CHAPTER-II
THE MAKING OF THE KUSHANA EMPIRE

The mighty Kushanas achieved the herculean task of uniting a large mass of land and people by carving out an extensive empire, including southern parts of the erstwhile Soviet Central Asia, Afghanistan, Pakistan and north India under their imperial hegemony. The Kushanas belonged to the Yueh-Chih tribe, identified as Tokharian speaking people, who most probably belonged to an Indo-European community.¹ The Yueh-Chih reached their first known habitat, in a territory in the north-eastern corner of the Ordos region of China.² According to the Chinese sources like Shih-Chi, Ch’ien Han-Shu and Hou Han-Shu, the habitat of the Yueh-Chih, before their westward migration to Central Asia, was located somewhere between the Tun-Huan and Ch’i-lien (western side of the Nan-Shan) in the Kan-Shu province of China.³ There, they suffered at the hands of the neighbouring Hiung-nu, identified as Hunas, and were forced to escape to western regions, where they were confronted by the Sai or the Shakas, the Wu-Suns and other races dwelling near Balkh. Thus, the Yueh-Chih might have migrated through Kucha to the region of Wen-Su or Aksu and thence to the country of Sai in the vicinity of the lake Issik-Kol.⁴

During the westward migration, the Yueh-Chih got split into two. While a small section of the tribe, which came to be known as the 'Hsiao' or the little Yueh-Chih, moved south and settled in north Tibet, the 'Ta' or great Yueh-Chih moved further west driving away the Sai or the Shakas from the Jaxartes area. The displaced Sai-Wang or the Shaka king went southwards and occupied Chi-pin (a portion of northwest India probably including Kahsmir)⁵, hence establishing the Shaka kingdom in the northwestern part of the Indian

² B.N. Mukherjee, The Rise and the Fall of the Kushana Empire, Calcutta (hence RFKE), 1988, pp.3-6.
³ Ibid., p.8.
⁴ Ibid., pp.8-9.
⁵ Ibid.
subcontinent. But the Ta-Yueh-Chih themselves could not occupy the Issik-kol region for long as they were driven away by the Wu-Suns (who were assisted by the Hiung-nu) and were forced to escape towards the valley of the Kuei. Here, after taking over Tahsia (eastern Bactria) they established their capital in the north of the Kuei, i.e. Amu or Oxus river. All this migration from Kan-Shu, conquest of the Sai or Shaka country and their defeat at the hands of the Wu-Sun chief happened in all probability between 174-160 or 158 B.C.

Chang Ch’ien’s (a Chinese visitor) description of Tahsia refers to its conquest by the Yueh-Chih and is dated around 130-125 B.C. and hence the migration of Yueh-Chih from the Issik-Kol region to the north of Oxus and the foundation of the Yueh-Chih kingdom must have taken place between 160 or 158 B.C. and 130-125 B.C.

According to Hou Han-Shu (Annals of the Late Han Dynasty), when the Yueh-Chih had been routed by the Hiung-nu, they moved to Tahsia and divided their country among five chiefs belonging to the Ta-Yueh-Chih. These chiefs were called Hsi-hou in Chinese which is a transcription of Yavuga or Yavua (a tribal chief), the title which occurs on some coins of Kujula Kadphises, the first Kushana ruler to have made inroads in the Indian subcontinent. The Ch’ien Han-Shu also refers to the existence of the hsi-hou (family or sept or group) namely Hsiu-mi, Shuang mi Kuei-Shuang, Hsi-tun and Tu-mi who resided in the walled cities of Homo, Shung-mi, Hu-tsao, Pomao and Kao-fu respectively. The capital of the Yueh-Chih country is called Chien-Shih in the Han-Shu and Lan-Shih in the Hou-Han-Shu records.

Tahsia roughly corresponds to northeastern Afghanistan to the south of the Oxus, which included the region of Wakham, Badakshan, Chitral, Kafiristan (?) and apparently the region lying between them. The area of Kuei-Shuang was probably somewhere between Badakhshan and Chitral including the

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territory bordering the north of Gandhara.\(^1\) Of the five branches of Yueh-Chi, the Kuei-Shuang group was the most powerful.

