CHAPTER III

HISTORY

(From Janapada Period to the Paramara Period)
Vidishā was counted among the well-known cities of ancient India. It was the capital of Dasaṁa or Ñara, i.e. eastern Mālva. Coming down to the mythological and classical Age, we find a Purānic reference to Vidishā as a Janapada.\(^1\) Another important reference is found in the pages of the Śkaḍda Purāṇa, in which Vidishā appears as a holy place (tīrtha). As per Ágauṭṭara Nikāya, Vidishā was included in the Avanti Janapada before the birth of Buddha. According to traditional history the region was probably under the occupation of the Haihayas, who belonged to the yadu clan.\(^2\) As per the Purāṇas and the epics, the Haihayas dominated this area from early times. They are stated to have suffered a set-back at the hands of the kings of the solar race (śūrya-vaśa) of Ayodhya. According to the Purānic tradition, Haihayas founded the great city of Māhiṣmati (Maheswara in the Khargone district of M.P.). The Haihayas soon re-asserted themselves. They raised their ancestral land to the position of a great kingdom, particularly under their most powerful king Kārṭvīrya Sahasarājuna (of thousand arms), who is described in the Purāṇas as a contemporary of Rāvana, whom he kept imprisoned in his capital at Māhiṣmati. This king, after conquering the city of Māhiṣmati, made it his capital. He had five sons, one of whom was Avanti, after whom probably the territory of western Mālva was known as Avanti. As per Kālidāsa's Raghuvamśa, Shaṭrujñna, the youngest brother of Rāma, expelled the Yādavas from this region and placed his
son Subêhu at Vidisëhâ. In Bëna's Kâdambarâ we find a king named Sûdraka who ruled over Vidisëh on the bank of the Vêtravatî (Betwâ).

This region around Vidisëh was known in ancient time as Dâsârâ, with Vidisëh or Beasagar as its capital. Kautilya the minister of Chandragupta Maurya, referred to this region as Dâsârâ and so also did Kâlidâsa. Dâsârâ (eastern Mâlwa) extended over the adjacent Sâgar plateau, dissected by the deeply entrenched valleys of the river Dhasârâ.

In Brahmanical, Buddhist and jaina literature, Vidisëh has been called by different names, viz. Vassanagar, Vaisvanagar, Visvanagar, Beasagar, Vaidisa, Vidisê, etc. During the days of the Buddha, i.e., in the 6th century B.C., Vidisëh's place was very exalted in all respects. The economic prosperity was due to its advantageous position on the cross roads of two important trade-routes. One of these ran from Pratištâhâ (modern paithan in the Godâvarî region) to Mahishmatî, Ujjayini, Gondâ (also), Vaidisa (Vidisê) and Kauśâmbî, while the other connected Bharukachcha (Broach) and Sûrpâraka on the Arabian sea, to Mathurâ via Ujjayini. A branch of this route ran from Vidisê to Kauśâmbî through the valley of Betwâ, or Vêtravatî and then to Pêtalipûtra.

In the itinerary of Jâvaka, who was sent from the Magadhan court of Ajëtâshastrî to treat the king of Avanti, Chanda Pradhyotâ, Vidisê, Gondâda-Ujjayini and Mahîshmatî
are mentioned. Jāvala must have travelled by one of the trade-routes. Substantial merchandises used to be carried over on these routes, which gradually made Vidishā one of the richest cities of ancient India. In fact, the magnificent stūpa of Sāñchī was built largely by the donations from the business community of Vidishā, though by general belief Asoka erected the grand cupola. The economic prosperity of this place was retained till the days of the Guptas, because in his Meghadūta, Kālidāsa has referred to Vidishā as a place where everybody gets wealth to his heart's contents.

In Sanskrit literature eastern Mālwa, including the Vidishā region, was referred to as Ākara, that rose to a great height of cultural superiority in the Buddhist and the subsequent period. The brightest era, of course, lasted from Ashoka's region to the Imperial Guptas. Sāñchī stood in symbolic relation to Buddhism. Equally interesting is the Haliocords pillar at Basanagar which gives ample evidence of Brahmanical influence coexisting with Buddhism in this area.

The Pradyōta Dynasty: Chanda Pradyōta was a contemporary of Buddha, and in his time Aventi became a powerful and flourishing kingdom, as is known from the early Buddhist literature. According to the Purāṇas, this king ruled for 23 years. His daughter Vāsavadatta was married to king Udayana of Kausāmbi. After Pradyōta four rulers of this dynasty
are said to have ruled over Avanti one after the other. The last ruler was defeated by the Saismāgas of Magadha. 7

There was in this period a brisk cultural movement between Avanti and other cities of Madhyadese. During the reign of the Pradyōta dynasty the ancient cities of Vidishā, Āran Mānighmati and Ujjayinī made great progress with the extinction of the Pradyōtas by the beginning of the 4th century B.C. Avanti lost the high prestige of an independent kingdom. It henceforth became only a part of the Viceroyalty of the succeeding Magadhan empire, first of the Nāṇḍas, and subsequently of the Mauryas.

Avanti continued its economic and cultural progress even after the rule of the Pradyōta. According to the Mahā-

bodhivamsa, the Sākyas took shelter at Vidishā, being afraid of Viditadha. 8

THE MAURYAS:

The Maurya emperor, Asoka stayed at the city of Vidishā while he was on his way to Ujjayinī to join the post of Viceroy of Avanti. 9 We learn from the Dipavamsa that Asoka, still a prince aged 18, was appointed a viceroy by his father, Bimbisāra, at Ujjain. While on his way from Patali-

putra to that place he met ‘Devi’, a banker’s daughter of Vidishā or Besnagar of the Sākya clan and married her. 10 According to the Mahābodhivamsa she was honoured as ‘Vedīśā
Mahâdevî. In the Buddhist works she is called a Sâkya princess. She gave birth to son Mahendra and daughter Saûghâmâtri.¹² Both are famous in history as their father's religious ambassadors to Ceylon. They are known to have carried a twig of the original 'Bodhi tree' and led a Buddhist mission to that country. The services rendered by Aśoka to the cause and spread of Buddhism need hardly be mentioned. He laid the foundations of great stûpa at Sânci and raised a huge monolithic pillar close to it with his usual edicts inscribed thereon.¹³ 'Devî' never visited Pâtaliputra. She stayed at Besnagar and embraced Buddhism afterwards. Recently a monastery type of building has been excavated near the Sânci stûpa, which is stated to have been constructed for her residence.¹⁴ It is said that before sailing for Ceylon Mahendra came to visit his mother at Besnagar. The mother took her son to a 'Chaityagiri', which by popular belief, was none other than the Sânci stûpa.

