Legends are generally not regarded as history. Yet the historians cannot neglect them altogether, as because they provide much historical information. Except those in the Vedic literatures, the legends found in the epics and the Purāṇas supply sufficient materials which are very important for the historians.¹

Specially, the Purāṇas deal with five topics, viz, Sarga (the evolution of the universe, its material cause), Pratisarga (the recreation of the universe), Vāmśa (the dynasties), Manvantara (the great epoch known by that name) and Vāmśānucaritām (the genealogical accounts).² The fifth topic is very useful and important for a student of history. Thus the genealogical accounts of the kings of the solar and the lunar dynasties, the Yādavas, the Bhojas, the Ābhīrās, Śakas Yavanas, Śisunāgas, Nandas and others are found

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¹ The epics are a kind of mine whose treasures have been used by dramatists, poets and story-tellers. Even the greatest critics do not deny the fact that the stories told in the epics may be magnified echoes of some historical events. EHI. p. 15.

² sargaśca pratisargaśca vāmśamanyantarāṇā / sarvaiśveteṣu kathyante vāmśānu-caritānca yat // VSP. 2.6.25. p.391
sargaśca pratisargaśca vāmśādyavantarāṇī ca / vāmśānu-caritācaiva purāṇam pañcalaksanām // Ibid. 6.8.2. p.408.
from the epics and the Puranas which are a great source of Indian legends.

THE HISTORICAL VALUE OF THE RUKMINI-HARANA LEGEND:

The Rukmini-harana legend, one of the important Puranic legends gives us an insight into the political, social and cultural history of ancient India. It further provides sufficient scope and interest for a study by way of identifying some races, characters, kingdoms, cities and other places connected with the legend. Thus the races like the Yādavas, the Bhojas, Śrīnjayas and others, characters like, Kṛṣṇa, Rukmini, Bhiṣmaka, Śiśupāla, Jarāsandha and others, and the kingdoms and the cities like Vidarbha, Cedi, Magadha, the city of Kuṇḍīna, Dvaraka, Bhojakata etc. may be identified in the light of the narrations of the Rukmini-harana legend. In this respect a detailed discussion is presented below.

IDENTIFICATION OF KṚṢṆA, THE HERO OF THE LEGEND:

Kṛṣṇa is the hero of the Rukmini-harana legend. That Kṛṣṇa was the same who was the son of Vasudeva and Devakī and is regarded as the incarnation of Lord Nārāyaṇa

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3 The puranas start with the rulers who trace their origin from the sun and the moon....... They give the names of the Puru kings....... At the end of the list of kings, certain puranas give us a series of dynasties of low and barbarian origin such as Abhiras, Sakas, Yavanas, Tusaras, Hunas etc.

EHII. p. 17.
Kṛṣṇa, the chief of the Yadavas:

Kṛṣṇa was Jadupati, the chief of the Yadavas. In Dvārakā Kṛṣṇa maintained the leadership over the Yadava heroes including Balarāma. Kautāliya (about 400 B.C.), in his Arthasastra refers to the Saṅgha (group, or confederation) and the Saṅgha mukhya of the Vṛṣṇis. Thus Kṛṣṇa was the Saṅghamukhya of the Yadavas.

Kṛṣṇa, a historical person:

Though Śrī Kṛṣṇa is generally regarded as a mythological figure, yet there is ample scope for considering Him as a historical person. It is obviously, a controversial matter whether Kṛṣṇa was really a historical figure.

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4 vasudēvasya yā paññī devakī... ................. .................
   VSP. 5.1.63. p.136.
   ...devakī vūrvanasyayambhūtām mahātmana //
   Ibid. 5.22. p. 143
   Bhāg.P.X.3.3. p.132

   Bhāg.P.X. 50.41, 42. p.444; 54.54. p.474;
   56.8. p.480; 58.55. p. 496.

6 saṅgha hi saṅhatatvadṛṣyasah paresām/...kamboja surīstra
   kṣatriya śrenyādayo varttaśāstropa jīvinah/
   lischāvākavrijka mallaka madraka... jīvinah/. ...raṅga
   mukhya yā prakhya tām dravyam prayacchet/

In the Kautāliya Arthasastra the Vṛṣṇis are described as a saṅgha, i.e. a republican corporation.
   PHAI. p.126.
or not. Thus Prof. E.W. Hopkins also observed with regard to the confusion whether Kṛṣṇa existed or not.  

The Cāndogya-Upaniṣad states in brief that Kṛṣṇa, the son of Devaki learnt Vedas from His preceptor Ghorāṅgīrāsa, a learned sage. This Upaniṣadic Kṛṣṇa is regarded as a historical person. But some scholars, however, try to differentiate Upaniṣadic Kṛṣṇa from that Kṛṣṇa described in the Mahābhārata and the Purāṇas and thus they reject the identification of Śrī Kṛṣṇa of Mahābhārata and the Purāṇas with that of Upaniṣada, who is regarded as one of the historical persons. On the other hand, Prof. H.C.I. Chaudhuri tries to establish that there is no

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7 But as no attempt has ever been made to separate myth from history in India, it is impossible to say whether Kṛṣṇa, the divine hero of the Mahābhārata, ever really existed, though this is probable.  

CHI. p.230.

8  


9 several scholars reject the identification of Kṛṣṇa of the Mahābhārata and the Purāṇas with the historical Kṛṣṇa of the Chāndogya Upaniṣad.

PHAI. p. 126.
any difference between the Upaniṣadic Kṛṣṇa and Kṛṣṇa of
the Mahābhārata and the Purāṇas, on the contrary, Kṛṣṇa
was one and the same and He was historical. Some points
of argument are forwarded by Prof. Chaudhuri in support
of his view. It is pointed out that both the Kṛṣṇas are
described as Devakīputra (i.e. the son of Devaki). Again,
the preceptor Ghorāṅgīrasa of Upaniṣadic Kṛṣṇa was closely
associated with the Bhojas who were the kindreds of the
epic and puranic Kṛṣṇa. Further, the Upaniṣadic Kṛṣṇa
and His preceptor Ghorāṅgīrasa were worshippers of Sūrya,
the Sun-God. Kṛṣṇa was taught the worship of the sun, the
noblest of all lights, high above all darkness. It is
similarly stated that the epic Kṛṣṇa explained of the
Sātvata-vrādhi which was learnt previously from Sūrya. In
the Śrīmadbhagavad Gītā also the relation of the epic
Kṛṣṇa with the sun and His resemblance as the sun is stated:

10 Ibid. pp. 126-127.

11 Both the Kṛṣṇas have the metronymic Devakīputra, son of
Devaki, which is rare in early times.

Ibid. 1.126.

12 The teacher of upaniṣadic Kṛṣṇa belonged to a family
(Aṅgīrasa) closely associated with the Bhojas
(Rgveda,III.537), the kindreds of the epic Kṛṣṇa.

Ibid. p.127.

13 We are told in the Sānti Parva (335, 19) that the
Sātvata-Vrādhi taught by the epic Kṛṣṇa was 'Prāksūrya
mukha nisīta'.

Ibid. p. 127.
in many places. Furthermore, some other scholars also identify this Upaniṣadic Kṛṣṇa with that one found in the epic and the Purāṇas. Again, it should be noted that Kṛṣṇa flourished in the Yadu family of the Vṛṣṇis about which the epic Mahābhārata, most of the Purānic works and ancient works of Indian history mention clearly. The Yādavas, the Vṛṣṇis, or the Bhojas are regarded as the historical Indian race. From that point of view, there is enough scope to regard Purānic Kṛṣṇa as a historical figure. The Brahma-Vaivarta Purāṇa states that Kṛṣṇa stayed on this earth exhibiting His pastimes for one hundred and twenty-five years. A.C. Prabhupāda also remarks that Kṛṣṇa was really a historical person who appeared on this earth five thousand years ago. He stayed

14 ādityānāmasaham viṣṇurjyotīṣam raviśsuman
    maricirmarutānasmi nakṣatranāmahārāśasi //
    Geeta. X.21. p. 197
    Vide Ibid. VII. 8. p.150; XI.12. p.212.

15 Before the final close of the Vedic canon, he (Kṛṣna)
came to be identified with Vasudeva a hero or demi-
God known to epic tradition as Kṛṣna Devaki-putra.
    AAHI. p. 50.
    VSP. 4.11.4. pp.54-55.

16 We are also told that Yadu and Turvasa, two among the
most famous Rigvedic tribes were brought by Indra from
a distant land.
    Vide. FHI. pp. 93, 100, 102. etc.
    AHSI. pp.87, 129, 279 etc.
    CHI. pp.230, 245, 232.etc.

17 Br.VP.(Ss.ed). 73. 23. p.211.
for hundred and twenty-five years on earth and played exactly like a human being, but His activities were unparallelled. That Kṛṣṇa was a historical person, is viewed by C. Vaidya, Tilaka and other historian scholars also. Thus Kṛṣṇa, the hero of the Rukmini-haraṇa legend may be identified as a historical person of ancient India.

THE PROBABLE TIME OF Kṛṣṇa:

It is of course, a very difficult matter to ascertain a certain date of Kṛṣṇa. Yet after a study of various activities and incidents connected with Kṛṣṇa's life an attempt may be made to determine a probable period.

Kṛṣṇa, the hero of the Rukmini-haraṇa legend was contemporary to the great Bhārata war (i.e. the Kurukṣetra war) and He took part in the great war as the charioter of Arjuna, the third of the Pāṇḍavas. He lived even after the end of the war. It is also clear at the same time that Kṛṣṇa's chivalrous activities in Gokula, construction of the Dvārakā fort, the feat of Rukmini haraṇa, the marriage of Rukmini and other wives, His heroic activity in connection with Pārijāta-haraṇa etc were performed before the

13 Kṛṣṇa is a historical personality who appeared on this earth 5,000 years ago. He stayed on earth for 125 years and played exactly like a human being, but his activities were unparalleled.


19 Vide. SSB. p.56.
great Bhārata war. It is evident from the references found in the Mahābhārata, as mentioned earlier in course of our discussion of the Rukmini-harana legend in the Mahābhārata.

The original epic Mahābhārata seems to have existed between about 4th century B.C. to the 2nd century B.C. The war might occur far before that time. Many scholars forward their opinion regarding a probable time of the great Bhārata war. Thus Prof. Chaudhuri attempts to place the war at a time of C.1400 B.C. According to calculation of Pargiter the great Bharata war took place in or about 1100 B.C. Thus it seems from the above observations that the great Bhārata war probably took place before 1100 B.C. Again, the remark of A.C. Prabhupada, as stated earlier drags Kṛṣṇa to at least 3000 B.C. From these records, however, we may come to the conclusion that Kṛṣṇa might live at a period about 3000 B.C. to 1100 B.C.

MORE ABOUT THE YĀDAVAS:

It is to be noted that most of the characters connected with the Rukmini-harana legend belong to the Yadu race.

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20. The Greek reference to the Indian Homer, etc. prove that the great epic in nearly its present extent existed before the fourth century A.D. .... existed earlier than the fourth century B.C. CHI. p. 230
21. An attempt has been made in recent times to support the purāṇic date for Pariksit and the Bhārata war which is taken to correspond to c.1400 B.C. PHAI. pp. 28-29.
22. Pargiter calculated that the great war described in the Mahābhārata took place in or about 1100 B.C. HI. p. 50.
Therefore, it is felt necessary to give here a description about the Yādavas, the family of Kṛṣṇa.