The term Kushana, which is noticed in several forms in Brahmi and Kharoshthi inscriptions and on a series of coins, is probably a dynastic one.\(^2\) The Central Asian documents mention Kushana and Kurshana whereas the Mat inscription mentions Kushanaputra. Originally, the name was that of either a family or sept and it became a national designation probably during the later half of the first century B.C., when the territories and people of seminomads were unified under the rule of a single chieftain, Kuei-Shuang-Wang, i.e. the Ruler of the Kuei-Shuang (the Kushanas), who finds mention only in the Chinese sources. In a period when acculturation brought the Shakas and the Yueh-Chihs together, they also came to be called Kushanas (Shaka-Kushanas) because of their common habitat. The epithet 'Ta' or 'great' was probably conferred on them because of such intermixing with other races of Bactria and Central Asia which caused an enormous increase in their population and status.\(^3\) The Great Yueh-Chihs of Bactria were also called Tushara or Tukhara or Tokhari, as they are mentioned in the Indian epic and Pauranic literature. The regions around Pamir, Badakshan and Bactria were called Tokharistan, the country of frost and snow.\(^4\) In their early nomadic period, the Tokharians used a language (Tokhari) of Indo-European origin which was given up in favour of local Bactrian, after they found a kingdom of their own in Bactria. As they embarked on the policy of expansion, they acclaimed themselves as 'Kushana'. But the name Kushana as such never appears in the Puranas, Mahabharat and other Indian sources, where they are described as Tukhara. The Puranas uniformly state that the number of Tukhara kings was fourteen, but the combined length of their rule varies widely. The Chinese always mention them as Ta-Yueh-Chih in their sources.

\(^{1}\) RFKE, 1988, p.11.
\(^{2}\) J.M. Rosenfield, \textit{The Dynastic Art of the Kushanas} (hence DAK), Barkely and Losangeles, 1967, p.11.
\(^{4}\) \textit{Ibid.}, p.7.
As rightly pointed out by B.N. Mukherjee, "there are very few known sheet anchors in the troubled water of Kushana genealogy and chronology". In absence of any integrated account the Kushana state, in any traditional sources, our knowledge of the genealogy and chronology, based largely on the information furnished by the Brahmi and Kharoshthi epigraphic records and series of coins bearing the names of the issuing kings, is far from perfect. Going by the numismatic evidence, the earliest known Kushana king is the one who issued tetradrachms with Greek legend and a Greek name Miaos or Heraeus or Eraos but is identified as 'Kushan' because of his tribal affiliation as noted on his coins and the oriental face on them. We find the same face on the clay bust found from the site of Khalchayan in southern Uzbekistan, also.\(^1\) According to B.N. Mukherjee, Miaos was probably the first independent Kushana ruler of hsi-hou of the Kuei-Shiang in Tahsia to the south of the Oxus. He extended the Kushana rule to the north of the Oxus at the cost of other Yueh-Chih chiefs, around the second half of the first century B.C.\(^2\) From his coins we may conclude that the centre of his rule was north of the Oxus river.

The *Hou Han-Shu* record substantiates the creation of the Kushana empire and furnishes details of the successive stages of its expansion. It asserts that more than hundred years after their division, the hsi-hou or yavuga of Kuei-Shuang, named Ch'iu-Chiu-Chueh attacked and destroyed the other four Yavugas and established himself as their 'Wang' or king and the kingdom was named Kuei-Shuang, i.e. "Kushan". Chang-Ch'ien visited Tahsia in c. 130-129 B.C., when the five hsi-hou were not divided and hence the destruction of the four hsi-hou might not have happened before c.30-29 B.C.\(^3\) Ch'iu-Chiu-Chueh is identified with Kujula Kadphises of coin legends, who conquered the area ruled by the other four hsi-hou in Tahsia. It seems that Miaos was followed by Kujula Kadphises, though the exact relationship

