a pacifying element. The incorporation of martial traditions into the sacred law encouraged internecine warfare, and protracted inter state feuds sapping national vitality and allowing national vigour to run berserk and break glittering crowns at the hands of one another and falling to the enemy blows one by one glorified by family bards. We propose to record briefly by giving a bird's eye view of the major happenings in the political field during the vast compense of 600 years from the ascendancy of Harsa to the fall of Prithvīrāja III and his father-in-law Jaichand.

86, Sisūpāla-Vadha, II, 10
86, Deshrath Sharma, Rajasthan Through the Ages, p. 26
87, Basham, A.L., The Wonder that India Was, p. 128
SCANNING OF THE POLITICAL SCENE

The curtain opens with the young Harśavardhana struggling to clamber up towards the peak of the political stage of North India. After the Guptaś, the Mañkapārśas ruled over the major parts of Madhyadesa with Kanauj as their capital. The Mitraśaśas ruled over Saurāstṛa and Western Malva and the Pushyabhūtis or Vardhanas at Thanēswara in the East Panjāb. The Hūnā incursions from the north-west had caused great up-heavals. Their advances were marked by rapine massacre and incendiariasm. Cities were blotted out of existence, ....... "The valley of the Kabul and Swāt rivers, one of the most flourishing centres of Indian civilisation, was so completely devastated that the greater part of it has ever since remained out side the pale of civilisation, fit only for the habitation of wild tribes......." The honour of becoming shield bearers of Indian independence at that critical moment devolved upon the Mañkārśa under the stewardship of the illustrious Iśānavarman, who succeeded in containing their turbulence to the portions of the Panjāb. "The later Guptaś could not help the disintegration of their empire due to the very ephemeral nature of their governmental system centred around the personality and competence of the rulers; political turmoils in Central Asia whose reverberations were always felt in the adjacent lands", and "the outbreak of rebellion within, devastating invasions from without, the growth of a class of

88. Majumdar, R.C., Ancient India, pp 260-61
89. Ibid.
90. Dāsharath Sharma, Rajasthan Through the Ages, p. 97
hereditary governors and other officials who commanded enormous influence in local centres........ and dissensions in the imperial family itself." 91

It was Harsa's father Prabhkarvardhana, who had enlarged the bounds of his kingdom comprising perhaps the whole of Panjab and a part of Mālwa and assumed the imperial title of 'Paramabhis-

		ttāraka Mahārājādhirāja'. After his death in 604 A.D., when his eldest son Rājayavardhana doned the imperial regalia, his brother-in-law, the Maukhārī Gopārvarman was killed by the king of Mālwa assisted by Sasānka of Bengal. His sister Rājayasree was thrown into fetters. Rājayavardhana was, although, able to avenge his brother-in-law's death by defeating the king of Mālwa, he lost his life; whether at the hands of Sasānka through guile or in adherence to a promise is a moot point. Recovering from the shock and dejection caused by the death and murders in the family, tragic though it was for the Young Harsa, he swore Vengeance and set out against Sasānka with a mighty expeditionary force, and succeeded in rescuing his sister in a short period of time. In accordance with the advice of Bodhisattava Ávlokiteśvara (Kuan-tṣa-tsaī- "the Beholding Lord" of Yuan Chwans), he became king of Kanauj without actually using the imperial title of Mahārāja. The chain of troubles in which he was bound, burnt in him the desire of ending the order of small princely

91. Raychaudhuri, R.C., Political History of Ancient India, p.637, and also see 'Ancient India' by R.C. Majumdar, pp. 227-38.
92. Majumdar, R.C., Ancient India, pp. 262-64.
warring states and bringing them under one umbrella. By doing this he would be upholding the traditional Kshatriya ideal of 'divyijaya' — conquest of the four quarters.

"Proceeding eastward he invaded the state which had refused allegiance and waged incessant warfare until in six years he had fought the five Indias...

Narsa was successful in establishing his suzerainty over the whole of Gangetic valley, i.e. the complete modern Uttar Pradesh, a large chunk of Bihar and Bengal (excepting Kamarasvarna), Orissa, and such of the portions of Panjab, Rajputana, Central and Western India for which Yuan Chwang does not mention the names of other rulers, but the measure of his true and colossal political influence cannot be gauged by the mere enumeration of his directly administered territories, as he earned for himself, the position of the Lord of the whole (utrapatha (Sakala Uttarnathanatha).