References to the Yādavas are met with as early as in the Vedic literature. Thus Jadu and his tribe are mentioned in the Ṛgveda. It is also stated that Yadu was closely associated with Turvāsa, Druhyu, Anu and Puru. The same association has been elaborately stated in the Purānic versions, from which it is learnt that Yadu and Durvasu were the sons of Dgavayānī (the wife of Yayāti) and Druhyu, Anu and Puru were born to Sarmiṣṭhā, the other wife of Yayāti. The Yādava race originated from Yadu.

Gradually, the Yādavas were divided into various sects or scions namely, the Sātvatas, Vitihotras, Vidarbhas, Krathas, Kaisikas etc. Thus from Vitihotra Bharata flourished. Bharata’s son was Vṛṣa, who was the father of Madhu. Madhu’s son was Vṛṣṇi, a famous king of the Yādavas.

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23 RV. 1.108. 8.
24 VSP. 4.10.6. p. 51
Vide. Bhāg.P.IX. 18.33. p.82.
25 yādāvāśca yadunāmoṣa-lakṣaṇādīti / VSP. 4.12. 30. p.57
26 vitihotrastanyo bharataḥ / VSP. 4.11.24. p.56.
27 VSP. 4.11. 24-28. pp.56-57
Bhāg.P. IX. 23.29. p.103.
The Sātvata family was one of the major branches of the Yādavas. The Sātvatas again expanded to many other branches e.g. the Mahābhōjas, Andhakas, Devavrddhas, and Vṛṣṇis.

MATHURĀ: ITS LOCATION:

Mathurā was the prominent seat of the Yādavas. The Viṣṇupurāṇa also states that in the place, where demon Madhu lived, there was a beautiful forest, famous by the name Madhuvana. Saṭrughṇa killed Lavanā, the son of Madhu and established there a city on Yamunā that came to be known as Mathurā. The Brahma-Vaivarta-Purāṇa mentions the name Madhupura in the description of Mathurā.

The Rāghuvamśa of Kālidāsa also refers to the river Kālindī and the Ganges. It is Mallinātha who clearly asserts the location of Mathurā on the bank of the Kālindī (i.e. Yamunā).

Jarāsandha, the powerful king of Magadha attacked Mathurā with twenty three Aukṣahiṇī of soldiers to take revenge upon Kṛṣṇa. At first the Yādava heroes defeated...

29 Ibid. 1.12.2-4. p.128.
30 Br.VP. (Ss.ed). 87. 1. p.236.
31 WK.Raghu. 15.28. p.288.
32 Vide Ibid. Raghu. 6.48; 15.28, "allinātha's commentary."
Jarāsandha in battle. Despite being defeated repeatedly Magadha attacked Mathurā for eighteen times. Kṛṣṇa and other Yādavas migrated from Mathurā, their original abode to Dvārakā, a newly constructed well-protected fort. As it is described in the Purānic versions, Mathurā was a very rich and beautiful city.

From the epic and Purānic accounts it is obvious that Mathurā was not only confined to the city by that name but it was a broad area occupying the fertile tract by the side of Yamunā. It is learnt from the Purānic evidences that the region of Mathura was situated towards the south of the Kuru kingdom. The Viṣṇupurāṇa gives a clear description of the coronation ceremony of Puru, a ruler of the Kurus and denotes the territory of his kingdom. According to this description on the south of the Kuru kingdom, the kingdom of Yadu (i.e. the Mathura region) was situated. The Kuru kingdom was, therefore, on the north of Mathurā including the fertile region between the river Yamunā and the Ganges. Indraprastha, the prominent seat of the Kurus is identified with a place called Indrapat in the neighbourhood of modern city

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33 VSP. 5.23. 3-11. pp. 252-254.
34 HVP. 51.50. p. 281.
Bhāg.P.X.41.20-23. p. 330
Br.VP.(Ss.ed) 87.1-7. p. 286
35 VSP. 4.10. 31-32. p. 54.
36 Kurus included the fertile tract between the Yamunā and the Ganges to the north of Mathurā. AGI. p. 38.
of New Delhi. The epic evidences prove that Mathurā was also a fertile area. Though Mathurā was deserted by Kṛṣṇa yet in the marriage ceremony of Subhadrā, Kṛṣṇa presented ten thousand milch cows imported from the district of Mathurā. The Chinese traveller Hiuen Tsang (about 8th century A.D.) in his account describes Mathurā as a very flourishing town.

A.C. Prabhupada remarks that Mathurā was once extended to even Dvārakā. General cunninghum observes that the old city of Mathurā was extended from the Nobī-Masjid and fort of Rājā Kāmsa on the north and to the mounds known by the names Tila-Kāmsa and Tila-Satrēkh on the south. The modern Mathurā town is situated on the

37 So, Delhi, founded by the Rajputs in the neighbourhood of Indrapraṣṭha (the modern Indrapat), the capital of Kurus in the heroic ages celebrated ...... great epic poem the Mahābhārata.

CHI. p. 21

Indrapraṣṭha has been identified with modern Delhi

AGI. p. 39.


39 It (Mathurā) was a very flourishing town when visited by Hiuen Tsang in the 8th century A.D.

AGI. p. 40.

40 It appears that formerly Dvārakā was also a part of the kingdom of Mathurā.


41 The old city, said general cunninghum is said to have extended from the Nobī-Masjid and fort of Rājā Kāmsa on the north to the mounds called Tila Kāmsa and Tila Satrēkh on the south.

AGI. p. 39.
right bank of Yamunā in the form of a crescent in present Uttar Pradesh. Thus the kingdom of Mathurā of the Yādavas can undoubtedly be identified as an area including the present district of Mathurā in Uttar Pradesh and the location of their city can also be determined as the modern city of Mathurā taking its adjacent area.42

DVĀRAKA: ITS LOCATION:

Dvārakā was the beautiful city and a well-protected abode of the Yādavas. Dvārakā is keenly connected with the Rukminī-harana legend as because Kṛṣṇa went from Dvāraka to abduct Rukminī from Kuṇḍina.

The fort Dvāraka was erected by Kṛṣṇa for the security of the Yādavas at the time when Kālayavana and mighty Jarāsandha invaded Mathurā.43 Kṛṣṇa took land measuring twelve Yojana from the sea and constructed the fort there, which came to be very much well-guarded.44 The Mahābhārata and the Purāṇas45 present a description of Dvāraka.

Dvārakā was erected by Kṛṣṇa in the midst of the

42 Vide Annexure "G", Map. No. 2.
   VSP. 5.23.9-11. p. 256.
44 VSP. 5.23.13. pp. 256-257.
   VSP. 5.23.12-14. pp. 256-257
   HV. 58. pp. 296-299.
The mountain Raivatākā which extended three Yojanas stood as a rampart or fortress around the city. It was so strong that even the Gods were unable to cross it and to enter into Dvāraka. Not to speak of others, even women could fight from the forth with the enemies. From the Dakṣiṇātyanātha of the Mahābhārata the Purānic Encyclopedia gives a picture of the city. Thus, 'There were four beautiful parks, e.g. Nandana, Misraka, Caitraratha and Vaibhārāja. The mountain Raivata acted as the eastern rampart of the city. Three other mountains, e.g. Venumāndha on the north, Sukāśka on the west, and Latāveṣṭa on the south acted as natural forts. On the east of the city there was a beautiful lake. It had an area of ninety six Yojanas (leagues), etc. Again, according to the Brahma-Vaivarta Purāṇa the city was extended up to hundred Yojanas. It is stated in the Harivamśa that Dvāraka was beautifully built with the application of all arts and technics of God Viśvakarmā, the divine technician. The Bhāgavata-Purāṇa also gives a similar picture.

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46 Vide Bhāg. P. X. 50.50. p.445
48 Vide. P. E. p.266.
49 sata yojana paryantant vagānaśumanoharam //
   Ibid. 97.64. p. 381
50 tatah sā nimitā kānta pari dvaravatitadā /
   mānaśena prayatnena vaivānavi viśvakarmā //
   HVP. 58. 44. p.297
The city of Dvārakā was very rich. Kṛṣṇa after killing Kālayavana, His enemy took away all riches to Dvārakā.\textsuperscript{51} Dvārakā is called Ahdhinagari. The Kuśasthali, and Dvārāvatī or Dvārāvatī were the other names of Dvārakā found in the epic and the Purānic versions.\textsuperscript{52} After the death of Kṛṣṇa the city of Dvārakā was swept over by the sea except the abode of Kṛṣṇa.\textsuperscript{53}

From the accounts of the city of Dvārakā found in the epic and the Purānic works it becomes easy to determine the probable location of the city. The evidences as stated above, apparently denote that Dvārakā was situated in the midst of the sea. It is learnt from the Viṣṇupurāṇa, as stated above that Kṛṣṇa took twelve Yojana lands from the sea. Further, it is also stated that Kṛṣṇa returned the land He took to the sea again after the end of His human life and therefore, Dvārakā was swept over by the sea after Kṛṣṇa's return to Golokadhāma from this earth.\textsuperscript{54}

Moreover, the Mahābhārata states that being afraid of the attack of Jarāsandha the Yādavas fled by Kṛṣṇa.

\textsuperscript{51} VSP. 5.24. 5-7. p.262
Vide Bhāg. P.X. 52.5. p.455.
\textsuperscript{52} MBh. (v.ed). Sabhā Parva. 14.49 p.145; 14,65. p.149
Vide V'T. 5.24.7. p.262; HVP. 58.44. p.297;
\textsuperscript{53} VSP. 5.31. 8-9. p.337.
\textsuperscript{54} Ibid. 5.37. 24. p.329.
towards the western direction of Mathurā and then built the Dvārakā fort. It is clear from this evidence that Dvārakā was situated in a place, towards the western direction from Mathurā and also in the mid of the sea. From this point, the existence of Dvārakā corresponding present peninsula of Kattywar seems to be correct. Again, the present Kattywar region was called Ānarta or Surāṣṭra in the Mahābhārata and Dvārakā was also known by the name Ānartanagari. Some historians of ancient India also identify present Kattywar of Gujrat as old Ānarta and Surāṣṭra.

From these evidences some scholars remark that the old Dvārakā was situated near Madhupura 95 miles south-east of Dvārakā. Girnar hill near Madhupura is identified with the mount Raivataka.

Moreover, from the Purānic accounts it is very clear that Kṛṣṇa, Balarāma, and others of Yādava family spent their childhood as cowherd boys. As found in the Purānic descriptions the principal occupation of these people was the

56 Ibid. Udyoga Parva. 7. pp. 6-7.
57 The extention of the territory of Rudra damana.......It included Akara (east Malwa) Aʿanti (west Malwa), Anarta (north Kattywar), Surāstra (south Kattywar) etc. EHI. p.253.
58 This Ujjayanta from inscription and tradition appears to be the Girnar hill near Junagarh. The local tradition about Dvaraka is therefore correct as Madhupura is near the Girnar hill. AGI. p.87.
cattle rearing. Kṛṣṇa Himself declared 'the rearing of cattle' as their principal duty. At present, there is a small locality near the sea situated in the westernmost part of Gujrāt. Cattle-rearing is still the main occupation of the inhabitants of this locality. Milk-trade is their chief occupation. The worth noticiable point is that the people of this locality strongly claim traditionally to be the descendants of Śrī Kṛṣṇa's family. This locality, that goes by the name Dvārakā, near Gujrāt may be identified as old Madhupura, specially as the original city of Dvārakā. Though the original city might be swept away by the sea, yet there is still the popular tradition that its remnants still exist there in the sea and the descendants of the Yañava tribe may live. In this regard the views of other modern researchers have drawn our attention.