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\(^2\) *RFKE*, pp.25-27.
\(^3\) *RFKE*, p.24.
between them is not known. It is now, that the term Kuei-Shuang acquired a
wider meaning and came to denote not only a family or dynasty but also the
territory ruled by it. It included Tahsia and the Yueh-chih territory to the north
of the Kuei or the Oxus river. The *Hou Han-Shu* indicates that Ch’iu-Chiu-
Chueh or Kujula Kadphises made himself the master of the rest of Tahsia,
invaded An-hsi (the Arsacid empire in the territory of Parthia adjoining
Tahsia), took away the country of Kao-fu (Kabul area in Afghanistan),
destroyed P’uta (Pakhtun or the territory of Pathans) and Chi-pin (a portion of
north western India including ancient Kashmir) and completely possessed
their territory.\(^1\) The numismatic data too suggests Kujula Kadphises' authority
over Gandhara (west of Indus), Takshsila region (east of Indus) and over an
area to the east of river Jhelum. This is evident from the discovery of more
than 2,500 coins of Kujula Kadphises at Sirkap (Taxila) alone.\(^2\) The credit of
transforming a little Kushana principality of Bactria into an empire extending to
the south of the Hindukush, in the Gandhara region goes to Kujula Kadphises.
This process of empire building was done within a period of about half a
century at the cost of the Bactrian-Greeks and Indo-Parthians, who were in
possession of these areas before the Kushana conquest. In his coins and
inscriptions Kujula was the first to adopt titles of sovereignty such as
‘maharajasa’ and ‘rajatirajasa’, ‘mahatasa’, ‘rajarajasa’ and ‘devaputrasa’
added to his name ‘Kujula kara Kaphasa’ (i.e. sovereign of Kapisa), which
became a norm on the coinage of his successors.

An inscription in Bactrian language and Greek script, found in 1993 at a
site known as Kafir’s castle at Rabtak near Pul-i-Kumri in north Afghanistan,
provides valuable clues in the genealogy and chronology of the Kushanas. In
this 23 line inscription dated in the year 1 of Kanishka era, and read by
Nicholas Sims-Williams,\(^3\) lines 12 to 14, refer to king Kujula Kadphises as the
great grandfather, king Ooemo-Takto, i.e. Wema Takto as the grandfather

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1 *RFKE*, pp.30-31.
3 N.S. Williams and J. Cribb, ‘A New Bactrian Inscriptions of Kanishka the Great’, *Silk Road Art and Archaeology*, The Institute of Silk Road Studies, Kamakura, Japan, 1995/96, pp.75-123.
and king Ooemo Kadphises, i.e. Wema Kadphises as the father of Kanishka-I. Thus a hitherto unknown Ooemo-Takto figures in the genealogy of Kushanas as the son of Kujula Kadphises and the father of Wema Kadphises. B.N. Mukherjee, however, argues that the correct reading of this new name is Saddaskana (Sadashkana), who was a son of Kujula Kadphises. Since there is no coin convincingly attributable to Ooemo Takto, it appears that he probably served as a junior co-ruler to his father Kujula Kadphises and predeceased him.¹ According to Hou Han-Shu, Ch'iu-Chiu-Chueh i.e. Kujula Kadphises, died at the age of more than eighty years and his son Yen Kao-Chen, identified as Wema Kadphises, succeeded him as king. But in the light of the Rabtak inscription Wema Kadphises was the grandson of Kujula Kadphises.

Joe Cribb and Nicholas Sims-Williams have identified this new king Ooemo or Wema Takto with Soter Megas or the 'nameless king'² whose coins are found in plenty throughout a region stretching from Mathura to Peshawar and into erstwhile Russian Turkestan. Till now, on the basis of circumstantial evidence it was suggested that these Soter Megas coins were most probably issued by the Viceroy appointed by Wema Kadphises or these were considered to be the earlier issues of Wema Kadphises himself, either as heir apparent or in his own right in the beginning of his reign. But Joe Cribb, basing himself on the evidence of Rabtak inscription asserts that Wema Takto is identical to Soter Megas as the 'nameless king' used a distinctive monogram or tamga on his coinage (𐁝) and yet does not carry a royal name.³ Cribb maintains that the name of Wema Takto is also mentioned in the Dasht-e-Nawur inscription as Ooemo Tak ()..o) in Bactrian as well as Wema Tak..., in Brahmi and on the sculpture of the seated king, found in Mat (Pl.32) which was previously associated with his son, Wema Kadphises. Cribb has also assigned certain series of some copper coins apart from the Soter Megas

coins, viz. the coins with the Kharoshthi monogram 'vi', to this newly identified king Wema Takto. Wema Takto must have ruled as a co-ruler of his father Kujula Kadphises and issued these coins. It seems that he predeceased his father who lived till the ripe age of eighty and his son Wema Kadphises succeeded Kujula Kadphises on the Kushana throne.