**VIDISHA : AS A CITY STATE**

The last of the Mauryan kings, Brihadratha was overthrown by his minister Pushyamitra Sunga in 187 B.C. Sometimes during the weak rule of the former, Vidisha like Tripuri, Mâhishmatî and the other contemporary towns, might have emerged as an independent city state, temporarily. The proof of this lies in the discovery of a few copper coins with signs of three Brāhmi letters, read as Vedisa or Veddasa (Sanskrit
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Vidisa). The characters are similar to those of the stratigography and palaeography the coin may be dated to the 3rd-2nd century B.C. 16

Independence of Eastern Malwa— After the death of Asoka, the great Maurya empire was disintegrated. The eastern Malwa region became free from Maurya domination about 200 B.C., if not a little earlier. This is clearly borne out by the discovery of coins of the independent rulers from Eran and Vidisha. 17 A coin of king Dharmapala with his name written in Asokan Brahmi characters was found by Cunningham at Eran. 18 The excavations conducted by Prof. K.D. Bajpai, at Eran (dist. Sagar, 1960-65) have yielded a round lead-piece bearing the die-mark of king Indragupta, the Brahmi legend in the die-reading as 'raño Indagupta'. The coins of another rulers Sivagupta and Saknadeva have also been recently discovered at Vidisha. 19

The Sungas—

The Maurya rule followed by the role of the Sungas in eastern Malwa. Pushyamitra Sunga, the originator of the dynasty made his eldest son Agnimitra, the ruler of Vidisha. The Sungas were the feudatories of the Mauryas at Vidisha. Pushyamitra tried to reinforce his position by marrying his son Agnimitra to princess Malavika of Vidarbha. She was the daughter of Madhavasena and niece of Yañasena, the ruler of
Vidarbha. Some historians think that Pushyamitra gave his daughter to Satakarni of the Satavana house. 20

During the Sunga regime Vidisha became the capital of Akara or Eastern Malwa, and one of the most flourishing cities of India.

Agnimitra served as his father's viceroy from his headquarters at Vidisha. It is significant to note that though the capital of the Sunga Kings was Pataliputra, still Pushyamitra and Agnimitra were called the rulers of Vidisha. 21

According to Kalidasa's play Mahavikram, Pushyamitra repulsed an attack of the Yavanas (probably the Bactrian Greeks), when the sacrificial horse of his Asvamedha sacrifice went to the bank of the Sindhu and was stopped by them. Agnimitra's son, Vasumitra was placed in charge of the roaming horse. The news of the Yavana attack was conveyed to Agnimitra at Vidisha. Actually Pushyamitra performed not one but two Asvamedha sacrifices with to herald the victory of Brahmanism over the Buddhist faith. 22 One of the Asvamedha sacrifices was probably performed at Vidisha itself, as evidenced by the recent excavations. 23

From the Ayodhya inscription 24 we also know that the Pushyamitra performed two horse-sacrifices, and they probably indicate his double victories against the Yavanas. D.C. Sircar 25 holds the view that his first campaign was
against Demetrius I, and the second was against Menander.
On other hand, A.K. Narain is of opinion that there was
only a single expedition, and that it occurred about the
middle of the 2nd century B.C. The Greek invader seems to
be Menander, whose inscriptions and coins have also been
discovered.

Pushyamitra ruled for about 36 years (187 to 151
B.C.) and was succeeded by his son Agnimitra (Vasujyeṣṭha).
He was succeeded by Sujuyeṣṭha, of whom nothing is known. The
fourth king was Vasumitra, the son of Agnimitra. The later
Sungas shifted their capital from Pātaliputra to Vidisha.
The next important Sunga ruler was Bhāghadra, who is known
to have ruled from capital at Vidisa. He must have been a
powerful monarch among the Indian rulers, to whom the Greek
ruler Antialcidas sent an envoy, named Haliodoros, who main-
tained diplomatic relations with him.

According to the Purānic literature nine other
kings of the Sunga dynasty ruled over Vidisa, viz. Agnimitra,
Vasujyeṣṭha, Vasumitra, Ódraka or Bhadraka, Pulinda, Goshha,
Vajramaṇṭha, Bhāgavaṭa and Devabhuṭi. Pushyamitra ruled for
about 36 years (187- 151 B.C.) and at the end of an eventful
life left for his son Agnimitra, a vast territory, including
the cities of Pātaliputra, Ayodhya, Vidisa and probably
Jālandhar and Sākala. There is a reference in the Valavik-
-agnimitra to the newly formed independent kingdom in the region of Vidarbha. Yaññasena, the king of Vidarbha, had a stained relation with the Śūngas of Viśisṭa on the arrest of Mādhavasena, who was a cousin of yaññasena but a friend of Agnimitra. Agnimitra gave order to his brother-in-law, Viśāra (who was already placed in charge of a fortress in the frontier, on the banks of Narmadā) to invade Vidarbha and effect the release of Mādhavasena. Yaññasena was defeated in the encounter and ultimately Vidarbha was divided between the two cousins Yaññasena and Mādhavasena, both acknowledging the Śūnga suzerainty.30 Probably after this incident the northern rulers entered a state of political relationship with the Sātavāhana monarch of Andhra. As stated in the Purāṇas, Agnimitra seems to have reigned for eight years only. Because of the longevity of his father he came to the throne at quite a mature age. Unlike his father he lacked sobriety of character and as his queen Haṅsapadikā laments, was perhaps, a refined sensualist. His endeavour to get the beautiful princess Mālavikā of Vidarbha is immortalised by Kālidāsa in his Mālavikāagnimitram. It is also shown in this Kāvya how fond was he of dance, music and Drāmā.