60 Remnants of the Dvārakā fort which Kṛṣṇa constructed are still existing on the bay of Dvārakā.  
Kṛ. Vol.II. p.99  
According to the modern researchers Dvārakā was situated in the sea to the west of Gujrāt. There is a small locality near the sea still called Dvāraka and the principal occupation of the people of this place still is cattle rearing and trading in milk. They claim to be descendants of the family of Śrī Kṛṣṇa.  
PF. p.266  
Dvārakā, Dvāravatī, the city of gates, Kṛṣṇa's capital in Gujrāt, which is said to have been sub-merged by the Ocean.  
Old Dvārakā was located 96 miles S.E. from present Dvārakā near Madhupura in Gujrāt. Its major part is merged in the sea.  
RD. Sfradiya number, 1875 Sak 6th year 5-6 number. p.365.
It is very interesting to note that there is another Dvaravatī, situated in Siam. V.D. Mahajan identifies this Dvaravatī as one of the important Hindu colonies established by some of the Hindus in early times about 2nd century A.D. when Hindu civilization spread up to Siam. 61

It appears apparently that the Rukmini-harana legend is not connected with this Dvaravatī in Siam but with that Dvaravatī or Dvārakā, situated near present Gujrat as indicated earlier. Of course, the establishment of Dvaravatī on the side of the bay of Siam, towards the south of present Thailand evidently proves the extension of the Hindu civilization up to Siam and the popularity of the Purānic name 'Dvāravatī'.

Identification of King Bhīṣmaka and the Vidarbha Kingdom:

As stated earlier in different versions of the Rukmini-harana legend, king Bhīṣmaka was the father of Rukmini, the heroine of the legend and the name of his kingdom was Vidarbha. We find an interesting controversy as because in

61 Hindu civilization spread to Siam in early times from about the 2nd century A.D. The Hindus set up many colonies in Siam and the most important of them was Dvaravatī which was ruled from Cambodia ...........up to the 10th century A.D.

FHI. p.408.
India there are two areas which are sought to be identified as the Vidarbha kingdom of Bhīṣmaka and Rukmini, connected with the Rukmini-haraṇa legend. Among these two places one is situated in southern India and the other is in the North-Eastern most part. Notwithstanding the verification of the strong local tradition, ancient history and literary evidences, it becomes very difficult to come to a firm belief in order to ascertain the actual location. Yet an attempt, is made here after to get a solution.

BHĪṢMAKA AND THE VIDARBHA KINGDOM IN THE NORTH-EAST INDIA:

According to the records in the historical works of ancient Assam, some literary evidences and local tradition Bhīṣmaka's Vidarbha kingdom was situated in the region of present Sadiya, on the easternmost part of Assam. The old Sadiya was however, extended to a south-western part of present Arunachal Pradesh. The beautiful city Kuṇḍina or Kuṇḍila (the term passes as Kuṇḍila in works of Assamese literature) was situated on the bank of a small river of the same name Kuṇḍila that flows to the Brahmaputra flourishing from the upper part of the north-eastern hills of Lohit district of present Arunachal Pradesh. The river Kuṇḍila still goes by that name. From some historical

62 Vide Annexure "F", Map. No.1, present work.
records it is also learnt that Bhīṣmaka was a Hindu king of
the Bhoja dynasty and therefore, he was a kindred of Śrī
Kṛṣṇa. Bhīṣmaka was a powerful king who ruled over Kuṇḍila
or Vidarbha kingdom, the eastern part of Saumāra, or
Saumārpiṭha (the ancient name of Upper Assam) at the time
when the kings of Kirāta race were ruling over Kāmarūpa
about 1500 B.C. Major Hannay in his account mentioned
Phīṣmaka's time as more than 2000 years ago from his time. 64
Dr. Lila Gogoi also attempts to determine the time of Phīṣ-
maka before the Christ, 65 and thus he is identified as a
king of Pre-Ahom period of Assam history.

**PHĪṢMĀKA, A FORE FATHER OF THE CUTĪYĀ KINGS:**

King Bhīṣmaka is identified by some scholars as one
of the fore-fathers of Gaurī Nārāyaṇa, the son of Vīrpāla,
and who was the founder king of the Cutīyā kingdom. The
traditional legend goes as follows in the Deodhāi-Asam-
Buraṇji with a Sanskrit verse in the prelude.

Long ago about 1111 Saka there was a person Vīrpāla
by name who belonged to the line of Bhīṣmaka. He used to
live on the foot of the mount Sonagiri with other 60
families. But at that time they had no king to rule over.

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63 DC. p. 10
64 Ibid. p.11.
65 AS. p. 270.
Rupavati was the beautiful wife of Virpālī who was a best devotee of Kuvera (a demi-God), the God of wealth. Rupavati prayed Kuvera to get a son. Once, as Rupavati returned from her mother's home, on the way she had sexual union with Kuvera, who appeared in the form of Virpāla. On the other hand, Virpāla also dreamt a dream with the grace of God Kuvera. Virpāla, in his dream came to know that his wife Rupavati would give birth to a son, and in time that boy would be the king with power and wealth.

Kuvera further asked Virpāla to go to a particular tree at the dark night on the fourteenth day of the dark fortnight and worship Kuvera there. Virpāla, was further advised to go there on the next morning to collect certain articles which should be treasured well and worshipped. Virpāla followed accordingly. Next morning, Virpāla found underneath the tree a sword, a shield, and a gold cat. In course of time, accordingly, Virpāla's wife Rupavati gave birth to a son who was none other than the offspring of God Kuvera. This boy became the king and ruled over the Cutiya kingdom and became famous by the name Gaurī-Nārāyaṇa.

66 saḍīyā korjakodesaḥ cutīkā-vans’ā bhīsmokah /
   dhātu dravyetu lebhe na hatvājaopadānayaḥ //
   DAB Prelude. 3+6. p. 193

pūrve līlī sākat bhīsmak rajār Vams’ār virpāl nūme ejān
   āchil.........................sei gachar talaloi gol/
   tāte dhāl, kharga ejo, sei dhālar talate virāli etā
   pāle /........ nutra jammil, nām thole gaurinārāyan //
   Ibid. p. 193.
This legend shows the divine origin of the Cutiyás as like as the divinity is found narrated in case of the Ahom and Koch dynasties. 67

According to Bhavananda Burhagohain, the Vidarbha kingdom was originally ruled over by the Fađos. 68 R.F.K.L. Baruah also admits that the Cutiyás were originally a tribe of the Fađo race and their kings came to be Hinduised accepting the Tantrik faith. 69 The Cutiyá race originated as a result of the association of the Fađos with some other tribes like Syan, Idu, Padam etc. These Idu and Padam tribes were known as the Culikaṭāmicimi (the Micimi tribals who cut their hair) and the Pevejiya Micimi respectively. Dr. L. Gogoi also admits such an admixture in respect of the origin of the Cutiyá race. 70 It is interesting to note that still the Micimis of Arunācal Pradesh feel proud to identify themselves as the descendants of king Bhíśmaka and Rukmavira. The Idus still cut their hairs as Rukmavira’s hairs were shaved by Kṛṣṇa. Therefore,

67 Like the Ahom kings and the Koch kings the Chutiya kings also claimed divine origin. EHK. p.130.

68 SF. p.8.

69 The Chutias were originally a tribe of the Fađo race. EHK. p. 133.

70 Vide SF. p.10.

71 AS. p.252.
they came to be known as Culikata Micimi. Such a record occurs in the work of Dr. L. Gogol and some others. 72 J. N. Burhagohain further states that the Idus were undoubtedly a scion of the Cutiyan tribe. 73

According to Dr. P. Saikia king Bhismaka was one of the prominent rulers of the Cutiyan kingdom. With reference to a poetic work (not yet published) on the chronology of the Cutiyan kings Dr. Saikia states that while king Ehima of Vidarbha became old, he divided his kingdom into two parts, viz., Kundai and the Saumarpiṭha. He established his eldest son Bhismaka in Kundai and the younger Vīśvatetu in the region of Saumarpiṭha. 74 A time between 1239 A.D. and 1314 A.D. is mentioned as the probable time of this Bhismaka. 75 Again, from different historical works the time of the establishment of the Cutiyan kingdom may be ascertained from the early part of the 12th century A.D. to the end of the 13th century A.D. 76 From the

72 Ibid. p.252.; SB. n. 10.
73 Ibid. p.16.
74 ... jyeṣṭha putra bhismakaka yitonarārya/ Kundai raṭa Ṛkṣa bātila tathāi //
DC. p.10.
75 Ibid. p.10.
76 It is believed that the Chutia kingdom was founded towards the end of the thirteenth century when the Kamarupa kings lost their hold over the eastern part of the kingdom.

Vide. ADD. p.106. EHK. p.179
records of Bhīśmaka, stated earlier, it appears that Bhīśmaka must be a king of a period earlier than the rise of the Cutiẏā kingdom. K.L. Paruah is also of the opinion that prior to the rise of Cutiẏā kingdom some Hindu dynasty ruled over a small tract found about Sādiya. This dynasty claimed itself as the descending from Bhīśmaka, father of Rukminī. That kingdom was known by the name of Vidarbha and their capital city was Kundila, situated on a river of the same name. On the other hand, from the examination of the old ruins found round about Sādiya and which were ascribed to Bhīśmaka, Mr. Gait supposes Bhīśmaka and his kingdom as of the Pre-Aryan time, possibly Drīviḍīṇa which got ruined and the Cutiẏā kingdom was subsequently built at the fall of that old kingdom. Dr. P. Saikia, further provides the information that the fore-fathers of the Cutiẏās originally migrated from the South-East Asia. Gradually, they proceeded to Sādiya through Syam, Mukan, etc.

It is further supposed that prior to the rise of this (Chutiya) kingdom a Hindu dynasty ruled probably over a small tract found about Sadiya. This dynasty claimed descent from Bhismak, the father of Rukmini, one of the wives of Sri Krsna. It is stated that this kingdom was known as Vidarbha and that the capital was at Kundil standing on the river of the same name.

EHK. p. 179.

Gait supposes that this dynasty collapsed by a process of internal decay and that on the ruins of this old kingdom the Chutiya kingdom was subsequently built.

Ibid. p. 179.
and dwelt on the bank of Kundilā. From these records, mentioned above, it may be considered that Bhīṣmaka, a ruler of the Vidarbha kingdom was a Hindu king who flourished at the very dawn of the Cutiyā kingdom.

ORIGIN OF THE NAME SADIYĀ:

As stated above, the Vidarbha kingdom of the Cutījās came to be famous by the name Sadiyā later on. Even today that region of Upper Assam is known by the name Sadiyā. At present Sadiyā is a sub-division of the Dibrugarh district. Regarding the origin of the term 'Sadiyā', there is an interesting traditional legend goes as follows.