Wema Kadphises is credited with the conquest of Arachosia (Kandhara area), region of Sindh and the area east of Jhelum upto Mathura. According to Hou Han-Shu, Yen-Kao Chen, i.e. Wema Kadphises destroyed T'ien Chu (a country west of the lower Indus) where he appointed a governor to rule in his name. This country, also called Shen-tu, stretched upto Kao-fu (Kabul) on the western side and to the western sea (Arabian sea) on the south-western side. The text further states that since then the Yueh-Chih have been extremely rich and strong. B.N. Mukherjee has suggested that Wema Kadphises' conquest of lower Indus region was largely inspired by the prospects of economic gain accruing from thriving Indo-Roman trade that passed from this region. Control over this area facilitated the tapping of the trade potentials of the ports on the Makran coast which were becoming important in the Indian ocean trade networks. The pedestal of a statue of the Kushana king Wema found in the ruins of a devakula or temple at Mat near Mathura alludes to the erection of a devakula during the reign of Maharaja Rajatiraja Devaputra Kushanputra Wema Takshamo. If this inscription is attributed to Wema Takto as done by Joe Cribb, then it seems that the Kushana rule had penetrated into India atleast upto Mathura by the time of Wema Takto or else it alludes to the inclusion of the Mathura area atleast in Wema Kadphises' kingdom. The extensive finds of coins of Wema Kadphises in large number, as far as Bhita, Kasia, and Pipraha-Ganwaria and his inscription from Ganwaria suggest that his sphere of influence increased to a

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2 RFKE, 1988, pp.44-46.
3 Ibid., p.44.
5 B.N. Mukherjee, Nana on Lion: A Study in Kushana Numismatic Art, Calcutta, 1969, pp.79-82.
6 ASIAR, 1911-12, p.124.
great extent in the east probably as far as Benaras. Kanishka's claim of being 'the ruler of all India' in the very first year of his reign in the Rabtak inscription suggests that much of the eastern expansion in India must have taken place during the reign of his predecessors and father, Wema Kadphises. The earliest known date about Wema Kadphises is from the Khalatse inscription of the year 187 (of the old Shaka era of 170 B.C. and so A.D. 17) which mentions *Maharaja Uvima Kavphisa.* As Kujula Kadphises reigned at least up to c.A.D. 46, Wema Kadphises must have ruled as a co-ruler of his grandfather from c.A.D. 17 to 46 and as a sovereign from c.A.D. 46 to 78, the most accepted date of Kanishka's accession. Wema bore several imperial titles as *Maharaja, Rajatiraja, Sarvalokesvara, Mahesvara, Trata (tradata), Devaputra* and *Shahi* on his coins and inscriptions. It was he who introduced a regular gold coinage on international standard for the first time in India and his Central Asian empire which is suggestive of greater commercial enterprise with the western countries. Wema's strategic conquests, extension of the empire in the Yamuna-Gangetic region and his measures of consolidation, bring him out as the real founder of the Kushana empire in the heartland of India.

Wema Kadphises was succeeded by Kanishka-I, who continued the process of empire-building with an undaunted spirit of aggrandizement. The Rabtak inscription states that he was the son of Wema Kadphises. Kanishka initiated a new reckoning known as the Kanishka era to the modern scholars, whose dating in Christian era is indeed the most debated issue of Kushana history. Even after two international conferences held in London in 1913 and in 1959, on the date of Kanishka, there is no unanimity on this issue. However, most scholars have placed Kanishka in the last quarter of the 1st century A.D. which strongly supports the theory of A.D. 78 as the date of Kanishka's accession to the throne. Since he ruled at least up to his 23rd regnal year, as known from his inscriptions, his reign should not have ended before A.D. 101.

