CHAPTER XIII.

POLITICAL LIFE AND WAR.
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A large number of scenes are found in temples which throw light on the religious, social and also indirectly on the economic condition of Northern India. But there are comparatively fewer scenes to illustrate or to hint at the political condition of the country during the centuries when these temples were constructed. Whatever scanty material we have at our disposal, it has been carefully used to give us glimpses of the political life of the country during the ninth to fourteenth centuries.

KING AND QUEEN

Before resuming the authority and duties of a king, the prince had to be Coronated. The Coronation followed an anointment ceremony after which waters from the holy rivers were sprinkled over the king by some learned Brahmin or Purohitas, ascetic or Tapasvi. Then the Crown was placed on his head and the king took the Oath and resumed power.

KING'S CORONATION.

A scene shows the king seated on the throne while a Tapasvi is sprinkling the sacred waters over him from his kamandalu.

Thus being anointed the king was henceforth surrounded by a large number of attendants always standing at his beck and call and looking after his comforts.

1. Room 3 Bhuvanesvara Museum.
The king is standing with a guard on his left and the man holding Nangala Kalasa on the right (Fig. 224).

The king is seated, an attendant standing stands holding the Chhatra (Canopy) behind him while one stands holding the Purse. The king is apparently giving charity to the poor at the happy occasion of his resuming power.

The king stands on his right leg resting his left leg on the palm of an attendant who might be tying his sandal or doing some such other service for the king. Two Chhatra bearers and four male attendants, one of whom is armed with sword and shield, also stand by.

While the king sits on the throne, four attendants stand beside him holding Chhatra, fan and such other articles which are not very distinct.

But life was not all a pleasant dream of luxury and comfort even for the kings. They had to look to the state business and the welfare of the people.

Here a king—though seated on a Sīhāsana (throne), is shown instructing two attendants who stand in front. He seems to be directing them with a sword in his right hand.

1. Outside Ambika T. Jagat.
2. Konark Museum.
3&4. Lit out Purī T; Konark Museum (no attendants).
5. Lit out Sm T facing Sun T Konark.
Often there were unpleasant moments when the king was angered by his attendants or other men in government employ, for not faithfully discharging their duties.

The king seated on the throne is angrily pointing his dagger to a man standing in front. Behind this man stands another with a bag hanging on his shoulder.

**DOING JUSTICE OR SEEING JUSTICE DONE.**

Attendants are shown standing behind a king seated on the throne. The king is pointing his sword towards a man standing in front with folded hands. Three more men stand likewise with hands folded, along with him. Perhaps the four persons have come to present their grievance to the king and he is pointing at the real offender. The king was the final court of appeal and hence he is listening to these men.

In this scene the king is seated on a SthalaIsana and a cushion is placed behind his back. Five men stand in front of the king. The first has his hands folded, the second who has a sword, is held tight by the third man and two more men stand by. It seems that the first third and other two of these five men have brought a complaint against the man with the sword. Behind the king stand four attendants one holds a purse, another a sword and he is also pointing at the third man of the party of five; one more man just stands idle, while the fourth attendant with a staff seems to be a woman.

1. Ríout Puri T.  
2. Lt out Puri T.  
SITTING TO HIS PEOPLE.

Sitting on his throne all alone, the king seems to be speaking\(^1\) (as his mouth is shown open) evidently to an audience in front which is not shown in the scene.

KING ON TOURS.

Kings often had to take tours in their kingdoms to personally learn about the welfare of their people. At such occasions they went in a palanquin carried by men or in chariots, on horse or an elephant back, as well as in a boat.

A scene depicts the king being carried in a Falaki by two men. As the king carries a sword and a small spade like weapon with him it seems he fears danger on his way\(^2\).

In this scene the king’s Falaki bearers are eight in number. Five soldiers are shown guarding him on either side and musicians and dancers lead ahead\(^3\).

King on horseback is going ahead and a man follows him on foot holding the Chhatra over his head. A garland bearer, a female attendant and some more men are also shown\(^4\).

Sitting on a Sīhāsana placed on the back of an elephant the king goes ahead. Four attendants carrying Chhatra, garland and such other things are also shown\(^5\).