King Ratnadhvaṭapāla (Viśvaketu) of Vidarbha had good friendship with the contemporary king of Gauḍa, lying in the west. Being prompted by the bonds of friendship, the son of Ratnadhvaṭapāla, the prince of Vidarbha was invited to a marriage ceremony in the Gauḍa kingdom. The prince honoured that invitation and went to visit Gauḍa. But unluckily, he was to suffer from disease (Dysentery) and to face his death. The king of Gauḍa was ignorant of the burial custom of the Cutiyā kings. Therefore, he kept the dead-body of the prince well and sent the same

79 Vide. DC. p.5.
to Visvaketu or Ratnadhvajapāla, father of the prince. King Visvaketu felt very sad at this premature death of his son. Visvaketu sent the dead body to king Bhīsmaka, his brother and ruler of Kundila. Bhīsmaka also lamented very much at this pathetic death of the prince. At last they performed the sacraments of the prince according to their prevalent manners. As the dead-body was sent or given, the Vidarbha kingdom came to be known as Sādiyā (a place to which the dead-body was sent or given) from that time onward. The name came to be retained even in modern times.

THE OLD RELICS OF BHĪSMAKA IN SĀDIYĀ:

There are some old ruins or relics, round about the Sādiyā region which are ascribed to the Cutiya civilization and some of these are specially assigned to king Bhīsmaka. These ruins are - the Bhīsmak nagar (the city of Bhīsmaka), the Rukmini nagar (the city of Rukmini), Śīsupāl Durgā, Tamrēsvārī mandir (the temple of copper root) Mālinī Thīn, Padum-Pukhurī etc. Dr. L. Gogoi, who visited many parts of Arunacal mentions six places, containing traditional ruins. These are - Paraśurāma Kuṇḍa, Tamrēsvārī mandir, Bhīsmak nagar, Mālinī Thīn, Itānagar and Bhālukpung. It seems that among all these relics the Bhīsmak nagar, the Rukmini

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80 mahirāja vādēcāha sito vaścīma deśīra / tāra same viravāhubhīla sakhi bara //................
dekhīvirapare śava pathālanta diyā / tāra nāma dhari bole grāmaka Sādiyā //


31 Vide. AS. p. 268.
nagar, Śiśunāl Dūrā, the city of Kuṇḍila and also the Tamres'vari temple are closely connected with the king Bhīṣmaka, the father of Rukmīṇī, the heroine of the Rukmīṇī-haraṇa legend.

THE BHĪṢMAK NAGAR :

There is a ruined city in the Sādiyā region, which is supposed to be the old city of king Bhīṣmaka and therefore, that relic is known by the name 'Bhīṣmak nagar' (the city of Bhīṣmaka). The remnant of this city is found in the present Lohit district of Arunacal Pradesh. The account of L.W. Shakespear also proves this situation of the Bhīṣmak nagar, which is now already buried in the forest of Micimi hills.32

According to the record of Dr. P. Saikia, the city situated at a distance of two days journey by elephant from Na-Sādiyā towards the north-east direction.33 Dr. Laksmi devi also determines the distance as about 2+ miles towards the north-east direction from present town of Sādiyā and it is situated at a range of forest between

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32 Turning to the Sadiya area controlled by the second (Lakhimpur) Assam Rifles, we find again remains of an ancient civilization in ruined city sites, stone defense works, tanks etc. now entirely buried in deserts forests imaginable between the Lohit river and the Mishimi hills. DC. p.11

33 Ibid. p.9.
the Dikrang and Divang (or Diving) rivers. Dr. Devits assessment seems to be correct. There are tanks, one of which is known by the name Padum Pukhuri (the tank of lotus), and remnant of ramparts, known as Rājgar later on.

Dr. L. Gogoi observes that the bricks and the technics of construction of the buildings of the ruins of Phīṣmaka nagar found in present Sādiyā are similar to the same of Āhom period. From this he opines that the Phīṣmaka nagar, found in present Sādiyā seems to be constructed in Āhom period, probably it was the capital city of Sādiyā Khoīghain (1663 A.D.). Dr. P. Saikia, on the other hand, finds three types of bricks used in the walls of the ruins of the city. These are - 20.3 cm x 15.1 cm x 2.7 cm, 12.6 cm x 9.7 cm x 2.3 cm, and 12.9 cm x 7.3 cm x 2.3 cm. Dr. Saikia, of course, is in the opinion that it was a relic of the early period of Cutiūya dynasty. It may, however, be remarked that the ruin of the Phīṣmaka nagar in Sādiyā region can undoubtedly be assigned to king Phīṣmaka of Vidarbha kingdom.

THE RUKMINĪ NAGAR :

Rukminī nagar is another place, found in present Arunācaī Pradesh, traditionally known as the old city of

34 Vide ADP. p.32.
35 AS. p.270.
36 DC. p.9.
Rukmini, the daughter of Bhīṣmaka and the beloved wife of Kṛṣṇa. It is situated on the bank of the river Kuṇḍīla, and about 5 miles distance towards the North-west of the Bhīṣmak nagar. Dr. P. Saikia also places the Rukmini nagar on the left bank of the river Kuṇḍīla.\textsuperscript{87}

Another Rukmini nagar is found at Gunpora of present Sādiyā sub-division of Upper Assam. There is still a village at Gunpora Rukmini nagar by name. According to the local tradition there was the city of Rukmini. Of course, it seems that this name Rukmini nagar at Gunpora, probably is of later origin that implies the popularity of the Rukmini-haraṇa legend.

THE ŚISUPĀL DURGA:

Another important relic connected with Bhīṣmaka's reign is the 'Śisupāl-dūrga' (the fort of Śisupāla) found in the Lohit district. The local tradition ascribes the place in the name of Śisupāla who came to wed Rukmini as the bride-groom and who was the rival character of the Rukmini-haraṇa legend. This Śisupāl-Dūrga is situated at a place near Bhīṣmak nagar. Late Sarvananda Rajkumar also mentions of Śisupāl-dūrga in Sādiyā.\textsuperscript{88}

\textsuperscript{87} Vide Ibid. p.13.
\textsuperscript{88} ASSP. 20th year, 1333 Sāk No. 1. p.27.
THE PROBABLE AREA OF VIDARBHA KINGDOM: A GEOGRAPHICAL ACCOUNT:

On the basis of the historical records mentioned above, an attempt is made to ascertain a probable area of the Vidarbha kingdom in North-East India.

Dr. P. Saikia gives an account of the territory of the Vidarbha kingdom, which he considers as the original name of the Cutiya kingdom. According to this account, Vidarbha was extended up to the Himalayan mountain on the north, up to the Dihing river on the south, to the Patkai mountain on the east and to the Pharali river on the west. It is also stated that the Cutiya kingdom is supposed to have extended up to Visvanatha, i.e., Kāmarūpa. L.W. Shakespear determines the probable area of the Cutiya kingdom from the river Sovansiri round to the Disang river. From these records, it seems that the Cutiya kingdom once occupied a vast tract of land.

39 DC. p.3.

90 The seat of the Chutiyas, when they were assendent, appears to have been about Lakhimpur, and the banks of the Subansiri. They held all the country on the north of Brahmaputra, probably as far down as Bisvanath. DĀ. p. 323.

91 These are believed to have belonged to the ancient Chutiya race who owned the country from the Subansiri river round to the Disang river. DC. p.11.
As it is stated earlier, Bhīṣmaka ruled over Vidarbha at the very dawn of the rise of the Cutiyā's. Therefore, it is obvious that the Cutiyā kingdom did not attain the widely extended form in Bhīṣmaka's time. On the contrary, Bhīṣmaka's kingdom, probably, existed in the north eastern area of present Arunācal occupying a small tract. In this regard few more points are given below in support of the view.

B.N. Burhagohain wants to remark that the kingdom of Bhīṣmaka, one of earliest rulers of the Cutiyā race was located towards the Divang valley of present Arunācal Pradesh. Dr. Lila Gogoi remarks that the old Sadiya and the relics of Bhīṣmaka are in the present Arunācal. On the other hand, though Dr. J.P. Wade does not mention anything about Vidarbha, or king Bhīṣmaka yet it can be learnt from his account that Sādiyā region was situated in Upper Assam in the extreme eastern area. K.L. Baruah also observes that Bhīṣmaka, a king of Hindu dynasty, probably ruled over a small tract found about Sādiyā. A similar point is found in the view of L. Devi regarding the location of Bhīṣmaka's kingdom. According to Dr. Devi's observation, Bhīṣmaka's Vidarbha might be located in the region to the

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92 SB. p. 10.
93 From suddia, or kuddia (Sadiya) the eastern extremity of Assam to sowpurra, and extent of country intersected by numerous rivers flowing from the northern mountains. AAA. p. 353.
94 ... of this kingdom a Hindu dynasty ruled, probably over a small tract found about Sadiya. EHK. p. 179.
extreme east of Saumārṇātika including Śādiyā and some of its neighbouring area. It should be noted that the area of Saumārṇātika comprised of areas beginning from the Dhairavī (i.e. Bharalu river in Sonitpur district) up to the Dikkaravāsini (i.e. modern Dikrai or Dikrang river) on the east. Moreover, as stated earlier, Dr. P. Saikia states with reference to an unpublished historical work that the Vidarbha kingdom was divided into two divisions e.g. Kundila in the west and Saumārṇātika in the west, and Bhīṣmaka became the ruler of Kundila, the eastern region. Further, the existence of river, Kundila that flows through a middle position between the Dīvang and the Lohit rivers is one of the important and convincing factors to help imagining the location of Bhīṣmaka's kingdom.

The last, but not the least important point is that most of the old ruins viz., the Bhīṣmaka nagar, the Rukminī nagar, Śīśupāl Durga etc. which are related to Bhīṣmaka are situated in the present Lohit district of Arunācāl Pradesh. From all these stated above, regarding the area of Bhīṣmaka's Vidarbha kingdom we may come, however, to a conclusion as follows. The Vidarbha kingdom of Bhīṣmaka existed, probably in an area beginning from the northern part of Tirap district on the south and beyond the Dīvang valley on the north. The eastern mountaneous

95 Vide A.D.B. p. 32.
96 AD. p.2.
region of Tirap, Lohit and Divang was the eastern territory of the kingdom and the western boundary was extended, most probably, to the east of Saumārpīṭha i.e. including present Sādiyā sub-division of easternmost Assam. 97

LITERARY EVIDENCES:

Apart from the historical records and the geographical evidences stated above, there are sufficient literary evidences which directly or indirectly support the view that king Pīśmaka, Rukminī and Rukmī and their kingdom Vidarbha with the beautiful city Kundila were in the North-Eastern part of India (i.e. in present Assam and Arunachal Pradesh). We have discussed at length in the fourth chapter of the present work about the various literary works on the Rukminī haraṇa legend in Assamese literature.

EVIDENCE IN GURUCARITS:

The Gurucarits, as stated earlier, make mention of the Rukminī-haraṇa legend in course of stating the significance of the names of some places like Pāṭvāusī, Dhenu Khandī Vil 93 and the Temuānijān. 99 Here, the notable point is that the place known by the name 'Pāṭvāusī' still exists by that name and is situated about 20 K.M. south from

97 Vide Annexure – P. Map. No. 1, Present work.
98 KGC. p. 127.
EGC. p. 111.
99 DD. p.3.
present town of Darpeta in the district of Darpeta. Again, there is a water reservoir, or lake in the middle Assam which still goes by the name 'Dhanu-Khandā Vil' (a water reservoir or lake dug by the bow). Similarly, the Tembuānījān, a rivulet on which the Šemī (a small pot containing lime used with betel-nut) fell down (as it is known traditionally) is still flowing by that name near Bardowa in Nowgong district of Assam. These evidences, which are met with in the Gurutarits indicate that Kṛṣṇa came to North-East India to abduct Rukmiṇī.