Bana has very graphically summed up the whole position:

"The camp was filled on every side with conquered hostile vassal chiefs some who could not find admission, hung down their heads and seemed in their shame to sink into their own bodies through the reflection of their own faces which fell on their toe nails, others seemed to present chowries......Others with flashing sapphires hanging on their breast seemed to be carrying blades

94. Mookerji, R.K., Harsha, p. 28
95. Watters, T., On Yuan Chwang's Travels in India, p. 343
96. Tripathi, R.S., History of Kanauj, p. 130
97. Mookerji, R.K., Harsha, p. 43
suspended from their necks to propitiate their lord's anger, ....
honoured even in being conquered .... continually asking the
servants ....... "Good sir! Will it be today? Will the great
Lord give an audience in the hall ....... other kings ....... come
from the desire of seeing his glory, natives of various
countries ....... "

It may, however, be noted that Harsa maintained a large
army to which reference will be made in an appropriate place.
His army was far in excess and disproportionate to the size of
his empire, and besides that, he strained his economy to the
farthest limits by making excessive charities. "At the royal
lodges every day viands were provided for 1000 Buddhist monks
and 500 Brāhmīns." In addition, he maintained big monasteries
and lived with great pomp and show. Devraj goes to the extent
of saying that "Having bled the peasant white for his military
campaigns and for his insensate acts of charity Harsa left a
trail of famine and desolation behind him. Little wonder that
his empire collapsed soon after." 

It was an age of mutual animosity and strife. An out-
standing statesman with a strong mace was required to hold a
vast empire together. But when Harsa died without an heir
sometimes in 647-48 A.D., the distant provinces fell off one
by one "what followed next was a general scramble to feast on

98. The Harsa-Carita of Prag (Eng Tr) (Cowell and Thomas, pp. 48-49
100. Watters, T., On Yuan Chwang's Travels in India, p. 344
101. Devraj, A Short Note on Harsa - Journal of Ganganath Jha
Research Institute, Vol. IX, 1952-53, p. 61
102. Tripathi, R.S., History of Kanauj, p. 130
the carcass of the empire;" each petty princeling tried to become an emperor by suppressing his neighbours. The empire of the later Gupta's, in Magadha was revived by Adityasena, the Maukhāris became supreme in Kanauj; in Valabhi, Dharasena IV became an independent king. Gradually numerous other lesser known principalities like, those of the Gurjars- Pratiharas and Karkotakas, of Rajputana and Panjab and Kashmir respectively came to the forefront, thus restoring semblance of law and order in North India.

Adityasena of Madhyadesa, had signalled his accession to power by performance of the horse-sacrifice and strengthened his position by Matrimonial alliances with the leading families of his age. He was succeeded by Deva Gupta, Vishnu Gupta and Jīvita Gupta II, one after the other but the outward expansion of the Gauda kings of the East led to the extinction of the house of Adityasena. The kingdom of Kanauj, however, was soon revived by the legendary Yasovarman, who ended the career of the Gauda king, subdued vanga's of Eastern and Central Bengal and reached Narmada in the South and incorporated in his empire Rajputanā and Thaneswar. But to the bad luck of North India the career of this illustrious ruler was cut short by his erstwhile accomplice Lalitāditya of Kashmir.

Lalitāditya, of karkotaka dynasty founded by Durlabhvardhana in seventh century A.D., came to power in or about

103. Ibid., p. 199
724 A.D. His important expeditions were against the Tibetans, the Parthia, the Turks and Yasovarman. After vanquishing Yasovarman he advanced eastwards and trampled, Magadha, Cauda, Kamrupa, Kalinca, Malwa and Gujarat. He also defeated the Arabs of Sindh. It were the victorious marches of his arms, which after the great Imperial Guptas, founded a most powerful empire in North India but this time with its epicentre as Kashmir. Lalitāditya died in 760 A.D. and his successors could not preserve their inheritance for long. The conquests of Lalitāditya and later Jayanīda (776-817 A.D.) brought in its train immense flow of wealth. The accompanying peace and prosperity contained within it the germs of its own decay. And after the enlightened reign of Avantivarman constant rebellions and civil wars caused by feuds became the order of the day. "Death, famine and pestilence stalked the land...... and state divided against itself, resting on a shattered economy could not be expected to maintain the large territories."