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One of the most forceful statements being made in the Rabtak inscription, on behalf of Kanishka is the claim that he ruled India as far as Kausambi, Shri Champa, Pataliputra and beyond. The inscription states that in the first year of his reckoning it is proclaimed in India and, in fact in all the satrapies and especially in the cities of Koonadeano (Kaundinya), Ozeno
(Ujjain), Zageda (Saketa near Ayodhya), Kzambo (Kausambi), Palabotro (Pataliputra) and Shri Champa (Bhagalpur) that all rulers and important persons had submitted to Kanishka's will and he had submitted all India to his will.¹ Thus, in the very first year of his reign Kanishka-I, it seems, extended the limits of the Kushana empire upto Pataliputra and Champa, i.e. eastern border of the present territory of Bihar. Kaundinya or Kundina has been identified with Kaundinyapura on the Wardha river in the Amaravati district of Maharashtra.² But going by the numismatic and archaeological evidence Ujjain may have marked the southern border of the empire.³ The findspots of Kanishka's Brahmi inscriptions dated in the year 2 at Kosam, year 3 at Sarnath, years 4 to 23 at Mathura, year 12 at Ahichhatra, year 16 at Agra, two inscriptions from Sravasti attest to his rule over large parts of north India. Further his Kharoshthi inscriptions of year 1 at Shah ji ki Dheri (Peshawar) and Rabtak, 11 at Sui Vihara (Bahawalpur) and Zeda (Und), 18 at Manikiala (Rawalpindi) suggest Kanishka's dominance over an extensive territory including Benaras in the east and Bahawalpur in the southwest.⁴ The abundance of Kushana copper coins found throughout the Ganga valley upto Tamluk or the ancient city port of Tamralipti (Midnapur district of West Bengal) and a local issue of Orissa called Puri Kushana coins attest to the extension of Kushana economic influence in the east, far beyond the political borders of the empire. The eastern conquest of Kanishka is found recorded in the Chinese chronicle, Fu fa-tsang yin Yuan chuan, which records Kanishka's attack on Pataliputra from whose king he obtained three most valuable gifts including Buddha's alm-bowl, a miraculous cock and scholar Ashvaghosha.⁵ It is mentioned in the Tibetan work Li yul gyi lo rgyus, that Kanika (Kanishka), the king of Guzan (Kushan), in association with the ruler of the Li (Khotan) country, king Vijaykirti and other chieftains led incursions in India and

² B.N. Mukherjee, 1995, op. cit.
captured the city called So-ked, i.e. Saketa (Ayodhya). It seems that the whole of north-western part of India (excluding some parts of Baluchistan) including Kashmir was within Kanishka's empire, as Kalhan's Rajatarangini favours the view that Kanishka held sway over Kashmir and even founded a new settlement called Kanishkapura. The Sui Vihar inscription of the year 11 establishes Kanishka's control over the lower Indus region which was formerly under the Scytho-Parthian rule and demonstrates his sway over the coastal territories which included seaports like Barbaricum. In the south, Kanishka's rule extended as far as the Malwa region where his co-ruler Vasishka-Kushan of the Sanchi inscription of year 22, acted as his viceroy. Kushana influence it seems was felt in western and central India as well, where the Shaka-Kshatrapas acknowledged the overlordship of the Kushanas. Thus, literary, epigraphic as well as numismatic material confirm that Kanishka's vast empire India included Kashmir, parts of Indian Punjab, Haryana, perhaps Himachal Pradesh, parts of Rajasthan, parts of Malwa, Uttar Pradesh and the entire Indo-Gangetic basin at least up to southern Bihar.