Agnimitra was succeeded by his son Jyeṣṭhanītra and Vasumītra or Sunti, of whom the former remained on the throne for seven years and the latter for ten years (C. 133-123 B.C.). A few coins of Jyeṣṭhanītra have been discovered.
According to the evidence of the Purāṇas again, there were other Śuṅga kings, named Ōdraka, Āndhraka or Anadra, Pulindaka and Vajramitra. The Bhāga or Bhāgavata of the Purāṇas was doubtless no other than king Bhāgabhadrā of the Śuṅga dynasty. During his reign the Greek king Antialcidas of Taxila sent Dion's son Heliodorus, as his personal ambassador to the Śuṅga court at Vidishā. A part of this information is inscribed on a lofty Saruḍa pillar locally named as 'Khāmbāpī'. The pillar with the inscription was discovered near the village of Besnagar or Bes, that is ancient Vidishā. The epigraphs records the erection of this pillar in the fourteenth year of king Bhāgabhadrā's reign by Heliodorus, who himself was a Vaishnava, as a Saruḍa-dhwaja to a temple of Lord Bāgudeva. The lithic record, doubtless, points to the existence of a temple of Bhāgavata in near proximity. On numismatic ground Antialcidas is assigned a date somewhere in the middle of the second century B.C. The temple, mentioned above, must have thus existed in the same age. The discovery of an elliptical temple of Viṣṇu just on the site of the later Bhāgavata temple supplies the earliest archaeological evidence of Viṣṇuva culture. This temple is believed to have been existing in Vidishā at least in the 3rd century B.C. Another inscription in early Brāhmī characters, dated in the 12th year of king Bhāgavata, has been discovered on a fragment of a stone pillar at Vidishā. It records the
setting up of a flagstaff in honour of Lord Vishnu, in the
temple at Vidisha, by a private individual named Gautamiputra.34

Incidently it may be mentioned that the earliest
punch-marked coins were also found in this region. By general
belief the earliest coins of this type existed as early as
in the 5th century B.C. Atleast the use of such coins can
be established in Vidisha during the 4th century B.C. 35

Bhāgabhadra enjoyed a long reign of 32 years. Dr.
D.R. Bhandarkar36 identifies Bhāgabhadra of the inscription,
with a king of the name Bhāgavatā, who is mentioned in the
Purāṇas as the ninth king of Śunga dynasty. V.A. Smith37
assigned the date 100 B.C. to this Śunga king. But this
identification of D.R. Bhandarkar, and the date assigned by
V.A. Smith, do not seem to be correct, because a second
Garuda pillar at Beelangar is dated in the twelfth regnal
year of king Bhāgavatā, and Bhāgabhadra of one pillar cannot
be taken to be a Bhāgavatā on the other. According to R.K.
Mookerji38 and D.C. Sircar,39 this Bhāgabhadra was most
probably the fifth Śunga king, Bhadraka of the Purāṇas,
known also from the Brahmosa inscription. 40 But actually,
there seems to be no reason to identify Bhāgabhadra with
Bhadraka, the fifth Śunga king, because he is credited with
a reign of either two or seven years, whereas the inscription
is dated in the fourteenth regnal year. Bhāgavatā, on the
other hand, according to the Purāṇas, reigned for thirty two years. It seems very probable that Bhāgavata and Bhāgabhadrā of the two inscriptions found at Sesnagar, referring to the twelfth and fourteenth regnal years respectively, are identical.\(^1\)

Bhāgabhadrā has enjoyed a long reign of 32 years. He was succeeded by Devabhūti in C. 82 B.C. Bāna tells us that a Śunga king, who was overfond of women’s company, lost his life at the hands of the daughter of his female attendant, disguised as a queen. The murder was committed at the instance of the king’s minister Vāsudeva, a Kanya Brāhain. This is corroborated by the Purāṇas, which speak of the overthrow of the last Śunga monarch Devabhūti. The Purāṇas assign to Devabhūti a reign of ten years.\(^2\)

**THE KĀNVAS:**

The Magadhan throne was thus usurped by the Kanya king Vāsudeva after murdering the last Śunga king Devabhūti. The Kānvas were four in number, viz. Vasuniṭra, Bhūmuniṭra, Nārāyaṇa and Suśarmana. They ruled for 45 years only (B.C. 75 to 30) and the last of them was overthrown by the Āridrā-śrītyas or the Sātavāhanas. It is not quite unlikely that some weak successors of the Juṇjas were allowed to rule in Vīdisha region under the de facto authority of the Kānvas during their tenure.\(^3\) This is inferred from the Purāṇas,
which state that the Andhras would destroy the Kanyas and what is left the Sunga Power. 44

Coins of quite a large number of Mitra rulers of Pāncāla, Mathurā, Ayodhyā and Kaushāmbī are known to us. It has to be reconsidered if these four houses, along with the Mitra house at Vidishā, were related to each other. It appears quite probable that the five branches had their originator in Puṣṭamitra Śunga. The coins of a new king Śunyavarma, a seal of Dhanbraṇi and the coins of king Āṅgarāja, all acquired from Kauśāmbī, are to be taken into consideration in this respect. 45 Prof. K.D. Bajpai 46 has propounded a theory on numismatic evidence, that the Mitra ruler of Pāṇḍhāla, Mathurā, Ayodhyā and Kauśāmbī, along with the Mitra house at Vidishā were related to one another. It appears quite probable that the five branches had their originator in Puṣṭamitra Śunga. However, this theory is not convincing. 47 The rule of the Śunga rulers of Vidishā came to an end in the first century B.C. and these rulers are not known to have issued any coin. On the other hand, the Mitra rulers of Pāṇḍhāla, Mathurā, Ayodhyā and Kauśāmbī, issued coins which, palaeographically, belong to the second or third century A.D. In the Suxar hoard, the coins of these Mitra rulers were found with the Kauśāna coins of Kauśāna and Kauśāṇa. It seems that these Mitra rulers do not seem to have been related to the Śunga house of Vidishā. 48
Agnimitra, the eldest son of Puṣṇyamitra Śunga, is known to have ruled at Vīḍiṣhā including the several part of the eastern Mālwā region during the 2nd century B.C. The Mālamikāagnimitra, the dramā of the great sanskrit poet Kālidāsa, gives some detailed account of the Agnimitra's rule. The famous Buddhist stūpas at Sāihā near Vīḍiṣhā, built during the Śunga-Sāṭavāhana regime, received donations from the inhabitants of Vīḍiṣhā, besides the others from Ujjainī, Ĥran and several other towns and Villages. After the Śunga rule the eastern Mālwā was also ruled over by the Sāṭavāhanas, whose coins and several inscriptions are known to us from Mālwā. There was a constant struggle for supremacy between the Sāṭavāhanas and the western Kṣatrapas during the early centuries of the christian era. Some coins bearing the names of kings Vālāka, and Vīśākādeo have recently been discovered at Vīḍiṣhā. Similarly coins of several rulers of the Nāga dynasty have been found in large number in Vīḍiṣhā and Ĥran. It appears that at least the major part of Ĥran was also included in the kingdom of Vīḍiṣhā during the period. Vīḍiṣhā was connected with Ĥran by the main route coming from Kaushāmbī in the north-east and Ujjain in the west.