EVIDENCES IN MODERN ASSAMESE LITERATURE:

Similar evidences are met with in some works of modern Assamese literature also. Some of these are stated below as for instances:

IN DRAMATIC WORKS:

Two dramatic works in modern Assamese literature on the theme of the Rukmiṇī-haraṇa legend, composed by Late Atul Chandra Hazarika and Sri Jiban Chandra Goswami have been discussed in the earlier pages of the present work. In these two works of the same name i.e. the Rukmiṇī-haraṇa Nāṭak, the story is presented in local colour. In some places through dialogues and situations presented it is shown that Phīśmika's Vidarbha kingdom and the beautiful capital city of Kuṇḍīna were in old Upper Assam and Kṛṣṇa came from far Dvārakā to abduct beautiful Rukmiṇī, the
Kundil Kunvarî (the princess of Kundila).

As for examples, in the fourth scene of the Act-II of Hazarika's Rukmini-haranâ, Vedanidhi, the brahmin messenger arrived at Dvârakâ carrying the letter from Rukmini. Here Vedanidhi appears like a typical Assamese brahmin with his wallet, Jâpi (a kind of umbrella in the shape of a cap specially used by the Assamese people) and a stick. Again, through the introduction of Assamese Gîyânâm (marriage songs)101 and the presentation of the performance of the Kâmrûpi dance102 in Act IV and also through the reference to the Lauhitya (i.e. the Brahmaputra) and the Paraṣukûnda in the speech of Balarâma in Act V103 etc., it seems that the author intends to assert that the Vidarbha kingdom of Íshmaka was situated in old Assam i.e. North-Eastern India.

Similar observations can be made from the play, Rukmini-haran (Nâtak) of Jiban Chandra Goswami also. In some dialogues indications are found in respect of the distance and direction of Kundila from Dvârakâ. Thus in the second scene of Act-I during the conversation of Haridâsa and Rûpâi, it is said that Haridâsa coming from a westernmost place reached the easternmost country.104

100 RHAH. II.4. p.69.
101 Ibid. IV.2. p.125.
102 Ibid. IV.3. p.132.
103 Ibid. V.1. p.152.
104 RHNJ. I. 2. p. 12.
Moreover, in the play of J. Goswami also the name Kāmarūpa is mentioned in the concluding speech of Kṛṣṇa in the last Act. Thus, J. Goswami wants to indicate through his dramatic work that Bhīṣma's Kuṇḍila was located in Upper Assam (i.e. Sadiyā and present Arunācal Pradesh) just in the eastern direction from Dvārakā.

IN POEMS:

In the modern Assamese poems containing references to the Rukmini harana legend also, the view that Kuṇḍila of Rukmini was situated in the North East India is met with.

Thus Muktinath Bordoloi in some poems of his 'Pārvatī' (the daughter of Parvata or mountain) speaks of beautiful princess Rukmini as being from Kuṇḍila of present Arunācal Pradesh. The poet compares the beauty of Hānlu with that of princess Rukmini who possessed excellent beauty. In another poem 'aniscit' as stated earlier he describes the bank of the river Kuṇḍila as the native place of beautiful Rukmini. Thus poet Bordoloi forwards his view through his beautiful poems that the region of North East India was the old kingdom of Bhīṣma.

106 'Pārvatī', 'hānlu', p.5. (vide also FN.195, Chapter IV of the present work).
107 Ibid 'aniscit', pp. 16-17 (Vide also FN. 196, Chapter IV of the present work).
of their adorable God or Goddess for prayer on the previous day of their marriage ceremony. This custom is observed as prevalent one only in imitation of Rukmini's marriage ceremony at Kumbhila. Again, as stated earlier, the people of Idu tribe of Arunacal still observe a custom cutting their hairs on head as Rukmini's hairs were saved by Krishna. They maintain this custom up till now, because they feel proud to identify themselves as the descendants of Rukmavira, the brother of Rukmini. These people, therefore, are known at present by the name "Culikati micimii. Thus these cultural and customary observations coming down traditionally genera\textsuperscript{ion} after generation among the people of Arunacal as well as in Assam offer scope to suggest Bhishmaka's Vidarbha kingdom as being in the North-Eastern region of India.

OTHER TRADITIONAL BELIEFS:

Apart from the views, recorded in the historical works or Gurucarit\textsuperscript{as}, as stated earlier, there are some other local traditional beliefs also in some places in North-East India connected with the Rukmini-haraṇa legend. These are as stated below.

RĀJĀDHIPA OR RĀJDHIPA IN BORPETA:

Rājādhipa or Rājdhipa (the royal mound) is situated in the present Borpeta district of lower Assam. The name

\textsuperscript{113} DC. p.29.
\textsuperscript{114} Vide SB. p.10.
\textsuperscript{115} Vide SP. p.252
Rājādhipa comes from the name of a mound. Rājādhipa or Rājdhipa is a mound about eight or ten feet high and it covers a spot of about fifty square feet broad. Its exact location is in a Cuba or Cuburi (a part or corner of a village) named Ojaravara of Ganak Gari Gaon about 2 miles south from the Sarbhog railway station in present Parpeta district of Assam. Regarding Rājādhipa, tradition goes as follows:

Krṣṇa abducted Rukmī from Kundina and returned to Dvārakā by his chariot. He had to fight with the rival kings headed by Jarīsandha, Śiśupāla and Rukmī, the elder brother of Rukmī as Krṣṇa defeated them all in battle and again started His return journey to Dvārakā with Rukmī, His beloved. Being tired of the fierce fight, on the way, He stopped His chariot and took rest for a while with Rukmī at a particular place. That place, with a Dhipa (mound) became famous by the name Rājādhipa. Traditionally, that mound is regarded as a holy place and the local people pay homage to it. Up to now, the brides and bride-grooms of that locality while passing by Rājādhipa wait for a while and bow to it offering Guā-pan (bettle-nut with a leaf called pan). This traditional legend is also found in an article of late Nanda Talukdar. This traditional belief regarding Rājādhipa wants

115 Vide 'Article: aitihāsik paramparāt rājādhipa' by N. Talukdar. ASSP. 19th year. No.1. p.27.
to signify that Bhīṣma's Kuṇḍila was located in North-East India.

THE RUKMĪNĪ NAGAR IN SĀDIYĀ:

There is a village Rukmiṇī nagar by name situated in Sādiyā Sub-division of present Dibrugarh district in Assam. It is in the Cunpora region of Sādiyā. According to the local tradition, princess Rukmiṇī resided there for which the place came to be known by the name Rukmiṇī-nagar (the city of Rukmiṇī). This tradition also indirectly suggests the location of Bhīṣma's Kuṇḍila in North-East India.

RUKMĪNĪ-GAON IN GAUHATI:

In the present city of Gauhati (Assam) there is a small area known by the name Rukmiṇī-gaon. It is situated at a distance of about 2 K.M. from Dishpur (Gauhati), the present capital of Assam. Originally, there were a few families of Kachari tribe with a tract of cultivated land. Now, it becomes a developed residential place.

According to the local tradition, Kṛṣṇa, while returning from Kuṇḍila with Rukmiṇī stopped His chariot there for a while and took rest under a bow tree. Afterwards some village grew up there which came to be known by

116 Informations, collected from some old inhabitants of Rukmiṇī-gaon, Gauhati.
the name ‘Rukmiṇī-gaon’ (the gaon of Rukmiṇī). Even today, the place is known by that name, though some newly estab­lished citizens wanted to change the name as Rukmiṇī nagara (the city of Rukmiṇī).

MORE REMARKS OF MODERN SCHOLARS:

In addition to above, we come across remarks of some other modern scholars which seek to assert that the Vidarbha kingdom of king Ehīsmaka, connected with the Rukmiṇī-harana legend was located in ancient Assam (i.e. in the North Eastern India). 117

All these evidences, the historical, literary, tradi­tional and so on, speak of a strong view that the Vidarbha kingdom of Ehīsmaka was located in North-East India.

117 The first king of the Chutias is mentioned as Ehīsmaka, obviously, Ehīsmaka, the father of Rukmini, the consort of Kṛṣṇa.

DADF. Introduction. pp. XXVI-XXVII.

ei deśar jīyārī rukminīk- bhagavān śrī kṛṣṇai āru bāṇ rājār jīyek uṣāk tenor nātiyek aniruddhaī vīvāh kārichil.

AD. p.1.

asamār pūv prāntat avasthit asamīyā sanskṛtir kendra-sthal aitihya mandit sādiyā hol mahābhūrataḥ yugar vidarbha rājya.

SB. Preface, by Chandra Prasad Saikia

...... There is Ehīsmak nagar in the Lohit Frontier Division, which was once the capital of king Ehīsmaka whose daughter Rukmini became the spouse of Lord Kṛṣṇa.

But prior to coming to a conclusion it will be good enough to examine and verify the evidences in support of the view that the Vidarbha kingdom of Bhīṣmaka, connected with the Rukminī-harana legend was located in south India.

**BHĪṢMĀKA AND THE VIDARBA KA KINGDOM IN SOUTH INDIA:**

The very term Vidarbha, the name of a kingdom is after the name of a king (i.e. Vidarbha) who flourished in the Yadu race and Bhīṣmaka was one of his descendants. From the evidences found from the Vedic time onward, some historical and geographical records, local tradition and the view of some modern scholars, it is also guessed that Bhīṣmaka's Vidarbha kingdom and the beautiful city of Kundīna were located in South India. The Berar or the Berar region taking Amarāvotī district in present Maharashtra is identified as old Vidarbha kingdom. A discussion is given below on the view.

**REFERENCE TO VIDARBA IN VEDIC LITERATURE:**

The reference to the Vidarbha kingdom is met with in the works of Vedic literature.

The *Aitareya Brāhmaṇa* mentions king Bhīma and his Vidarbha kingdom and it is further stated that the king

118 Vide. VSP. 4.12. 3+37. p.60.
met the sages Parvata and Arjuna who made the king enlightened. It is also clear from the description that king Bhima was contemporary to Nagnajita, the king of Gandhara, and these kings have been described as Mahârâja. Dr. J. Eas makes the same observation. Similarly, the Vrhadâranyakopanisad also refers to a sage called Vidarbhi-Kaundinya. It is very clear that the name Kaundinya is derived from the city of Kundina, the capital of Vidarbha. A Gazetteer of Amaravati identifies this Kundina as the Kundinapura on the banks of Wardha in present Amarâvatī in Maharastra. This view is also supported by H.C. Chaudhuri. The records from the Aitareya Brahmana suggest that the satvatas gradually migrated to the south India and some rulers were styled Bhoja. It is also worth notable that gradually in the Brahmanic period the Aryans crossed the

119 etanu haiva prachutuh parvata nāradau........gāndhīrāya/ ABr. 7.34

120 As illustrations of Maharaja or supreme kings the Aitareya Prāhmana enumerates names of such kings as - Janmejaya, Somika, Sahadeva, Srujâja Kâdru-dâivavrdhyâ, Lhima vaidarbha, Nagnajita Gandhara ...........
IAB. p.86


122 The Kaundinya is apparently derived from the city of Kundina, the capital of Vidarbha represented by the modern Kaundinapura on the banks of Wardha in the Chandur Taluk of Amaraoti.