This is the time when we turned our attention towards the Western Horizon of India where the mighty whirlwind of Arab hordes had uprooted and thrown to the dust the Brahman dynasty of Sind. The storm which had gathered over the sandy lands of Arabia in the first quarter or so of the seventh century, soon spread in all directions and in the resultant state submerged countries from Iran to Spain. The Arabs fired by the zeal of Mohammed's new faith and their caliphs, had been casting their

106. Majumdar, R.C., Ancient India, p. 275
longing eyes on the rich ports of western India right from the beginning. In the course of a number of futile invasions, they knew much about the country of 'Sind and Hind'. From the reign of caliph Muawiyeh (661-680 A.D.) onwards it became a practice to designate a commander of an expeditionary force as 'governor of Sind' in advance. Hajjaj was appointed governor of 'Iraq, Hind and Sind' by the Khalifa Abdul Malik son of Marwan long before the alleged act of piracy near the port of Debal. Piracy, if it ever occurred, came in very conveniently to serve as a pretext of holy war against Sind, where the Arabs had miserably failed almost for 70 years.109

A word about Al-Hajjaj and his capabilities. He was a school master of Al-Taif in al-Sijaz who had exchanged his pen with sword to serve as a pillar for the tottering Umayyad Crown. Abdullah ibn al-Zubayr, a pretender, who had for nine years held the 'title and power of caliph', lay dead at his feet and upon his corpse he ascended to the governorship of Arabia. "In fact, no head proved too mighty...... to crush, no neck too high for him to reach...... Human lives to the number of 120,000 are said to have been sacrificed by this governor of al-Iraq, who is represented by the Arab historians.... as a blood thirsty tyrant, a veritable Nero......."110

In the eighth century, India had multiple divisions

108. Raychaudhru, H.C., Advanced History of India, p. 181
110. Hitti, Philip K., History of the Arab, pp. 207-8
and subdivisions, with fluid political boundaries and internecine clashes of arms. Geographically isolated, with no hope of assistance from the main land, Sind presented an attractive objective to the war-like Arabs. "Sind under Dāhar was a ramshackle political organisation, utterly wanting in cohesion and inhabited by a heterogeneous population. A feudal state,... whose governors were so independent of each other and of the central authority, their only liability, when they chose to fulfil it, was to render military assistance to the king of Sind...."  

Sind fell, therefore, to the Youthful Kāsim's disciplined army, who were determined to conquer or die for the faith. Dāhar was too weak to stem the high tide of Arab national rise. Sind fell but the Arabs, inspite of best of their efforts could not make wider dent in the body-armour of India proper. Seeing the performance of Arab army in other lands the historians have shown surprise over this unusual phenomenon in India. "The real matter of surprise, however, is that the vestige of Arab authority, continued in Sindh for three hundred years."  

Even the Muslims felt that the Gurjar-Pratiharas could have easily conquered strategically vital Multān, which dominated all routes of ingress from the North-West. They hesitated in doing so far fear of destruction of holy images at the Muslim hands. It showed poor lack of general knowledge about the happenings in the neighbouring kingdoms, foresight and

111. Sainandra Nath Dhar, The Arab Conquest of Sind - Indian Historical Quarterly, Vol. XVI-3, 1940, p. 593
112. Ibid., p. 604
113. The Age of Imperial Kanauj - Bhartiya Vidya Bhavan, p. 128
statesmanship. If only they could think beyond their nose, they could have forestalled and thwarted Muslim designs of the 10th-12th centuries.

The Gurjara - Pratihāras:

The formidable Arabs were stopped at the gates of India by the mighty Gurjar-Pratihāras who had been for a century and a half before them settled in Rajputāna. There is enough evidence to prove that the Arabs did all within their means to extend their dominions in India but the Pratihāras stood as bulwark of Indian defence against the vanguard of Islām. It was Pratihāra Nagabhatta and also chālukya king of Badami who successfully barred the muslim entry into Northern India and Deccan respectively, particularly against a powerful Arab expeditionary force of 725 A.D. which had over run Kutch, Kathiawar peninsula, northern Gujarāt and Southern Rajputana. By A.D. 836 the Pratihara dynasty was firmly established in Kanauj and before the end of 9th century their commands were obeyed all over the territory stretching from Pehoa in Mavyāna to Deogarh in central India, and from Una in Kathiawar to Paharpur in North Bengal.