It seems that all the names of the Śunga rulers in the Purānic lists belonged to the direct line of Puṣṇyamitra Śunga whereas the remaining other monarchs known from the coins and inscriptions must have been the later offshoots of the
Śuniga dynasty which continued to rule for a longer period as feudatory chiefs. Kaushāmbī continued to be the headquarter of the Śunigas for about three centuries. The Pabhosa inscription mention that the coins was excavated in the tenth year of the reign of ōdraka. The donor of the coins was Asādhasena, a maternal uncle of Bahaspatimitra, who has been identified with the king then ruling at Kaushāmbī and whose coins have also been found from the above place. In another inscription from the same place, we find that Asādhasena belonged to the royal family of Ahichchhatarā, the capital of north Pāṅchala in Bareilly District of Uttar Pradesh. Thus the Śunigas of Ahichchhatarā, Mathurā, Kaushāmbī and Vidishā seem to have been inter-connected with matrimonial relationship. There is nothing to prove that the Śuniga house of Bharhat came to an end after Dhanabhūti. They were probably uprooted later either by the Kanāvas or by the Sātavāhanas, who swept away the remains of the Śuniga power and appointed Sisunandī to govern the Vidishā region. However, this event have must taken place sometime at the end of 1st century B.C., as we find the third Sātavāhana king, Sātavāhanī (27-17 B.C.) mentioned at Sānchi.

The Sātavāhana and the Western Kshatrapas: After the Śunigas, the next powerful dynasty which ruled over eastern Mālā was that of the Sātavāhanas. The main current of Indian History from the 1st century B.C. to the second century A.D. was the
long drawn was between the western Kṣaṭrapas of the north-west and the Sātavāhanas of the south. Both these houses were vying with each other in their bid to extend their respective empires, at the cost of the other. Coins and several inscriptions of the Sātavāhanas are known to us from Mālwā region. There was a constant struggle for supremacy between the Sātavāhanas and the western Kṣaṭrapas during the early centuries of Christian era. This is attested to by the Nāsik inscription of Gauḍamī Bālārī and the Jūnāgarh inscription of Rudradēmanā. According to Nāsik prasasti the territories conquered by Gauḍamiputra Sātakarnī from Nāhāpāna included Anūpa (the country of the Narmadā about Nimār), Ākara (East Mālwā). Vidishā is taken to be the north-eastern part of the Sātavāhana empire, that had to change its allegiance between these two powers quite often. As has been mentioned that according to the Purāṇas a Sātavāhana ruler killed the last Kāpva ruler and became the master of the Meṣadhan empire including Mālwā, in the 1st century B.C. One Sātakarnī is believed to have conquered Mālwā about 72 B.C. Soon they were dispossessed by the western Kṣaṭrapas.

They styled themselves as Viceroyes. The earlier of these Kṣaṭrapas, belonged to the Kṣaharāṭa house, while the latter house is named the Kardamaka. Some copper coins bearing cut-landish names, such as Rāmagama and Valāka, have been discovered in Mālwā. These foreign chiefs ruled over some
parts of Malwa during the 2nd - 1st centuries B.C. Inscriptions and coins of both the houses have been unearthed in Vidishā. Bhūmaka was the founder of the Kshaharāṭa line whose second member Nāhapāna extended his dominion up to Ajmer in the north and Nāsik and Poona districts in the south, which had so long been under the possession of the Sātavāhanas. He assumed the title of 'Rājana'.

According to the Nāsik and Kārlā inscriptions of the Nāhapāna's son-in-law, Śaka ushavadata, the former became the master of the whole of Mālwa, Koṅkan, the western part of Vidishā and the whole of Mahārāṣṭra. The invasion effected a permanent lodgement in these territories, and almost obliterated the Sātavāhanas power. But his power was crushed by the Gautamiputra Sātakarni who, according to the Poona and Nāsik inscriptions of his mother Gautami Balashri, killed his northern opponent in Śaka year 46 (A.D. 124-25) and thereby enriched his dominion with the possessions of Saurāśtra, Anūpa, Ākara (Eastern Mālwa) and Avañē (Western Mālwa) etc. Sātakarni is mentioned in an inscription at the Southern gate of Sāñchi, which records the gift of one of its architraves by Ānanda, a foreman of the artisans of the Sātavāhana realm.

Gautamiputra Sātakarni seems to have lost Mālwa to the Scythian rulers known as Kardamakas, because it is firmly
asserted in the Jūnāgarh inscription dated A.D. 150 of Rudradāmanā of the Kardamaka dynasty that his grandfather chaṣṭana, with whom he was ruling jointly, became the lord of all those places which were once conquered by Gauṭamaśri Sāṭakarni from Nāhapaṇ. According to Ptolemy also Chaṣṭana's capital was located at Ujjain (Ozena). It seems quite probable that a matrimonial alliance was made between these two warring dynasties, by marrying the daughter of Rudradāmanā to a son of Gauṭamaśri Sāṭakarni. The name of the bridegroom seems to be Vāsiṣṭhishiputra Sāṭakarni, a brother of Vāsiṣṭhishiputra Pulumāvi. Coins of Pulumāvi and his successor were discovered from Vīdīshā proper. Probably they were the last known southern rulers of this region. Several Khaṭrīpras coins belonging to Vīradāmanā, Rudrasena-II etc. found in Vīdīshā, suggest a prolonged Khaṭrīpras occupation in this tract after the Sāṭavāhanas. The Sakas ruled in the Ujjayini region from the middle of the 2nd century A.D. to almost the end of the 6th century A.D. Thus the western Khaṭrīpras ruled over Mālavā for about 250 years, till their power was finally crushed by Chandragupta-II of the Gupta dynasty. About the middle of the 3rd century A.D., there were not only internal dissensions among the Sakas of western India, but they were also threatened by the external enemies, such as the Mālavas, the Abhiras and the Nāgas.