PHAI. pp.77-78.
Vindya mountain and established several kingdoms in the broad region stretched from the Narmada to the river Godavari. Vidarbha was one of these kingdoms. It further seems that Vidarbha was an independent kingdom in the Vedic period. According to view of some modern scholars the Vidarbha kingdom, mentioned in the Vedic texts constituted of modern Berar on the bank of Varada (i.e. Wardha) and a considerable portion of the central province lying between Wardha and Wain-Ganga. Thus the Vedic evidences place Vidarbha in South India.

EVIDENCES IN THE MAHĀBHĀRATA:

We have some idea in respect of Bhīṣmaka and the location of his kingdom from the epic Mahābhārata also. In course of description of Rukmi occurred in the Udyoga Parva, his father Bhīṣmaka is stated as the powerful king of Lhoja race ruling over Daksinātya. He is also described as Hiranyaroma (Possessing golden hairs). Similar description of Bhīṣmaka is met with in the Harivamsa. It is further stated that Bhīṣmaka ruled over the city of Kundina and extended his kingdom towards the provinces of

123 Vidarbha, therefore, existed as an independent kingdom in the time of Kūmi.
Ibid. p. 77.

124 ... Vidarbha of the Vedic texts lay in the Deccan, and not in some hitherto unknown region outside.
Ibid. p. 77.

Vidarbha, the modern Berar is mentioned, but only in the late Jaiminiya Upaniṣad Brahmav. though Bhīma of Vidarbha occurs in a late passage of the Aitireya.


126 HVP. 59. 13. p. 299.
southern direction protected by sage Agaśṭya. It becomes more clear from the narration of the Harivamsa that Vidar-bha was located towards the southern direction of the Vindhyā mountain.127

Again, the Sabhā Parva of the great Mahābhārata narrates vividly the victory expedition of the Pāṇḍavas, prior to their Rājasūya sacrifice. In course of description of the heroic expedition of the Pāṇḍavas, Ehiśmaka and his kingdom are also referred to. With the consent of the king Yudhiṣṭhira his young brothers went out on expedition to overcome other kingdoms and to collect revenue from them with a view to establishing their own supremacy.129

Now the reference to Ehiśmaka occurs in course of the description of the expedition of Sahadeva who moved towards the south. It is to be noted that Ehiśmaka's reference is met with twice in the narration. First, in course of expedition as it is stated, being rewarded by the ruler of Avanti with gems and riches, Sahadeva arrived at the city of Ehojakatā of Ehiśmaka. There Sahadeva, the son of Mādri fought for two days against fierce Ehiśmaka and overpowered him.130 In this Sahadeva's victory march the reference to Ehiśmaka is met with for the second time. According to this

127 Ibid. 59. 10. p.229.
account Sahadeva, in his conquest route overpowered the king of Surāśṭra and from there he sent message of expectation to Rukmi as well as to great, wise and pious Bhīṣmaka who lived in Bhojakatā and who was also the best friend of Indra. King Bhīṣmaka then consulted with his son over the matter and considering the good relation of Kṛṣṇa (his son in law) with Yudhīsthira accepted with love and peace the proposal of Sahadeva. Then Sahadeva took various kinds of jewels from Bhīṣmaka as taxes and then again he started his march and overpowered the kings of Surparaka, Tālikata, Daṇḍaka, and the Mlecchas (some low tribes) of the sea island.

The first narration, as stated above, delineates Bhīṣmaka as a fierce warrior, while the second one describes him as a great, pious, wise and the friend of Indra. Of course, the association of Bhojakatā with Bhīṣmaka undeniably helps us in identifying Bhīṣmaka as the king of Vidarbha. Most probably, at that time Bhojakatā (the new city) became more famous than the city of Kuṇḍina, in the same Vidarbha kingdom. Further, the second narration presents that Bhīṣmaka and Rukmi accepted the proposal of Sahadeva with love and peace considering the Pāṇḍavas as favourites of Kṛṣṇa, their relative. The Bhārata Kaumudī commentary more

clearly states that Bhīṣmaka and Rukmi did so, because, Kṛṣṇa was the husband of Rukmini and thus. He became the son-in-law of Bhīṣmaka and the brother-in-law of Rukmi, the brother of Rukmini. It is felt needless to say that Bhīṣmaka, described in the Mahābhārata versions is the same one related in the purānic versions and connected with the Rukminī-harana legend.

The very description of the expedition of Sahadeva, mentioned above, is very important because of it being suggestive of the location of Bhīṣmaka's Vidarbha kingdom. As stated above, Indraprastha, the native city was the starting point of expedition for all the Pāṇḍavas running to different directions. Thus Sahadeva's victory expedition started southward from Indraprastha.134

From the route of Sahadeva's conquest mentioned above, the following points may be noted regarding the situation of Bhīṣmaka's kingdom. The name Dhojakata, probably was more popular to mean Bhīṣmaka's abode at the time of Sahadeva's expedition. Again, it is learnt that Dhojakata was situated on the south of Harmada and Avanti stood on its northern territory. Moreover, Kosala, Venvātata, Pulinda, Surāśṭra

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133 rukminipatiḥ kṛṣṇo bhīṣmakasya jāmata rukminasca sahadevāna sāhā vīrodho'na karttavya ityā ločyeti bhāvah // Ibid. (Vv.ed) Sabhā Parva.30.62 bhārat kaumudi commentary, p.270.

might be neighbouring kingdoms of Vidarbha. On the other hand, it appears that the kingdoms of Surparka, Tālikaṭa, Daṇḍakī, Kerala, Pāṇḍya etc. were towards the south of Bhīṣmaka’s kingdom as because Sahadeva conquered these kingdoms after passing through Phojakaṭa. Andhra and Kaliṅga were obviously towards the south-east direction of Vidarbha kingdom. Thus, the expedition of Sahadeva, described in the Sabhā Parva of the Mahābhārata helps one to imagine a probable location of the Vidarbha kingdom of Bhīṣmaka.

Moreover, in course of the narration of the story of king Nala, the Vana Parva of the Mahābhārata too states about the Vidarbha kingdom, ruled over by Bhīma, the father of Damayantī. From the Mahābhārata versions, however, it seems that Vidarbha was located in the south India.

THE PURĀNIC EVIDENCES:

In chapter-II of the present work different versions of the legend that have occurred in different Purāṇas are elaborately discussed. There, in course of narrations, the introduction of Bhīṣmaka and his kingdom are obviously met with. As stated earlier, the Mahābhārata makes mention of the same Bhīṣmaka in respect of whom most of the Purānic

works narrate. The introduction of Bhīṣmaka and his kingdom, found in the Purāṇas is as follows.

It is already stated on the strength of the 
Harivāma-Purāṇa version that Bhīṣmaka, a king from the 
Kāśīka family was the ruler of Kuṇḍīna in Vidarbha kingdom which was situated towards the southern side of the 
Vindhya mountain. This Bhīṣmaka is also introduced in the 
Harivāma version as Hiranāyaroma.

The Viṣṇu-Purāṇa as stated earlier, mentions the 
name of the king Vidarbha. In the narration of the Rukmīṇī 
harana legend, this Purāṇa simply introduces Bhīṣmaka as 
the king of Kuṇḍīna in Vidarbha kingdom. It seems that 
Vidarbha was a broad kingdom and Bhīṣmaka ruled over 
Kuṇḍīna, a part and the city of that kingdom. On the other 
hand, it is learnt from the Harivāma-Purāṇa version the 
city of Kāśīka, the brother of Bhīṣmaka, who honoured 
Kṛṣṇa was known as the city of Vidarbha. From this state-
ment it becomes clear that Kāśīka ruled over the other part 
of Vidarbha and his capital city was also known by the same 
name Vidarbha. As Bhīṣmaka ruled over a major part of the 
Vidarbha kingdom, probably, centering the city of Kuṇḍīna so 
he was also called the Vidarbhapati as well as the

136 bhīṣmakaḥ kuṇḍine rāja ..............................//

137 HVP. 50.4,9. p.275.
Kundinapati. Thus the Bhāgavata-Purāṇa describes Bhīṣmaka as the Vidarbhapati in one place and the Kundinapati in another verse. The Erahma-Vaiyarta-Purāṇa describes Bhīṣmaka as Vaidarbha rājendra. This Purāṇa presents a beautiful description of his city of Kundina. The Padma-Purāṇa calls Bhīṣmaka Dharmātmā Vidarbharājo (the pious king of Vidarbha). The Śkandha-Purāṇa version states how Bhīṣmaka possessed plenty of riches and ruled over the city of Kundina.

Like the Harivamśa version the Śkanda-Purāṇa also gives us to know that Bhīṣmaka's kingdom was located towards the south of the Vindhya mountain. The Śkanda-Purāṇa version states that while Kṛṣṇa returned to Dwārakā (in north-west India) taking Rukmiṇī with Him from Kundina, He was to overcome or cross the Vindhya mountain on the way. Further, Kṛṣṇa on the way to Dwārakā arrived at the holy bank of Narmadā where the Siddhas (the holy or pious persons) lived formerly. Thus it becomes obvious that Bhīṣmaka's Kundina, or Vidartha was located in the region towards the south of Vindhya mountain and the river Narmadā

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      rājā sa kundina-patih ...................... /
      Itid. X. 53. 7. p.461.
139 Fr.VP.(Ss.ed). 98.1. p.382.
141 vidarbharājo dharmātmā bhiṣmakāno’hāma ......................//
      Pad.P. 94. p.1379.
142 SKP. 142. 39-40.
of South India.

REFERENCE TO VIDARBHA AND KUNDINA IN LATER WORKS OF SANSKRIT LITERATURE:

Accounts and references to the Vidarbha kingdom as well as the city of Kundina are found in some later works of Sanskrit literature composed by the scholars like Kalidasa, Sri Harshadeva, Bhavabhuti, Dandina and others as stated below.

IN RAGHUVAMSA OF KALIDASA:

Kalidasa (about 4th century A.D.) in his epic poem Raghuvamsa presents a beautiful description of the Svayamvara of Indumati, the sister of the king of Vidarbha. According to the narration, Aja, the son of Raghu was invited to that Svayamvara of Indumati, arranged by the Phoja king of Vidarbha and Aja made his journey accompanied by a troop of army that befitted his royal state. On the way to Vidarbha, Aja arrived at the bank of river Narmada and he encamped his tired army there. Then a big wild elephant suddenly emerged from the river and attempted to attack Aja's camp. Aja then killed the elephant who transformed into a Gaudharva prince, Priyamvada who thus got released from the curse of Mataanga. Feing satisfied, Priyamvada presented Aja a fierce weapon. Aja then started his journey again and reached

144 Ibid. Raghu. V. 40-42. p.37.
Vidarbha. There he was well received and luxuriously lodged for the night.\[145\]

In the Svayamvara pavilion of Vidarbha princess from the kingdoms of Magadha, Aṅga, Avanti, Surasena, Kaliṅga, Pāṇḍya etc. assembled for beautiful Indumāti. Aja entered the Svayamvara hall and he became the centre of attraction among the princes. The bride Indumāti ultimately selected Aja as the bride-groom and laid the wedding wreath on his neck.\[146\] Aja received high honour in the palace of Vidarbha. While he was returning accompanied by his bride Indumāti, he was to face, on the way the attack of the rival kings. Aja defeated them all and reached his native city in joy.