The Rise of the Pāla

Bengal had lost its political cohesion after the death of Sasānka. When at the beginning of eighth century, a king of Sāla dynasty was ruling in Bengal, it was invaded by Yas'overman

114. Ibid.
115. Majumdar, R.C., Ancient India, pp. 280-81
and Lalitāditya, followed by a king named Harṣa, probably of Kāmrūpa. These foreign incursion set in complete lawlessness and confusion in Bengal, each landlord establishing an independent principality. Out of this anarchy rose Gopāla, elected by all barons, who settled firmly the dust raised by clash of swords during the period of preceding chaos. As his and his successor's names and with the word pāla, the dynasty founded by him came to be known as the pāla dynasty. However, it was left to Dharampāla, son and successor of Gopāla to raise his kingdom to dizzy heights of greatness and splendour. 117

At the time when the Pālas were busy in founding a great empire in the East, the same processes were at work in the West under vatsarāja, a pratihāra king one of whose known dates 783 A.D. As the pālas wanted to expand west and the pratihāras eastwards, there was soon bound to be a clash of arms, which came somewhere in the Gangetic - Jamuna Doab, in which the 'door-keeper' vatsarāja beat up the intruder Gopāla or most likely his son Dharampāla. This germinated a perpetual animosity between the two giants of North India. While the close boxing-bout was on between the two contenders, a third heavy weight champion, the king Dhruva of the Rashtrakūṭas of Deccan, appeared to claim the national title. Not able to take the rain of blows, vatsarāja ran away to hide himself in the warm and safe sandy corner of Rājputānā, whereas Dharampāla curled his head within his own Gauḍa hood. Thus commenced that protracted tripartite conflict

117. Majumdar, R.C., Ancient India, pp. 281-82
for empire among Gurjar-Pratiharas, Pālas and the Rāshtrakūtas, which marked the political struggle of the 10th century, A.D. 118.

Although al-Masudi lauds the Pratihara kingdom in the first few years of the 10th century (915-16 A.D.), Mahipāla had to pay heavily for his inherited hostility against the Rāshtrakūtas, and the vast kingdom of Bhoja and Mahendrapāla lay prostrate at the feet of the Rāshtrakūṭa King Indra III. Compelled by domestic problems Indra III returned home quite early but the loss of prestige faced by the Pratiharas could not be regained resulting in the assertion of independence by their subordinate chiefs.

According to the authors of 'The Age of Imperial Kanauj' the Gurjar-Pratihāra empire and not that of Harsa, was the last great empire in Northern India before its conquest by the Turks. It even equalled the great Gupta empire. Their greatest contribution to India was the effective check which the Pratiharas placed on the ambitious designs of the Muslims beyond the limits of Sindh. In the tripartite struggle, referred to above, each one of them, "like the waves of the sea rose to the highest point only to break down, the Pratiharas had a longer spell of success than either of their rivals..." 119

Among the powers, which rose over the effete Gurjar- Pratihāra empire, were the Chandellas, Parmāras, Kalachuris, Chaulukyas, Chāhāmanas, Guhilas and a score of minor families.

118. Ibid., p. 299
Not going into their detailed history, we shall make a passing reference to those who rose to exert some vital influence on the under current of North Indian history of our Age.

In the period before the rise of Sultan Mahmūd to power, Chandellas of Jájakabhukti (Bundelkhand) under Dhanga (954–1008 A.D.) and Pārmāra Vākapati Mūṇja (974–995 A.D.) deserve special mention.

The Chandella power rapidly increased under Dhanga in the South-Central Portion of Northern India. The territories of Dhanga came to be bounded by Jamuna in the North, Son on the east and Chambal in the West. But before he could extend his dominion in the North West, the Turks, like vultures, had fallen on the Indian frontier in that direction. It may be noted that the Chandellas were very suspicious of the designs of Eastern states and always adopted a policy of crippling their resources like the Gurjār-Pratihāras. In their aggressive wars although they did not occupy Gauḍa but "Their invasions created a situation in which it was possible for an other family to occupy the territory of Bengal."  