**THE NĀGAS:** After the Sāṭavāhana rule, eastern Mālavā (Ākara)
was ruled over by the Nāgas. They had their main capital at Vīdīśa, apart from other political seats, such as Mathurā, Pādmapati (Pawāy), Kaṇṭīpurī (Kutvār in Morena distt.) and Eran (in Sāgar District). The Nāgas of Pādmapati ruled over Vīdīśa during the 2nd-3rd century A.D. According to the Purāṇas the Nāga rulers flourished after the decline of the Kūṣhāpas at Vīdīśa. It has been also surmised that the Nāga house probably originated at Vīdīśa, from where they moved on to the north, establishing Branches at Pādmapati, Kaṇṭīpurī and Mathurā. Several copper coins of the Nāga rulers have been brought to light from the excavations at Beenaṅgar (Vīdīśa) and Eran. One of these belong to Gaṇapati and one to Būma, the Nāga rulers of Pādmapati indicating that the kings of Pādmapati may have extended their influence over other Nāga centres.

The Nāgas of Vīdīśa and Pādmapati must have become aggressive neighbours of the Kāñṭātrapas at this time. A number of coins of Nāga rulers have been discovered from Vīdīśa. The Nāgas were śaivites. During their rule there was some artistic activity in eastern Mālāvā.

The main Nāga rulers, who flourished at Vīdīśa, were Śeṣa, Bhogin and Sādāchandra. Sādāchandra is surnamed Chandaḍāśa, who is described as the second Nākṣavat (i.e. Nakrāpana) and may have been associated with the Ṣakas.
K.P. Jayaswal\textsuperscript{62} holds that the coins usually attributed to kings Seshadatta, Rāmadeśa and Sisuchandradatta of Mathurā are really the issues of the Nāga rulers of Vidishā mentioned in several Purāṇas bearing the names of Sesa, Rā machandra and Sisunandi respectively. The coins of Purushādatta, Uttamadaśa, Rāmadeśa, Bhavadaśa and Sivanandi which also occur in the Mathurā series, are also attributed by him to the early Nāga rulers of Vidishā.

A.J. Altekar\textsuperscript{63} has proved that there is no evidence to justify the conclusion that Seshadatta, Rāmadeśa, Sisuchandradatta and other rulers of Mathurā series were ruling at Vidishā.

Vidishā was also a centre of Nāga worship. The Nāga rulers appear to have been the worshippers of the Nāgas, and they patronised this. Various statues of Nāgas and Nāgis, both in the human and the serpent forms from the 1st to 3rd century A.D. have been found at Vidishā.\textsuperscript{64}

The Vākaṭakas: - At the same time, some portions of Vidishā district seem to have been held by the Vākaṭakas who, like the Śunga, Kanya and the Sātavāhana rulers, were Brāhmaṇas of Vīṣṇuvṛṣidhūga gōṭra. Although the question of the original home of the Vākaṭakas is not yet satisfactorily settled, there is, however, clear evidence to show that the centre of their early activity was in Vidishā.\textsuperscript{65}
The Purāṇas mention Vindhyaśakti (C. A.D. 255-275),
the founder of the dynasty, as a ruler of Vidishā. Vindhya-
śakti seems to have enlarged his patrimony, comprising a
district or two in Vīdarbha, and extended its limits across
the Vindhya range, so as to include a portion of Mālwa. This
may perhaps explain why the Purāṇas mention Vindhyaśakti as
the ruler of Vīdisha.66

The Imperial and the Later Guptas:

When the foundation of Gupta empire, with Pātaliputra as the capital, was laid by Chandragupta - I in about
319 A.D., there were several independent petty states in
this region of Mālwa. The Mālvas settled in the region. The
Samakānika, Abhira, Prājrjuna, Kāka and Kharparika ruled in
the area around Vīdisha. The territory around Pāwayā was in
the possession of the Nāgas, and western Mālwa was ruled by
the Sakas.67

Samudragupta:— In the fourth century A.D. a new power, the
Gupta dynasty arose in northern India. By the middle of the
4th century A.D. the authority of the Nāgas was supplanted
by the newly rising power of the Guptas. This is attested
to by the Allahābād pillar inscription of Samudragupta, who
finally vanquished them. The inscription also claims his
victory over a number of ruling tribes and dynasties in
Northern India, such as the Mālvas and the Sankānikas.68
According to the Allahabad pillar inscription, Samudragupta vanquished two Nāga rulers, Gaṇapaṭi Nāga and Nāgasena along-with the other rulers of Āryavattra during his empire-building conquests about the middle of the 4th century A.D. They were extirpated and crushed by him and the region passed under the Gupta suzerainty. Samudragupta might have established friendly relations with the Nāga rulers afterwards. He, however, married his son Chandragupta II to a Nāga princess Kubernāgā. A child of this union was Prabhavatīgupta, who became the queen of Rudrasena-Ⅱ of the Vākātaka house. Amongst the many tribes which Samudragupta subdued were the Sanakē-nikas, Khaparikas and the Ākakas, who are believed to have lived in the neighbourhood of Vidishā. Samudragupta annexed Eastern Mālavā is clear from Śran inscription. This refers to his good deeds and to his virtuous queen and also refers to Śran as a pleasure town (Svabhoganagar). It appears that in the course of his expedition Samudragupta conquered eastern Mālavā and appointed Rāmagupta to look after the newly conquered territory. The Ṣakas of western India submitted to the suzerainty of Samudragupta.

Rāmagupta: Among the scholars there has been a keen controversy about the historicity of Rāmagupta of literary traditions. Some scholars doubt his historicity. No official Gupta genealogy ever mentions the name of Rāmagupta as the son of Samudragupta and the predecessor of Chandragupta-Ⅱ.
The 'Devā Chāndragupta' drāmā of Viśākhadatta, can not be a trustworthy source of history, as it was composed for the purpose of drāmā. All the later evidence, being based on the 'Devīchāndragupta', can not be relied upon. At the same time, there is some discrepancy in these works, which do not relate the same thing.

The other views is that Rāmagupta preceded Chandra-gupta-II. The name of Rāmagupta is not in the official records, which give only the genealogy but not the succession, of kings. Viśākhadatta is a contemporary, or near contemporary, of the events narrated. This occurrence shows the persistence of a historical tradition which must have its foundation in reality. Further, it is confirmed by different literary sources, and the later epigraphs of the Rāṣṭrakūtas.