\(^1\) National Museum Delhi. \(^2\) Konark Museum. \(^3\) Outside Bhogamandap Puri T. \(^4\) 465. Pillar base in the Mandap of Sa T facing Sun T Hodhera.
the throne has been kept in the boat for king and he is seated on it. Four attendants with Chhatra, Genser pot, a bowl etc stand beside him. Five sturdy men are shown rowing the boat. In the other scene the king holding bow & arrow sits on the sishasana kept on the boat, two chhattra bearers—one in front & the other at the back are shown alongwith a third attendant; Four men are rowing the boat.

**KING HUNTING.**

All work and no play makes Jack a dull boy. Similarly the King's life would have become burdensome if there was no diversion for him from the business of the State. There were seasons when the work was heavy but they were invariably followed by the season of less work and more jocularity. For such a change the kings used to go on hunting excursions.

Sitting on horse back the king is shown pursuing the boar with a sword in his right hand; or seated on the back of an elephant followed by his attendants the king watches a tall Giraffe like animal which has suddenly appeared in front (Fig. 225).

Sitting on horse back the king carries a spear and is in hot pursuit of a wild Elephant; the attendant carrying his Chhatra is following behind. Two kings seated in two chariots are out hunting.

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1. Lt out Puri T.
2. Calcatta Museum
3. Lt out Sa T Konark facing Sun T Konark
4. Back out Sh T Konark
5. Hastakala Centre Jabalpur (No attendants here) Back outside Sa T facing Sun T Konark.
in a jungle. Each carries a bow and some arrows with him. Four or five wild boars are shown running for life.  

Two scenes depict the king shooting arrows seated on the back of an elephant (Fig. 226). He is hurling something in front (Fig. 227) in the second scene.

**KINGS FIGHTING.**

To conquer new lands a king had to fight another king. Conquests were made not only to impress their people but also due to economic pressure.

Seated on the backs of Elephants which are wearing coats of arms (i.e., a long iron net with heavy borders) two kings are shown fighting with each other (Fig. 228).

In the other scene the king sits in the howdah fighting his opponent. It seems that he has killed his opponent as a riderless elephant is shown stooping down.

**KING AND QUEEN TOGETHER.**

On all the above described occasions kings generally performed the various deeds without being accompanied by their queens. Moreover the high class women and queens were also observing prudery to some extent. They came out only in the presence of a select gathering. Hence they are depicted separately.

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1. Outside Sa T facing Sun T Konark.
2. Pillar base Sa T facing Sun T Hodhara.
3. Vishnu T Kiradu.
4. Rt out Vishnu T Kiradu; Mandap ceiling Sir J. Shah T Mt Abu.
5. Lt out Vishnu T Kiradu.
A queen is shown seated on a Sūhāsana while a maid in waiting with folded hands seems to be seeking forgiveness for some of her minor mistake unwillingly committed\(^1\); the queen here is looking back towards her female attendant perhaps expecting her to do something for her\(^2\).

But when during the late hours of the evening after the day's work was done and the king required some relief through dance and music, the queen and the female attendants of both the king and queen were to be seen enjoying the performance along with him.

The king is seated on the throne with eight female attendants on either side of him holding Chāmara, Chhatra, a big fan and such other things. Dance and music goes on in front\(^3\).

The king is sitting on a Swing in the balcony of his palace. Three female attendants with Chhatra, Chāmara and fan stand by\(^4\).

The king sits on the throne watching five female musicians shown playing on the clarionet, flute, mrdanga and manjeera while one prepares for the dance\(^5\).

In the secret bower of his palace there was enough room for romance even for the king and the queen.

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1. Lt out Su T facing Sun T Konark.
2. Outside Bhogandap Puri T.
3. Outside Bhogandap Puri T.
4. Outside Bhogandap Puri T.
5. Lt out Puri T.
The king wearing his crown and even carrying arms is shown embracing his queen who also wears a crown and is armed like him. The queen carries a lotus flower in her hand. Perhaps they have returned together from some hunting expedition.

BIRTH OF AN HEIR.

The birth of an heir or successor to the throne was a matter of great joy. A still greater pleasure it was to watch the baby grow into a child. Sometimes the child could not resist running to his father and sitting on the throne beside him or from sitting on the King's lap.

One scene depicts the king seated on a Simhasana holding fondly his son on his lap while an attendant stands by.