In Central Asia Kanishka's empire should have included Balkh, Khotan, Mrgw (Merv), Hrya (Herat) and Skstn (Seistan), Tashkent and Kash or Kashgarh. Thus Afghanistan, Uzbekistan, Tadzhikistan, parts of Kirgizia and eastern fringe of Sin-Kian were under Kanishka. Towards the end of his long reign, Kanishka seems to have led an unsuccessful military expedition into Central Asia against the Chinese in which he was defeated by General Pan-Chao and forced to pay tribute to the emperor Ho-ti. Coins found in Chinese Turkestan show that the largest number of Kushana coins belong to Kanishka which indicates either the extension of Kanishka's political power in that area

1 B.R. Mani, 1987, op. cit., p.16.
6 B.N. Mukherjee, 1988, op. cit., pp.72-86.
or trade and commercial relations which ceased in the beginning of Huvishka's reign.\(^1\)

The Kushana empire reached its zenith during the reign of Kanishka, who ruled over this vast empire at least up to the 23\(^{rd}\) year of his reign. He had a co-ruler Vasishka whose known dates vary from the year 20 to 28 and who was probably Kanishka's son. The Sanchi Bodhisattva inscription of Maharaja Rajatiraja, Devaputra Shahi Vasishka dated in the year 28,\(^2\) shows that he assumed titles and maintained Kushana hold over the Malwa region even after Kanishka. The last known date of Vasishka is the year 28 and the earliest known date of Huvishka is the year 25 of Kanishka era. Thus, it can be logically gathered that Huvishka began to rule as a co-ruler during the reign of Vasishka.

Political boundaries continued to shift through the reigns of the successive emperors after Kanishka. Vasishka was succeeded by Huvishka whose empire to begin with, should not be less extensive than that of Kanishka. Although coins of Huvishka are found all over north India in large numbers, his dominion convincingly included the Oxus area Kabul, Kashmir and Mathura. The findspots of the Airtam inscription\(^3\), the Surkh-Kotal inscription\(^4\) dated in the year 31 and of the Wardak vase inscription\(^5\) of the year 51 prove the inclusion of the Oxus region and Afghanistan in Huvishka's empire. Kalhan's testimony of Huvishkapur being founded by Kushana ruler Huvishka implies that Kashmir was a part of Kushana in second century A.D. He also founded a Vihara for Buddhist monks in Mathura.\(^6\) It is significant that most of the epigraphs referring to Huvishka have been found from Mathura region suggesting that Mathura had become a great centre of Kushana power during his reign. It seems that some parts of eastern India, including Bihar, which were a part of Kanishka's empire, were gradually lost by the Kushanas


either in the later part of Huvishka's reign or perhaps during the rule of his successor Vasudeva-I. The hegemony of Huvishka may be suggested to have spread over some parts of Deccan if we accept the theory of the subordination of the family of Chastana before the independent rule of his grandson, Rudradaman-I by c.A.D. 149-50. While Huvishka’s dates range from 28 to 60, Kanishka-II of the Ara Inscription discovered near Attock in Pakistan of the year 41, who was the son of Vasishka, held the title Kaisara (Ceasar) apart from other imperial titles used by Kushana rulers, i.e. Maharaja Rajatiraja Devaputra. Kanishka-II probably ruled as a co-ruler of Huvishka for a short period. This inscription shows that the Kushanas still held a sway over North-West-Frontier-Province of India in the first quarter of the second century A.D. The last known date of Huvishka is the year 60 or A.D. 138. However, since the earliest known date of his immediate successor Vasudeva is year 64 or 67, Huvishka might have ruled upto one of these years.

The last ruler of the 'Great Kushanas' or 'Imperial Kushanas' was Vasudeva-I, after whose reign the Kanishka era apparently went out of usage. The earliest known dates of Vasudeva-I is the year 64 or 67 while the last mentioned date on his epigraphic records is year 98 of Kanishka era. Vasudeva-I thus, must have ruled as an independent ruler from A.D. 142 or 145 to 176 earliest. His empire, most probably comprised the area to the east of Peshawar, Punjab in India and Pakistan, Haryana and Western Uttar Pradesh at least up to the Mathura region. Probably the area of Kashmir was also a part of his empire. Although coins bearing the name of Vasudeva have been found in large number over a vast region in the northwest of Sahri-Bahlol, Jamalgarh, at Sirkap and other places in Taxila and at Begram, it is difficult to determine the exact political boundaries of his empire. The Junagarh inscription of Rudradaman-I claims that Sindhu and Sauvira region