When Chandra-gupta and Dhrūva Devī of the drāmā are the historical names, there should not be any doubt in regarding Rāmagupta as a historical person. When the literary evidence is correlated to the epigraphical, it tends to show that Dhrūva Devī (Dhrūvasvāminī), wife of Chandra-gupta, was originally the wife of his elder brother Rāmagupta.

Interest in this problem was revived by the discovery of copper coins of Rāmagupta at Vīdisha, Bhar, etc. in Mālā. These are mainly of two types, namely the lion type and the Garuda type. P. L. Gupta,76 A. S. Altekar76
and K.D. Bajpai, attribute these coins to Rāmagupta of literary tradition.

A large number of coins and epigraphic records are inscribed with the name of Rāmagupta, who seem to have ruled the tract of eastern Mālwa and some parts of Bundelkhand during this period.

During the recent years, a large number of copper coins bearing the legends, Rāmagūpla, Rāmagūt or maguṭa have been discovered from the eastern Mālwa. Prof. K.D. Bajpai found a large number of round copper coins with the name of Rāmagupta from excavations at Eran (dist. Sāgar, 1960-65). Recently three inscribed images of Jain-Tīrthākaraś (Chandraprabha, Puspavedaśa) are found from Durjanapura near Vīdishā. The Brāhma inscription on the pedestals mention "Mahārajādhirāja Sri Rāmagupta". The title suggest that this Rāmagupta was a paramount ruler of the Gupta lineage. Thus the inscribed Jain images and a large number of coins found from Vīdishā and Eran give sufficient weightage to the historicity of Rāmagupta, who seem to have paid allegiance to Jainism. Prof. Bajpai, G.S. Ghai and others have identified this Rāmagupta ruler of the Imperial dynasty. He had assumed the title 'Mahārajādhirāja' like other Gupta monarchs.

Chandragupta-II : Chandragupta-II, who became emperor, in about 375 A.D. emulated the military career of his father
Samudragupta. Chandragupta-II married a princess of the Nāga family and his daughter Prabhāvati was married to the Vākātaka king Rudrasena-II.

Chandragupta-II launched an attack against the Sakākshatrapas of western India. The Udaigiri hill inscription of one of his ministers, states that the latter had accompanied his master to Udaigiri. The inscription alludes to a big military campaign undertaken by Chandragupta-II towards the south-western part of the empire. In addition to the record of the minister Virsana, a feudatory of Chandragupta-II. This inscription gives the genealogy of the Sankānika dynasty ruling in this area. It gives the name of Dhala, the grandson, of Mahārāja Chhagalaka and the son of Mahārāja Viśnudāsa. Then it mentions Amrakāraddava, who was an official of Chandragupta-II. The presence of a minister, a feudatory and a military officer, of Chandragupta-II, for a prolonged time in the same locality of eastern Mālwā, clearly indicates his campaign against the western Ksatrapas. The campaign was signally successful, for Chandragupta-II not only defeated the western Ksatrapas, but completely annihilated their power and annexed to his empire dominions, consisting of Eastern Mālwā, Gujarāt and Kāthiāwār.

The success achieved by the Gupta emperor is attested to by his silver coins. After his victory over Mālwā,
Chandragupta-II seems to have had a residence at Vidisha, and later on after his western conquest, at Ujjain. It seems that he had deputed for some time his son Govinda Gupta, to govern eastern Mālā.

Chandragupta had a number of feudatories and ministers to help him. He may have been one of the governors in charge of parts of eastern Mālā earlier conquered by samudra Gupta.

The Udaigiri stone inscription of S.E. 81 (A.D. 401) was issued by this Sanakānīka feudatory. The Śānci stone inscription of S.E. 93 (A.D. 414) was issued by the king's minister called Anragāraśva "a hero of many battles".

Chandragupta was succeeded by his son Kumāraj̄upta-I (414-55 A.D.). The earliest known date of his reign is given as Gupta year 96 (415 A.D.) in the Bilsad inscription (No. 10 of Fleet).

The Udaigiri cave inscription of Gupta year 126 (445 A.D.) of the reign of Kumāraj̄upta-I mentions the construction of an image (ākṛti) of Bhārthānākara Pārśva.

Towards the end of Kumāraj̄upta's reign in his old age, the empire was threatened by the Hānas and the Pusya-mitrás. The crown prince Skanda Gupta successfully repelled these enemies.
Skandagupta ruled from 455 to 467 A.D. After him the glory of the Gupta empire began to fade. During the reign of Buddhagupta, the region between Yamunā and Narmada was under the control of the Guptas. Gold and silver coins of Buddhagupta are known.

Buddhagupta was succeeded by his younger brother Narasimhagupta in about 496 A.D. No silver coins of Narasimhagupta have been discovered and this suggests that he did not rule over eastern Śālavā. The rule of Buddhagupta in fact marks the end of the imperial epoch.

HE HŪNAS:

The later Gupta kings, like Buddhagupta and Bhānu-gupta made all possible efforts to keep the political boundaries of the Gupta empire intact yet the forces of disintegration were already at work. A number of small principalities emerged in south eastern parts. The Eran inscription of the Gupta king Bhānu-gupta dated in Gupta year 191 (510 A.D.) refers to the defeat of Coparāja, the chief of Bhānugupta, at the hands of the Hūnas. This is borne out by an inscription of the Hūna king Toramāna engraved on the neck of a colossal image of Varāha (in animal form) installed at Eran. After Toramāna his son Mihirakula ruled over eastern Mālwa for sometime. He was given a crushing defeat by Yasodharman, the ruler of Dāsapur (Mandsaur), with the help of the Gupta
ruler Narasimhagupta Bālāditya. This occurred in the year 520 A.D.

POST GUPTA ERA:

During the 6th-7th centuries A.D. Vidishā was a flourishing city as is attested to by Varāhamihira in his Brihatasamhitā and by Bāna in his Kādambarī.

The Mālikara dynasty of western Mālwa gradually became powerful. The rule of this dynasty lasted from about 350 to 550 A.D. The Mālikaras seem to have been a branch of the Mālava people. They always used the Mālava era in their inscriptions. In an inscription from Bihār Kotara, this era has been called the "Mālikara Samvat". From the 7th century A.D. Mālava denoted a wide region, including also some parts of north-eastern Gujarāt. In the Sānchī inscription of the 7th century A.D., the word 'Mahāmālava' has been used in the territorial sense meaning an extended unit of Mālwa.