Mūṇja Parmāra, was one of the greatest generals of his Age. He fought all his life, and defeated among others: Kalachuri Yuvarāja II, Guhilas of Medapata and Chāhāmānas of Nādog. His

120. Ray, H.C., Dynastic History of Northern India, p. 1213.  
121. The Indian Historical Quarterly, Vol. XXVIII, 1952, pp. 177 and 179

* 1002 A.D. according to R.C. Majumdar, Ancient India, p. 303; 1008 A.D. is the date given by H.C. Ray, Dynastic History of Northern India, p. 1211
and came as a result of his own folly in flouting the well
known military principle of advancing too far from his firm base.
He was captured by Taila II and put to most tragic death, 122
the reference to which shall be made in another chapter.

The Kalachuris, whose founder was Koka I in or about
845 A.D. rose to be a big power for only a short period and later
remained confined to Madhyadesha only. 123

Mularaja founded Chaulukya dynasty sometime in 940 A.D.
with his capital at Anahilapataka or Anahilapattana. He was no
great general but had lot of doggedness to preserve in spite of
having been defeated by Munja and later by Kalachuri Lakshmana-
raja. His successor too had to wage defensive wars against the
Parmaras and the Kalachuris. 124

The Chahamanas, (famous chaubans of the later period) were
the feudatories of Gurjara-Pratiharas and their most important
branch ruled over Sapadalaksa country with Sakabhar (modern
Sambhar) as their Capital. Simharaja, whose known date is 956
A.D. took up the title of Maharajadhiraja. His son and successor
carried his victorious arms right upto Narmada. 125

Another dynasty, which was later on destined to play an
heroic role in the Indian history were the Guhilas or Guhilots

122. Majumdar, R.C., Ancient India, p. 313
123. Ibid., p. 310
124. Ibid., p. 314
125. Ibid., p. 315
of Mewār. They were also vassals of the Pratihāras. It was Bhartripatna who threw off the Pratihāra suzerainty some times in the middle of 10th century A.D.126

Our discussion of the Indian political scene will not be complete without a mention of the shāhis of the Kabul Valley. Their capital was shifted to udābhandapura in 870 A.D. Its founder, Kallar identified with Lalliya Shahi, whose glory outshone many rulers of North India who found "safety in his capital city."127 The Shāhis waged a brave and raleentless fight against the Ghaznavids, who could advance into India only over their dead bodies.

At this stage we may also touch upon the institution variously termed as feudalism. Since the system as it existed in India did not quite fit in with the definition of the term as known to the Western authorities, A.L. Basham calls it as 'Quasi-feudalism' where by Indians had a system of over-lordships, the vassals having their own vassals or petty chieftains.128 These jāgīrdārs or Bhoiktas had specified rights and duties. They received taxes, had title to the land and gained or lost power with the strength and competence of the rulers.129 They were at once the source of strength when they chose to be loyal and when otherwise, brought the speedy ruin of great empires in a matter of little time.

126. Ibid., p. 316 and 318
127. Majumdar, R.C., Ancient India, pp. 318-319 and also D.B. Pandey, The Shāhis of Afghanistan and Punjāb, p. 180
128. Basham, A.L., The Wonder that was India, p. 94
129. Dashrath Sharma, Early Chauhan Dynasties, p. 203
This brief review clearly brings out that towards the end of 10th century A.D., North India presented a spectacle of congeries of small states, "whose only political contract with their neighbour was when they fought with each other or combined to destroy a hated and powerful rival." 130

At this stage, let us turn our attention towards the hilly, cold and not very productive lands along the North West frontier of India, where Turks were beginning to awake and become conscious of their newly acquired power and self, which was to have serious consequences for India.