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1 B.N. Mukherjee, 1988, _op. cit._, pp.76-81.
2 CII, p.165.
3 B.N. Mukherjee, 1988, _op. cit._, pp.92-93.
4 _ASIAR_, 1911-12, pp.95 ff.
5 CII, p.117.
7 B. Chattopadhyay, 1967, _op. cit._, p.33.
were conquered by Rudradaman-I, in or before c. 149-50 which were earlier under the control of the Kushanas. The part of Kushana empire later annexed to the Sassanian empire, immediately after the fall of Imperial Kushanas, could have been under Vasudeva-I. Most of his inscriptions have been found at or near Mathura and his coins usually bear the reverse device of the Indian God Shiva and rarely the Iranian deity Nana. This sharp decline in the number of deities depicted on the reverse of Kushana coins and also in the quantity of pure gold in the total weight of gold coins, from the time of Vasudeva-I indicate dwindling economic condition of the empire. It was perhaps due to the end of direct Kushano-Roman maritime trade after the loss of the Sindh region to the Kushanas. But only a few years of digging at the site of Buddhist stupa and monastery at Mohenjo-Daro yielded at least 1438 copper coins of Vasudeva-I. His coins and their imitations, recovered in some secular buildings from Jhukar also suggest the popularity of Vasudeva’s copper coins in the lower Indus region as regular currency. Since the Kushana rule in Shen-tu (Sindhu) in the days of Wema Kadphises is certain, its continuation up to at least the beginning of the reign of Vasudeva-I appears to be highly probable. It seems that a vast region from Transoxiana to Mathura continued to acknowledge Kushana authority under Vasudeva-I and his successors, i.e. Kaniska-III (last quarter of A.D. 2nd Century) and Vasudeva-II (first quarter of A.D. 3rd century) but not beyond A.D. 230. After Vasudeva-I the empire may have been split into an eastern and a western or even more parts. It is apparent that the greatness of the Kushanas began to wane after Vasudeva-I’s reign and subsequent history is a proof of the rapidity of the withdrawal of their authority from the Ganga valley.

It is learnt from the We-lio (A History of the Wie Dynasty by Yu-Houan) that the Yue-Chi power was flourishing in Ki-pin (Kapisa i.e. Gandhara), Ta-

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1 El, Vol. VIII, 1905-06, p.44.  
5 Ibid., pp.170-173.
hia (Bactria), Kao-fu (Kabul) and Tien-chu (India) as late as the second quarter of the A.D. 3rd century. Numismatic evidences suggest that the Kanishka III's sway extended over the region extending from Punjab to Bactria and Afghanistan. However, the coins of these later Kushan kings are heavily debased in comparison to those of the 'Imperial Kushanas'. No sovereign of the dynasty has left any record after the year 98 (A.D. 176). Chinese sources refer to a king of the Ta-Yue-Chih named Po-tiao, identified with Vasudeva-II, who was ruling in A.D. 230 at the time of the Sassanian king Ardashir-I and who sent an embassy to the Chinese emperor. It appears from the evidence of Al-Tabari that Kushanas submitted to Ardashir-I sometime after A.D. 244 or 226. But the submission on the part of the Kushanas could have been only nominal and Vasudeva-II could have continued to reign for some more years. The Naqsh-i-Rustam inscription of Shapur-I, dated to A.D. 262 records that a part of the Kushana territory extending to Pashkibur (Peshawar) and northwards to Kash, Sogdiana and mountains of Chach (present Tashkent) was annexed to the empire of the Sassanian monarch Shapur-I. Sassanian governors who issued the so called 'Kushano-Sassanian' coins seem to have replaced the local dynasties. Thus, the rise of the Sassanian power and its gradual annexation of northwestern provinces seems to have been one of the immediate causes of the fall of the Kushana empire. But its economic strength had already been drained off to a great extent after the collapse of the Kushano-Roman maritime trade.

In the Indian territories of Punjab and the Gangetic-Yamuna belt, Kushana rule was subsequently replaced by independent republics and monarchies who issued their own tribal coins. Till the rise of Guptas, 16 Naga kings ruled over Mathura and Padmavati which suggests a long span of time of independent Naga rule. In Kausambi, a great many chieftains, mostly Maghas came to power. Pataliputra came under the control of some Murunda

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rulers of a Scythic lineage who had spread in some parts of the upper Ganga valley.\footnote{B.R. Mani, 1987, op. cit., p.22.} Arjunayanas came to power in the Bharatpur and Alwar area.\footnote{U. Singh, 2008, op. cit., p.378.} Eastern Punjab saw the rise of independent republics under the Yaudheyas, Malavas and the Kunindas in the beginning of the third century A.D. However, these local powers were not directly responsible for the extinction of the Kushana empire.