From the above narration it appears that Vidarbha was in the south beyond the river Narmadā. It was at a distant place from Ayodhya as the Aja’s army encamped on the bank of Narmadā being tired. Further more, it should be noted that the Phojā rulers of Vidarbha generally performed Svayamvara of their royal maids in the pomp atmosphere and entertained the guests well. Thus the reference of four famous Svayamvara ceremonies are met with e.g. the Svayamvara ceremonies of Damayanti, Indumāti, Rukmiṇī, Subhāṅgī, Čakudvatī, or Rukmavatī, the daughter of Rukmiṇī. On the other hand, at the time of Indumāti’s Svayamvara also

\[146\] Ibid. Rāghu. VI. 33. p.117.
the city was by the name of Kundina as the Bhoja, the brother of Indumati is called Kundinesa (the Lord of Kundina).\textsuperscript{147} Thus the Raghuvamśām of Kālidāsa introduces the Vidarbha kingdom as being in South India.

**IN MĀLAVIKĀGNIMITRĀM:**

Vidarbha kingdom is referred to in the Mālavikāgṇimitrām, a dramatic work of five acts of the same poet, Kālidāsa. Mālavikā, the heroine of the play was a princess of Vidarbha. She was the younger sister of Mādhavasena, the ruler of Vidarbha and who was captured by his cousin Yajñāsena. Vasumitra, a prince released Mādhavasena their favourite king defeating his enemies and reinstated him in the throne of the Vidarbha kingdom. It is also learnt that the kingdom was divided into two parts by taking river, Varadā (i.e. wardha) as the middle boundary.\textsuperscript{143} Anundoram Forooah also observes this division of the Vidarbha kingdom during the reign of Agnimitra.\textsuperscript{149} Keith observes that the characters, namely, Puṣyamitra, Agnimitra, and Vasumitra are historical and are taken from the record of Šunga dynasty.\textsuperscript{150}

\textsuperscript{147} tasmādāpivirtata kundinesaḥ ...........................................//
\textsuperscript{148} tauprthak varadākule ...........................................//
\textsuperscript{149} In the Mālavikāgṇimitrām, it is stated that Agnimitra divided Vidarbha into two parts.........................
\textsuperscript{150} Puṣyamitra, Agnimitra and Vasumitra are clearly taken from the dynasty of Cungas...............in 178 P.C.

\textsuperscript{147} Ibid. Rīghu. VII.33. p.125.
\textsuperscript{148} Ibid. V. 13. p.223.
\textsuperscript{149} AGI. p.82.
\textsuperscript{150} SDK. p.149.
play further refers to a fort Antapāla by name that stood on the bank of Narmādā. Thus Mālavikāgnimitraṃ clearly shows the existence of Vidarbha in Deccan.

IN MĀLATĪMĀDHAVA OR PHAVABHṬI, A POET OF VIDARBHA:

Phavabhṛti or Śrīkaṇṭha (later part of the 7th century A.D.), the author of Viracaritām, Uttaracaritām and Mālatīmādhavāṃ lived in a town named Padmapura in Vidarbha. His illustrious ancestors of Kāśyapagotra were the followers of the Taittirīya branch of the Black Yajur-veda. They performed sacrifices and kept five-fold sacred fire at home. This introduction is found in the prelude of Mālatīmādhavāṃ. The prelude of Viracaritāṃ also states that Phavabhṛti was an inhabitant of Padmapura, a city situated in Dakśinātya (i.e. Deccan). Phavabhṛti in his play Mālatīmādhavāṃ refers to Devarāta, the minister of the king of Vidarbha. As stated earlier, in chapter II of the present work the Rukmini-harana legend is referred to in the conversation of Madarākā and Buddhakītī that occurs in Act VII of the Mālatīmādhavāṃ. Such references in the

151 asti devyā varṇāvaro bhṛtā virāseno nāma ..........// Māl. I. p.18.
152 asti dakṣīṇāpathe vidarbheṣu padmapuraṃ nāmā nagaraṃ /
........... śrīkaṇṭha padaḻāṇcana bhavabhūtināma jātiṃkārṇi
putraḥ ..........// MM. Prelude, pp.7-8.
153 asti dakṣīṇāpathe padmapuraṃ nāmā nagaraṃ / tatra ca...
........... bhavabhūtināma jātiṃkārṇi putraḥ ..........//
154 śṛṣṭyatāṃ / astividarbhādhipateramātyaḥ ..........//
MM. II. p.58.
155 Vide. Ibid. 7. p.156.
works indirectly indicate the poet's impression on his native place Vidarbha, modern Berar. Modern scholars are also of the opinion that Bhavabhūti was a poet of Deccan (i.e. Vidarbha).\textsuperscript{156}

**IN **\textsc{DASĀKUMĀRA CARITA OF DANDĪN}:

Dāndīn (between 550 to 560 A.D.) refers to the Vidarbha kingdom in his famous prose romance \textit{Daśakumāra Carita}.\textsuperscript{157} The \textit{Uchāśa} VIII of the work narrates the adventures of Visrūtā, the last one of the Daśakumāras (i.e. the ten princes). There, in the narration, the reference to a prince of Vidarbha kingdom, and to Bhoja, the ruler of Vidarbha are met with. Further, the references to the Vindhyā forest, as well as the river Narmadā\textsuperscript{153} occur in many places of the narration from which it appears that the Vindhyā forest and Narmadā stood as the northern territory of Vidarbha.

It should also be noted that like Bhavabhūti, Dāndīn is also regarded as a poet of Vidarbha and Dakṣīṇātya in the light of his works the \textit{Daśakumāra-Carita} and \textit{Kāvyādārśa}. Moreover, Dāndīn proudly speaks of the Maharāṣṭrī language

\textsuperscript{156} Ibid. Introduction, p.5. 
\textsuperscript{157} DKC. VIII. pp.186-210.
\textsuperscript{153} Ibid. VIII. pp.137-200.
and he praises the Vaidarbhi riti (the Vaidarbhi style of writing). It is noteworthy that Vidarbha came to be known, at a later period by the name Mahārāṣṭra (the great province, or kingdom) on account of its great size, which extended from the bank of the river Kṛṣṇa to near the banks of Narmadā.

IN NAISADHA CARITAM OF ŚRĪHARṢA:

Śrī Harṣa (about 12th century A.D.) composed his epic poem Naiśadha-Caritam on the basis of the story of Nala and Damayantī narrated in the Mahābhārata. Damayantī, the heroine of the story was the princess of Vidarbha, and daughter of king Bhīma, and therefore, she was described as Vaidarbhi. Specially, the second canto of the work presents a very beautiful description of the city of Vidartha (i.e. Pundīna).

REFERENCE TO THE VAIDARBHĪRĪTI:

The reference to the Vaidarbhi riti (the Vaidarbhi style of writing) is met with in the rhetorical works of

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159 Reading the lašak, and the Kāvyā in this light, we can guess with some certainty that Dandin was of Dalṣinatya, probably, a native of Vidarbha country. Introduction P.AV.

160 The great kingdom of Vidarbha extended from the banks of the Kṛṣṇa to near the banks of the Narmadā. On account of its great size it was also called Mahārāṣṭra. Ibid. notes. p. 116.

Vāmana, Māmata, Dāndinś, Kavirāja, Viśvanātha etc. of Sanskrit poetics. Among the rīties (styles) (e.g. Vaidarbhi, or Vaidarbhā, Gaudī and Pāñcāli), as surely as the term Gaudī comes from Gauḍa, the Pāñcāli from the name of the country Pāñcāla, so surely does the term Vaidarbhi or Vaidarbhā come from the name Vidarbhā (i.e. the Vidarbhā country). The Vaidarbhi rīti is described as a very graceful style of writing. The Vidarbhā kingdom seems to be the same Vidarbhā kingdom of Deccan.

THE HISTORICAL EVIDENCES:

The scholars of ancient Indian history supply us some informations collected from various sources regarding the Vidarbhā kingdom. Thus sage Agastya is regarded as quite a historical person. His legend to go to the south, his marriage with Lopamudrā, a princess of Vidarbhā are regarded as the evidences of the extension of the Aryan civilization to the south. Thus Lopamudrā, a Vidarbhā princess seems to be a historical figure.

Again, it is already stated earlier, with reference to the Mālāvīkāgnimitram of Kālidāsa that Agnimitra, the king of Vidiśā had a clash with Yajñāsena, the king of Vidarbhā. Historians also remark in this regard that Agnimitra of Vidiśā was the son of Puṣyamitra (about 155-153 B.C.)
of Suniga dynasty (about 135-73 B.C.) and he had a clash with Yajñasena, the cousin of Mādhavasena. The division of Vidarbha mentioned earlier, is also stated in these historical records. Further, that Yajnasena of Vidarbha is identified by some scholars as a relative of Vṛhadratha, the last Mauryan king who was dethroned by Pushyamitra. Of course, the Vidarbha kingdom of that time is said to be a newly established kingdom. Probably, the old kingdom of Vidarbha was about to lose its original strength. The kingdom of Yajñasena is, however, identified with the region of Berar in south India.

Again, Vidarbha is described as a kingdom, that existed on the territory of Gautamiputra Śīrī-Śātakarnī of Satavāhana dynasty, who ruled over his kingdom about 70 A.D. to 95 A.D. Here too, Vidarbha is identified with Berar in the south India.

Of course, it is noticed from the historical records that the name Vidarbha is not found at least after the 8th

164 Vide EHI. pp.229-230.
AAHI. pp.113-114.

165 Yajnasena, king of Vidarbha, is represented as a relative of Brihadratha, the last Mauryan king whom Pushyamitra had ousted from the throne.
EHI. p.229

We are told that Pushyamitra, the commander-in-chief of Brihadratha, the last of the Mauryas, slew his master and reign in the seat.

CHI. p.166.

166 The prince was soon involved in a war with neighboring kingdom of Vidarbha, or Berar.
AAHI. p.114.

167 EHI. pp.237-238.

168 Vidarbha has been identified with Berar.
Ibid. p.238.
century A.D. i.e. from the time of the king Danti-durga about 750 A.D.) of Rāṣṭrakūta dynasty. It is stated that Danti-durga became the powerful king of the Rāṣṭrakūta dynasty performing Hīraṇya-Garbha ceremony in Ujjayinī and he conquered Madhya Pradesh, Berar, and Kirtivarman-II, the ruler of Calukyas and thus became the Lord of the whole of Mahārāṣṭra. Here the name Berar seems to have occurred in place of Vidarbha. Thus the historical evidences place Vidarbha in the region of south India centering present Berar of Mahārāṣṭra.

THE MODERN VIEW:

It is clear from some evidences as mentioned above that though the Vidarbha kingdom existed with modern Berar in century, yet the area was going on changing from time to time. It extended from the banks of Kṛṣṇā in south up to the banks of Narmāḍā on the north. According to some historians, apart from modern Berar Vidarbha extended some times to Khandesh, Madhya Pradesh and up to a part of Hydara-vid also. Of course, we are mainly concerned with the

169 The greatness of the Rastrakutas started with Danti-durga. By 750 A.D., he became the master of central and southern Gujrat and the whole of Madhya Pradesh and Berar. Danti-durga defeated Kirtivarman-II, the Chalukya ruler and thus became the master of the whole of Maharastra. Ibid. p.363.