The caliphate at Damascus had remained secure from the fear of armed invasions till the fall of omayyad line, where after, its seat of power was shifted to Baghda by the Khalifas of the Abbasid line. This change in the seat as well as in the line of caliphate, saw changes in the political mentership of the Muslim world. Persian ideas and officials, who were better educated, cleverer men, replaced Arab administrators in many of the governmental key posts. As the Caliphate grew weaker, Persians became independent and founded their own dynasties. Fearful of the Persians and constant in fighting of the Arabs of Mesopotamia, the caliphs looked for suitable men who would serve them as bodyguards. The answer was not far to seek. The Turks captured on the Northern Frontier, full of martial spirit and hardihood, came handy for this purpose. Secured by the brave body of Turks the Caliphs could keep leading luxurious and easy life. But according to Lane poole, "it was introducing the wooden

130. Ray, H.C., The Dynastic History of North India, p. 1211
horse into the Muslim fray. The Turkish guards became the masters of the Caliphs; Turkish officers gradually acquired the control of provinces, and throughout the Mohammedan empire, from Egypt to Samarkand, the Turks became a dominant race.\textsuperscript{131}

Abandoning their native steppes, the Turks gathered in Persia and there ensued a race for power in the Samanids kingdom, and this scramble for power was in a way responsible for the Turkish Invasion of India.\textsuperscript{132} Alptagin, a high officer of the Samanids, quarrelled with his over-lord, and moved to Ghazni,\textsuperscript{133} 'no man's land' and established there his own principality in A.D. 962.

His throne fell to the lot of his slave and son-in-law Subuktagin, who was the first to launch an invasion of India. But it was his son Mahm\u00f9d who organised the Turks into the best fighting machine of their age and vowed to lead a 'holy' expedition to India every year. "His iconoclastic zeal became almost nightmare to the Indian princes and has been very aptly expressed in the Mahoba inscription by the term 'bhuvanatibh\u00e0ram' his weight appeared too heavy for mother earth...."\textsuperscript{134} For more than thirty years, "They pillaged, burned and devastated the rich plains, cities and temples of the Indus and the Ganga Valley,\textsuperscript{135} because the people of the mountains were poor and the treasures of India presented to them irresistible targets.

\textsuperscript{131} Lanepool, S., \textit{Mediaeval India under Mohammedan Rule}, p.16 see also \textit{Delli-ka-Tomar} H.N. Dwivedi, p. 211
\textsuperscript{132} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{133} Ibid., pp. 16-17
\textsuperscript{134} Mitra, S.K., \textit{Candiala Dhausa and the Muslim Invasion of his Time. Indian Historical Quarterly, Vol. XXXII, No.2} 1957, p. 153
\textsuperscript{135} Ray, H.C., \textit{Dynastic History of North India}, p. 1214
"It was no wonder that they carried all before them, devoured the rich lands like a cloud of locusts and returned to their frozen homes with a welcome, such as meets the mooring of an argosy." As a result, the Turkish power came to be established permanently in the Western Punjab and Northern Sind. Multan and Lahore became their observation posts. Further, these conquests of Mahmud demonstrated the hollowness of Indian political system and blazed the trails, following which India became a preserve of the Muslim hordes two centuries later.

Mahmud's sack of Kanauj dealt the last great blow to the tottering Gurjar-Pratihara kingdom, on whose carcass fell to feast the hounds of Chandellas and the Kachchhpaghatas. With the passing away of Trilochanpala around 1027 A.D., finally ended the dynasty of the great 'Docr-keepers', who had fully justified their title by guarding the gateways to India for over 200 years.

The raids of Mahmud's successors kept the Rajputs at their tenterhooks. But as the Turks could not produce a leader half as capable as Mahmud, they failed to make any serious impression on the Indian princes, who relapsed into their old luxury of internecine mutual struggle. The successors of Vidyadhara lacked his foresight resulting in their failure to benefit from the weaknesses of their neighbours and gradually started loosing their territories to the Dahala Kalachuris who

136. Lane-Poole, S., Mediaeval India Under Mohammedan Rule, p. 22
137. Dashrath Sharma, Rajasthan Through the Ages, p. 260
138. Majumdar, R.C., Ancient India, p. 231
in this period produced two outstanding rulers, Gangeyadeva vikramaditya (1030-4 A.D.) and Lakshmikaraṇa (1041-70 A.D.). The latter equalled the feats of arms of the great Harṣa and later Partihāra Nāgabhata II and Bhoja I. But all hopes pinned on him were belied as his empire like that of Napoleon, tumbled with him. Gahadāvalas rose where Kalachuris fell and occupied the whole of modern Uttarpradesh and Bihar. But neither Govindachandra nor his successors had the vision and capability of an empire-builder.