Even a king could not be disrespectful to ascetics and the saints. Sometimes the king went to pay respects to a well known learned Sanyasi (ascetic).

Here a king (as he is wearing Crown) is shown paying respects to a Rishi. Only two attendants accompany him—the male with a Chulla and female with a Ghata—perhaps carrying offerings for the Rishi.

ĀSVAMEDHA SACRIFICE.

It was a matter of pride for a king to perform the Āsvamedha Yajña (Sacrifice). In this Yajña a beautifully decorated young horse

1. Dhar Museum.
2. Back out Sa T facing Sun T Konark.
3. Lt out Puri T.
was left loose by the king performing the sacrifice. The horse was to
wander from place to place for about a year and then come back to
his master. With the horse some military officers or one of the Princes
also went. If the horse came back unharmed— all the territories through
which the animal had wandered were to recognize the king as their
liege lord and sovereign. In case some other king wanted to oppose this
king— he just had to tie up the horse and the challenge was met by the
horse’s master.

One scene depicts a beautiful horse well decorated with
ornaments let loose by some king. The Prince on the chariot and some
other military official in a Palanquin are following the horse

BATTLE SCENES.

Some of the large and small friezes in the temples depict
battle scenes or the scenes of armies on the march.

An army is seen on the march with elephants and their
riders, a camel with its rider, cavaliers and foot soldiers going in a
row\(^2\) (fig. 229, 230, 231).

One scene shows the army marching, perhaps, through a
jungle as boars are shown running in between horse feet\(^3\).

In some fighting armies a chariot\(^4\) (figs. 232, 233, 234) is also
shown; other shows men armed with sword and shield marching together\(^5\).

1. Lt out on the Flinth of Sun T Konark.
2. Rt out Baliinga T, Sm T near Vishnu T Kiradu; Rajkot Museum;
   Lucknow Museum; Frieze in Sun T Modhera; Sm frieze in Sm T facing
   Sun T Modhera; Outside Kalika T Chittor.
3. Sm T near Kalika Mata Chittor Fort; Mahabir T Osian;
   Vishnu T Kiradu.
4. Sm T near 4alika Mata Chittor Fort.
5. Sm T at the back of Sun T Konark.
another scene of a big army shows a number of elephants, horses and foot soldiers going ahead (Fig. 235)—(Scenes of kings fighting have already been described).

A sturdy man of the opponent's army comes forth with a huge javelin. He has pierced the head of the elephant which is stooping down (Fig. 236).

**ARMY AND ITS EQUIPMENT.**

Soldiers, their dress and armed men and women have already been discussed in the chapter on social life. Here it would not be out of place to give something about the army's equipments. Elephant, horse and camel were used directly taking part in battles or as beasts of burden. When elephants and horses were fighting along with men, proper care was taken to protect them under coats of arms which are beautifully depicted in the Vishnu temple and some other temples at Kiradu and in the Naulakha Temple at Ghumli. Chariots were rarely used in battles. The weapons of war were Bow and arrow, lance with sharp pointed heads (Plate XI, Figs. 11 & 12 and 10), swords with single or double edges having various shapes and sizes (Plate XI, Figs. 1, 3, 5, 7 and 9), daggers, small hunting knives or scimitars for use at close quarters. Gada with the heavy weight to kill the opponent at one blow (Plate XI, Figs. 4 & 8) and shields of round or rectangular shape for protecting the

1. It out Furti T; Ehama Shah T Mt Abu.
2. Vishnu T Kiradu.
fighter from enemy's blows (Plate XI, Figs. 3 & 6).

The Charapa and Hirata often accompanied soldiers on fronts to encourage them in the thick of battle and entertain them when dusk fell and the battle was closed for the day. Likewise the military band playing national tunes or war tunes to incite their men and make them more zealous in fight, also went to the battle fields with the army.

WOMEN AND WAR.

At the time of serious emergencies women also did not keep themselves shut in their homes. They came forward armed with weapons and fought side by side with men. This may well be proved by the king and queen both armed, embracing each other. It is quite possible that the brave queen had accompanied her husband to the battle field and luckily they have returned home together. Rajput history is full of the stories of brave women who fought for their mother land at the side of their husbands. As late as the nineteenth century we get the example of Lakshmi Bai— the Rani of Jhansi whose praises even the British sung.