A series of coins closely resembling the issues of Kanishka-III and Vasudeva-II furnish us with the names of some chiefs belonging to the Shakas, Shilada and Gadhara or Gadakhara tribes. A large number of coins of these Later Kushana chiefs who succeeded the Imperial Kushanas have been found in good, bad condition or very debased gold from the entire Punjab region\footnote{RFKE, p.240.} which came under their sway in the third and fourth century A.D. The Kidara Kushanas known from their pale and much debased, Kushana type gold coinage and some Chinese sources, came to rule in the Kabul valley, Kashmir and north-western parts of India, in the middle of the fourth century A.D. Kidara Kushanas, who were actually of Huna extraction, were called Kushana on coins and Yueh-Chih in the Chinese text probably because they ruled over an erstwhile section of the Kushana empire.\footnote{G.V. Mitterwallner, 
Kushana Coins and Sculptures from Mathura, The Government Museum, Mathura, 1986, p.45.} They had to rule under the suzerainty of the Sassanians who were in possession of the northwestern part of the Kushana empire. How long did these local Kushana rulers continued to rule is not known but the fact that kings of Kashmir claimed descent from the Kushanas indicates a prolonged rule of petty dynasts on the subcontinent. The 
Devaputra Shahi Shahanushahi of the Allahabad pillar inscription might have referred to Kidara Kushana chiefs or some chief of the Gadahara tribe who were defeated by Samudragupta. The foundation of the Gupta empire completely diminished the glory of the descendants of the Kushana monarchs but the numismatic tradition of great Kushanas lingered on for centuries.
The Kushanas thus succeeded in not only carving out an extensive empire covering large parts of north India but also maintaining it for more than a century. In the light of the Rabtak inscription the extension of the Kushana rule till Bhagalpur area in Bihar in the east and Ujjain in south, at least by year 1 of Kanishka era, becomes a matter of authentic record. With the introduction of Wema Takto in the Kushana genealogy and chronology, as the son of Kujula Kadphises, the father of Wema Kadphises and grandfather of Kanishka, the direct line of the Kanishka group of kings with those of the Kadphises group, is now firmly established. The information provided by the Rabtak inscription can also help in solving the Soter Megas enigma which has puzzled historians for a long time. Although the political boundaries of the empire continued to shift in the reigns of each Kushana ruler, the broad perimeters of the Kushana empire have been drawn in this chapter. A detailed study of the archaeological material and the findspots of Kushana coins and inscriptions will further enhance our understanding about various aspects of Kushana rule in India.
# KUSHANA GENEALOGY AND CHRONOLOGY

## MIAOS
(Second half of the 1st century B.C.)

## KUJULA KADPHISES
(From about the end of the c. 1st century B.C. to the middle of the 1st century A.D.)

## WEMA TAKTO *

## WEMA KADPHISES
(From about the middle of the 1st century A.D. to c. A.D. 78)

## KANISHKA-I
(From the year 1 to 23 of Kanishka era i.e. c. A.D. 78 to 100/101)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>VASISHKA</th>
<th>HUVISHKA</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(Year 20 to year 28 i.e. A.D. 97/98 to 105/106)</td>
<td>(Year 25 or 28 to 60 i.e. A.D. 102/103 or 105/106 to 137/138)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## KANISHKA-II
(Year 41 i.e. A.D. 119/120)

## VASUDEVA-I
(Year 64 or 67 to year 98 i.e. A.D. 141/142 or 144/145 to 175/176)

## KANISHKA-III
(Last quarter of 2nd century A.D. or before A.D. 230)

## VASUDEVA-II
(1st Quarter of 2nd quarter of 3rd century A.D. but not beyond A.D. 262)

* Joe Cribb and Nicholas Sims – Williams have identified Wema Takto with Soter Megas.