With the fall of the Paramāras in Central India the Chaulukyas of Anahilapataṇ and the Chāhamānas of Sākambari, rose to prominence. The latter entered Panjāb sometime before 1164 A.D. and stretched their mighty arm right unto the banks of the Sutlej. By doing so they put their hand into the Wasp-comb of the waning yaminis of Lahore and Gahadāvalas of Kanauj and Benāras. Before this period was out the hands of the clock had been put back in the shape of fresh inroads of Ghuzz-Turkomans. 139

Within ten years of the idol-breaker's departure from this earth, his Persian possessions had been snatched away from his successors by the Western Turks, Ghuzz and other Turkoman clans led by leaders who were as capable or a shade better than Mahmūd in organizing abilities. The power that destroyed Ghzmawids grew up in their midst in the hills of Ghor. A family feud between the Ghzmawids and the Ghur Chiefs of 'Firoz-koh',

139. Ray, H.C., The Dynastic History of North India, p. 1216
ended in the sack of Ghazni by Ala-ad-din Rusain 'Jahn-soz' the world burner, who burst into Ghazni on a wave of slaughter and destruction...of all the noble buildings with which the kings had enriched their stately capital, hardly a stone was left to tell of its grandeur. The very graves of the hated dynasty were dug up and the royal bones scattered to the curse... The idol of Somnath and scores of other Indian gods defiled at the hands of Mahmud must have had a horse-laugh over this fate and treatment of the hateful Ghaznavids.

India was now to witness the repetition of blitzkreige of the 11th century, A.D. This time the leader of the enemy locust-swarm was Muizuddin Muhammad ibn sam, better known as Muhammad Ghori. He captured Multan in 1175 A.D.; the defeat of 1178 at the hands of Chaulukyas did not dim his insatiable desire for conquest and he became the master of Pashawar in 1179 A.D., which he took from the Ghaznavid Khusro Malik (1160-86 A.D.).

At this time, to the hard luck of Muhammad Ghori, Prithviraja III (1179-92 A.D.) ascended the throne of Sakambhari. This redoubtable Rajput king was certainly a great warrior, holding sway over vast territory including most of the Rajputana. His kingdom extended from the Sutlej to the Betwa or perhaps to the Ken skirting the Jamuna in the North. His victories over the Chandellas and the Gahadvalas had raised him as a bulwark against the possible Turkish advance into the heart of India.

140. Lane poole, Stanley, Mediaeval India Under Mahommadan Rula, p. 47
Muhammad Ghori captured Lahore in 1186 A.D. and the swords of Shanasbanis and Chahamanas were soon to clash. The first encounter of 1191 A.D. at Tarain sent the Turk home reeling and licking his wounds. He returned to avenge his defeat in 1192 at the same field. After the Chahamanas the defeat of the Gahadvalas "was only a matter of detail."  

The process of subordinating India was one long-drawn struggle, but surely did it place a Muslim ruler on the throne of Delhi to continue for almost 668 years (1192 to 1858 A.D.). Therefore, while Mahmud's raids, had left but a few scars on the wounded body of India but those of Muhammad Ghori, who had a humbler origin and was of a shade much inferior in generalship than Mahmud, laid the foundations of a permanent Muslim rule in India.

A brief review of the cultural and military history of our period would reveal the dismal picture of society and political organisation. While the literary and artistic standards had shown same deterioration, the religion for a common man had positively been reduced to a set of orthodox and superstitious norms and beliefs. The Hindu society was set up into a rigid social mould, every one with an allotted duty by the incident of birth where the aptitude was least known. Politically the country was woefully split into conglomeration of ever-fighting states putting to practice the venerated theory of 'the law of the fish' whereby the right of survival devolved only upon the stronger and the

141. Ray, H.C., The Dynastic History of North India, p. 1217
mightier; the weaker becoming merely a matelote to appease their hunger. The confusion was made more confounded by the onrush of the waves after waves of the poor, hungry, yet doughty warriors whose faith during this period happened to be, accidentally, Islam. It is then against this background, or to use a better expression, on this politico-cultural set that we shall explain the intricacies of the simple looking art, nay, rather the complicated science of warfare. We shall return later to the discussion of the causes that led to the collapse of Indian arms, when faced by the rugged barbarians who had no Kautilya to preach them sermons on polity and warfare.

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