On the basis of the two separate terms 'Ujjayini' and 'Mālava' used in the commentary of 'Vātsyāyana's Kāmamātra', K.C. Jain suggests that Ujjain denoted western Mālwa and 'Mālava' stood for eastern Mālwa. The Rāstrakūta kings of Deccan extended their sway for sometime over the Mālva region in the 9th century A.D.
The Kalachuris of Mahishmati: The early Kalachuris, who claimed their descent from the Harbaya king 'Kartavirya-rjuna' and grew powerful in northern Mahārāṣṭra, Gujarāt and in parts of Mālwā during the later part of the 6th century A.D. became the rulers of Vidishā. They used a Kalachuri era. There are epigraphic records of three of these rulers, viz. Krishnarāja, his son Shankarāja and grandson Buddhārajā. All of them were devotees of Śiva. Shankarāja was succeeded by his son Buddhārajā shortly after A.D. 595. His Vādner grant dated K.E. 360 (A.D. 608) was issued from Vaidīsa (Vidishā or Beasnagar). It is not unlikely that east Mālwā, of which Vidishā was the old capital, was conquered by one of these kings from Devagupta of the latter Gupta dynasty.

Before Harsha’s accession his father Prabhākar Vardhan came into conflict with the king of Mālwā as is suggested by his poet laureate Bāna. According to his eulogy he was “an axe to the creeper of Mālwā glory.” It is a well-known fact that after his death Devagupta, the king of Mālwā killed his son-in-law, Urahangamana of the Maikharī dynasty and put his daughter ‘Rājyasrī’ in fetters. Probably Devagupta was the last of the later Gupta rulers of Mālwā, for, when Hiuen Tsang visited this country in C.A.D. 641, a Brāhmaṇ king was reigning there. He must have replaced Devagupta.
Sometime after the 7th century A.D., the old town of Beasagar, on the western side of Betwa, seems to have been completely devastated by a tremendous deluge, or by some tragic political event. The population deserted the site of the old town and travelled southwards to settle on the eastern bank of the river. The city, thus founded, was known as Bhilsa when Alberuni visited India in the 11th century A.D. Bhilsa was also known as 'Mahabalistan'. But the Muslim traveller had admitted that the Hindus had admitted that the Hindus had always called it 'Bhilsa' ever since its foundation. Bhilsa is a corrupt form of 'Bhillasvamin' or 'Bhillasvamana', that was originally the name of an idol of the Sun god, enshrined and worshipped in a great temple of this place. An inscription from Vidishā, incised during the rule of King Krishna (probably the Rashtabāta monarch Krishna III of A.D. 939-68), refers to this temple of 'Bhillasvamin'. Another inscription dated V.S. 935 (A.D. 878), mentioning the same temple of 'Bhillasvamin' of Bhilsa, was found at Vidishā in 1952-53. During the 10th century A.D., however, it was incorporated in the Chandella empire. It is said that the most powerful monarch of Chandella family, namely Dhangā (A.D. 954-1002) extended his kingdom upto the Jamuna (Kaliṇādī) in the north, Gwalior (Gopagiri) in the north-west and Bhāsvat on the river Mālu (Bhilsa or Vidishā on the Betwa). The Chandella kingdom under Dhangā
thus took the shape of almost a triangle, with Gwālior fort
forming the vertical point and an irregular line drawn from
Vidishā to the confluence of the Ganges and the Jamunā for-
m ing the base of the triangle.90

In the first half of the 8th century A.D. there
emerged three Imperial dynasties - the Pālas, the Pratīharas
and the Rāstrakūtas. The tripartite struggle among these
powers began and continued for generations. In the struggle,
Māḷwā also had played some part due to its strategic location.

In the tripartite struggle Māḷwā first came under
the influence of the Rāstrakūtas, and thereafter under the
Chandellas.

The 10th century A.D. witnessed the decline of two
rival empires of Pratīharas in the north and the Rāstrakūtas
in the Deccan. This made possible for other powers to gain
their independence. As a result, the houses of the Parmāras
and the Kachchhaphāgūtas came into light.

THE PARAMĀRAS:

The Parmāras were formally feudatories of the
Rāstrakūtas in Gujarāt. After the downfall of the Rāstrakū-
tas, the Parmāras shifted themselves from Gujarāt to
Māḷwā. From the 9th century A.D. onwards, the Parmāras
established an independent state and expanded their terri-
 tory.
During the course of nearly five hundred years of their political existence, the Parmāras ruled over a number of territories, which, besides Mālwa proper, included the important adjacent districts of Vidishā and Sāgar in the east.

A territory called 'Rodapadi' is mentioned in a fragmentary inscription from Vidishā, wherein 'Vāchaspati', the minister of king Krishna, is said to have restored the chiefs of 'Ratanamandala' and 'Rodapadi' to their dominions. The founder of the family was Upendra-Krishnarāja, who ruled near Mt.Ābū with his fort of Acualgarn and extended his territory by conquest of Mālwa and other territories.

The Chandellas were ousted from Mālwa by the Parmāra king Siyaka-II, whose known date is A.D. 972. He founded an independent kingdom bounded by the Tāpti on the south, modern Jhālwar on the north, Vidishā on the east and Sābarmati on the west. His son Muṇja Vāmakarāja-II extended his fathers territory further and further till he was defeated and killed by Taila-II of the Chālukya house, A.D. 993. All his territories upto the banks of the Narmadā were annexed to the Victor's kingdom. Śīndhurāja, son of the Parmāra king Siyaka defeated the Chālukya monarch and recovered the lost territories. Son and successor of Śīndhurāja was Bhojadeva, the illustrious king of Mālwa. He came
to the throne about 1000 A.D. and ruled for more than half a century. Inscriptions of his reign, however, bear dates from A.D. 1020–1047. His kingdom included an area now represented by Chittor, Baiswara, Dungarpur, Vindisha, Khandsesh, Konkan, and upper course of the Godavari. At the end of the Bhoja’s life when his kingdom was attacked simultaneously by the Chalukya king Bhima and Kalachuri monarch Gangavadeva from west and east both, Vindisha might have been over-run by the Chedi force.

During the reign of Bhoja’s successor Jayasimha, Malwa was again occupied by King Somesvara-II of the Chalukya dynasty, with his ally king Karna, of the Chalukya house of Gujrat. Bhoja’s cousin or brother, Udayaditya came to the throne probably before the year A.D. 1080 and reigned till 1086. The eastern boundary of his kingdom extended up to Vindishá where he built the famous ‘Nilkantthesvara’ temple at Udayapur. The next king Laksman seems to have retained Vindishá, since he was a great king and a conqueror. What happened to this region during the fight of the next Parasamara king Naravarman (A.D. 1094) with the Chalukya ruler Jayasimha Sindravaraja is not known. The next king Yasovarman was defeated by him and the whole of Malwa was annexed to his kingdom about A.D. 1135.

Prior to this defeat the Chandella king Madesavarman (A.D. 1139-1163) forcibly occupied the Vindishá
region from Yasovarman's possession. The Chandella reoccup-
pation of the Vidishā region is proved by the fact that
Madan Varman, when in residence near Vidishā, issued a
grant bestowing ten ploughs of land in the 'Sudai Visya'
(located in Vidishā) to Brāhmaṇa Rāhul Sharma.95

But the region was snatched away by the Chālukya
ruler Yasovarman's son Jayavarman. He also lost Mālwa to
Chālukya king Jagadekasamalla and Noyasala king Narasimha,
who placed one Ballāla on the throne. Jayasimha Siddhā-
rāja's son, Kumārapāla, dethroned Ballāla and incorporated
the whole of Mālwa up to Vidishā into his kingdom. Since:
then the district remained part of Gujarāt for many years.
There is evidence to show that king Devapāla, who reigned
between A.D. 1218-1232 had his territories bounded by
Broach and Vidishā towards west and east. Who snatched
away the Vidishā region from the Chālukya possessions is
not known though it is surmised that he may be Vināhdya-
varman who defeated Mularāja-II sometime in A.D. 1233.

It is worthwhile to give a brief resume of
history of Sironj area during this period. The town of
Sironj and its surroundings were ruled by the Seṅgar Rāj-
pūt in the beginning of the 12th century. Shaṅkar Singh,
a Seṅgar Rājpūt, had occupied the town of Sironj in about
A.D. 1103. He is also said to have developed this place,
that was known as 'Seṅgarāj', corrupted to Sironj. In the
year A.D. 1260 Guldeo Rājpūt, however, defeated them and Sironj became an integral part of the Province of Mālwā.96

In so far as the Paramāras of Mālwā are concerned, one stone inscription of the time of king Jayasiṁhadeva was discovered inside the fort of Rāhatgarh, district Sāgar. It is dated in Vikram saṁvat 1312 (A.D. 1256).97 From this record it appears that the western part of the Sāgar dist. was probably included in the kingdom of the Paramāra king Jayasiṁha.

After the Paramāras, the Chandellas came to power. The important ruler of Chandella dynasty, who ruled over Vidishā region was Madanavarmman, whose known date is 1163 A.D. He conquered Vidishā from the Paramāras but had to surrender it to the Chālukya king Siddharāja. He invaded the Chandella kingdom and advanced as far as Mahobā, the capital city. Madanavarmman was succeeded by his grandson Paramardideva, whose known dates ranged between 1163 and 1201 A.D. The first campaign was successful and he recovered the Vidishā region from the Chālukyas sometime after 1173 A.D.

Vākpati-I or Bappairāja, Va vàiśāja-II, Siya-kdeo-II alias Harsha, Vākpati-II, Sindburāja (905-1000 A.D.), Bhūja, Jayasiṁha-I (1055-1070 A.D.), Udaitipya (1070-1086 A.D.), Lakshamadēva (1086-1094 A.D.), Nāravar-
madeva (1094-1130 A.D.), Yasovarman (1133-1142 A.D.)
Jayavarman (1142-1143 A.D.), ballala etc. were the chief
rulers of the Paramara dynasty who ruled over Malwa in-
cluding the Vidishā region. Vitūnyavarman (1175-1194 A.D.),
Subhatavarman (1194-1209 A.D.), Arjunavarman (1210-1215
A.D.), Devapala (1218-1239 A.D.), Jaitugi Deva (1239-1255
A.D.), Jayavarman-II (1255-74 A.D.), Arjunavarman-II and
Bojja-II etc. were the Maharājakumars of the Paramāra
dynasty who have also ruled over the several parts of the
Malwa and the area of surrounding.

The Paramāra kingdom of Malwa, with internal
dissensions and external dangers, could not survived for
long as an independent entity. The slave sultans of Delhi
raided more than once, but they returned leaving it to
the Native rulers. Things changed with the coming of
imperialistic khilji dynasty. Its first ruler Jalāluddīn
Khilji, captured Ujjain in 1291 A.D. His successor Allā-
uddīn started with a large army against Malwa in 1305 A.D.,
and defeated Koka or Goga and his master Mahalakdeo with
great slaughter. In this way, the independent existence
of the kingdom of the Paramāras came to an end in 1305
A.D.

The Paramāra power flourished in Malwa for nearly
five hundred years. It reached its zenith during the reign
of Vākpati Muni, Bhōja and Udayāditya. During the time of their rule the Paramāra country was prosperous through trade and commerce. In the sphere of art and literature, there was none to compete with them.
REFERENCES TO CHAPTER - III


2. The Vedic Age, p. 234.

3. Rāguvaṁśa, Verse 36. According to the Rāmāyana, it was Śatrughna's son Śatrughnāti, who was given charge of Vidisā.


5. Rhys Davids : Buddhist India, p. 103 (as quoted in Bhopal State Gazetteer, p. 104).


8. Māhābodhiṇīyaṇa, p. 98.


12. Ibid, pp. 98-99, Thupay, 43v


16. Seminar Papers on the Local Coins of India, C. 300 B.C. to 300 A.D. (no. 2).


19. Bajpai, K.D.: Sagar Through the Ages, Sagar University, 1964, p. 7;

20. Cambridge History of India, p. 471;


23. Ibid, p. 391. According to the information given in Archaeological Survey of India (Annual Report) 1914-15, pp. 73 - one such sacrifice was surely performed, but at a later date.


25. The Age of Imperial Unity, pp. 96-97.

26. The Indo-Cyrena, p. 84.
27. Also called Vasujyeshtha: For the Puranic list of Sunga kings of D.K.A., p. 70.
29. The Age of Imperial Unity, p. 95.
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