170 On the north of Kuntala, lay the great kingdom of Vidarbha which seems to have extended from the banks of the Kṛṣṇā to near the banks of the Narmāḍā. AGI. p.32.

171 Vide RD. Saradiya number, Śak 1375. Article - Vidarbha rājya by Dr. P. Gogoi, p. 365.
Vidarbha kingdom of Bhīṣmaka's time connected with the Rukmini haraṇa legend.

From different evidences and views stated earlier, it appears that Bhīṣmaka ruled over that part of Vidarbha kingdom including the city of Kuṇḍina, which comprised an area centering modern Berar of Deccan and including Amarāvatī district.

MORE ABOUT KUṆḌINA, ITS LOCATION:

From most of the evidences noted earlier, it is learnt that Kuṇḍina or Kuṇḍinapura was the original capital city of Vidarbha kingdom almost in all period i.e. from the Vedic time on ward. Sometimes Kuṇḍina is also called the city of Vidarbha. But it should be noted that as stated earlier after the Harivaṃśa, the city of Kaiśika, where Kṛṣṇa's royal coronation ceremony was celebrated was not Kuṇḍina. Because, Bhīṣmaka then ruled over Kuṇḍina a separate area from Kaiśika.

The Frāhma-Vaivarta-Purāṇa presents a beautiful description of the city of Kuṇḍina. Kuṇḍina is described here as a very beautiful city. It was surrounded by seven deep ditches and there were seven walls around it. Further

172 syādvīdīśibha tu kuṇḍinam

the city was provided by one hundred gates. The city of Kundīna was constructed applying varities of valuable gems and jewels by Lord Viśvakarmā himself. The outward city gate was guarded by many security guards. From some narrations occurring in the Purāṇa, it is further met with that there was a temple of Goddess Ambikā or Phāvānī (i.e. Durgā) in the city of Kundīna, where princess Rukmīṇī prayed the Goddess.175

LOCAL TRADITION AND MODERN VIEW:

Even in South India some controversial views of different scholars are met with regarding the location of Kundīna. According to the description given by K.M. Munchi Kundīna or Kundinapura was situated on a narrow delta formed by the rivers Tapti and Purna and two fords on both sides connected the delta.176 According to some other scholars modern Kundinapura, or Kundinya situated on the bank of the river Varadā and in the Chandur Taluk of present Amarāvatī district of Mahārāṣṭra was the original

175 Vide. HVP. 59. 33-34- p.300
Śr.P. Avantra Khande Revakhaṇḍam. 142. 25.
Pād. P. UK. 94.15.
176 Kundinapura was situated on a narrow delta formed by the rivers Tapti and Purna. The confluence in fact was a yojana and a half away from the city.
city of Kunda. Further, Dr. Padmesvar Gogol observes that the present town Kundinapura is located on the west bank of Wardha at a distance of about 25 miles east of present Amaravati town. But according to John Bowson, Kundinapura is situated about 40 miles east of present Amaravati in Berar. This record of course appears to be correct.

Moreover, as can be gathered from a local tradition, the people of that region still believe that Kundinapura as the original city of Kundina of king Phishmaka. It is also noteworthy that there is still a temple of Lord Krishna and Rukmini in that Kundinapura and a great fair takes place annually there even at the present time.

Now, from the evidences above, regarding Kundina, it appears that Phishmaka's city of Kundina might be located in the region of the present city of Kundinapura probably on the bank of the river Wardha of the Amaravati district of present Maharashtra.

177 Kundina, the capital of Vidarbha, represented by the modern Kaundinapura on the banks of the Wardha in the Chandur Taluk of Amaravati. PHAI. p.73.
178 RD. Saradiya number, 1375, Saka. 6th year. 5-6 numbers. p. 366.
179 ...It (Kundina) survives as the modern Kundinapura, situated about 40 miles east of Amaravati in Berar. CDHMR. p.171.
MORE ABOUT RUKMI AND PHOJAKATA:

As stated in various versions of the Rukmini-haraṇa legend Rukmi was the eldest son of Bhīṣmaka and the elder brother of Rukmini, the heroine of the legend. It is also already stated that he established a new city which became famous by the name Phojakata (i.e. the abode or castle of the Bhojas) and where Rukmi bold and resolute, used to live keeping his vow in tact. Description of Rukmi, as stated earlier, is found in the Udyoga Parva of the Mahābhārata besides the various Purānic works.

In course of time Rukmi intended to establish a good relation with Kṛṣṇa and the Vṛṣṇis of Dvārakā and therefore, he arranged a marriage ceremony of his daughter Rukmavatī with Pradyumna, the son of Kṛṣṇa and Rukmini. The Yādavas went to Bhojakata of Rukmi for marriage.130 The kings, headed by the ruler of Kaliṅga who were friendly to Rukmi assembled there in the city of Phojakata. The kings played dice in which Balarāma also participated. A controversy, however, arose in that game of dice. Rukmi and the king of Kaliṅga jeered at Balarama announcing his defeat. Balarāma, then became very furious and unable to resist his anger killed Rukmi.131 Thus proud and valiant Rukmi met...

with his death.

Rukmi's Phojakaṭa, another city of Vidarbha was also very beautiful and is described as being famous in the world. The Mahābhārata, further describes it as full of plenty of elephants, horses and other riches. As stated earlier, the Sabha Parva of the Mahābhārata states that Sahadeva conquered Phojakaṭa where king Bhīṣmaka lived. It is also stated how Bhīṣmaka accepted the proposal of Sahadeva in a spirit of love and peace. From this narration it is learnt that Bhīṣmaka lived in Phojakaṭa at the time of Sahadeva's expedition. Probably, on the basis of this reference, some scholars want to suggest that Phojakaṭa was the new name of Kuṇḍina, or the old name of Phojakaṭa was Kuṇḍina. Py this it goes to indicate that Kuṇḍina and Phojakaṭa were the two names of the same city. But it is not likely to be correct. Because, the most of the versions of the Rukmiṇī hāraṇa legend, as stated earlier, apparently prove that the new city Phojakaṭa was established by prince Rukmi to keep his vow intact, according to which he did not return to his old city of Kuṇḍina. Further, it is also clear from the Purāṇic narrations that the marriage ceremony of Rukmi's daughter was celebrated in the city of Phojakaṭa and

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183 tadbhojaḥ katamiti eva vabhūva bhūvi visṛutaṃ / HVP. 60. 32. p.303
cakre bhojakaṭaṁ nāma nivāsāya mahat puraṁ / Bhāg. P. 1.54.52. p.473.
184 Mbh. (Rs. ed) Udyoga Parva. 158. 16. p.254.
185 The original name of Phojakaṭa was Kuṇḍinapura PE. p.139.
Rukmī was killed by Balarāma there. Regarding the reference to Bhīṣmaka’s presence at Bhojakāta it may be considered that Bhīṣmaka might live in Bhojakāta at the time of Sahadeva’s expedition. Or, it may also be that probably the capital of Bhīṣmaka might be shifted to the new city of Phojakāta at the time of Pāṇḍava’s conquest.

Regarding the location of the city Bhojakāta the Purānic versions supply us some important information. Most of the versions state that Rukmī established Phojakāta, the new city at the very place where he met his defeat at the hand of Kṛṣṇa. On the other hand, according to the Hari-vamśa Purāṇa version, as already stated, Rukmī pursued Kṛṣṇa and he met Him with Rukmīni on the bank of the river Narmadā, which is also mentioned in the Skanda-Purāṇa version. The fierce fight, between Kṛṣṇa and Rukmī took place on the bank of Narmadā and Rukmī was defeated there. From this, it seems that the city of Bhojakāta might be established towards the bank of Narmadā.

LOCAL TRADITION AND MODERN VIEW:

Some more controversial views are found in the context of location of Bhojakāta as stated below:

BHOJAKĀTA IN BHILSA:

According to some scholars Bhojakāta was situated in a

\[186\] na vivesā purīni śīyāṁ sa tu taraiya cāvasat /
tatra bhojakatāṁ nāma Kṛtaṁ nagaram-uttamam //
place six miles south-east from Bhilsa or old Vidisā in the Madhya Pradesh. This view originates from the fact that once Vidarbha got extended beyond the north of Narmadā. This view taken note of by cunningham as stated by Dr. Padmeswar Gogoī.137 But there is no specific evidence, or traditional belief in support of this view. Dr. Gogoī, therefore, remarks that this view springs up from imagination only.

PHOJAKAṬĀ IN IILICHPUR:

Some other scholars, headed by vincent Smith are of the opinion that Phojakaṭā was situated in Ilichpur of Amarāvati district in the Berar region. The evidence pointed out in support of this view are as follows:

THE CHAMMAK GRANT:

A copper inscription was discovered in 1336 A.D. in a place called Chammak about four miles south-west of Amarāvati. That copper plate is identified as the record of the Vakataka kings and that is also known by the name Chammak lipi or Grant.138 From this inscription it is learnt that Phojakaṭā was situated near a place in Ilichpur. V.C. Smith remarks how the districts of Berar were

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137 Vide. R.D. Sārādiya number 1875 Sāk. 6th year, 5-6 numbers. p.366.
138 Ibid. Sārādiya number, 1375 Sāk. 6th year, 5-6 numbers p.366.
rearranged in 1,05 A.D. At this the Ilichpur district merged with the Amaravati district of Berar. Thus according to Smith, Bhojakatā (the castle of the Bhojas) was in Ilichpur.189

Ruins in Ilichpur:

Some ruins of an old fort are found in a place called Gaonviligarh situated on 4000 ft. high, a few miles north of Ilichpur. V. Smith imagines the same as the ruins of old Phojakaṭa.190 But no firm opinion is there until now in support of this view.

Bhatkuli, the Old Phojakaṭa:

Modern researchers forward a view that Bhatkuli, a place in the Amaravati district may be regarded as the old Phojakaṭa city of Rukmiṇī. There is a temple at Bhatkuli which is named after Rukmiṇī, the elder brother of Rukmiṇī and founder of the original cit, of Phojakaṭa.191 The place is popular as the old abode of Rukmiṇī according to the local tradition. This view, (i.e. the location of

189 The Chammak Grant (KINI. No. 619) establishes ..... The districts of Ferar were rearranged in 1,05. Ilichpur, which used to be separate district was then merged in Amaravati. The name Phojakata, which means 'castle of the Bhojas', implies that the province was named after a castle formerly held by the Bhojas.
190 Vide Ibid. Sārādiya number, 1375 Sak, 6th year, 5-6 numbers, p.366.
191 Ibid. Sārādiya number, 1375 Sak, 6th year, 5th-6th number, p.367.
Fhojakata at Bhatkuli) is supported by some other scholars also like Y.M. Kale, Cunninghum, H.C. Raychaudhuri.  

It is very difficult to confirm the identification of a particular place as old Bhojakata of Rukmi. In accordance with the Harivamśa, which refers to the fight of Kṛṣṇa and Rukmi on the bank of the river Narmadā, Bhojakata should be a place situated in the region of the upper part of Narmadā. From this, Bhojakata seems to be located in Bhilsa, as mentioned above, or in such a place of the south-eastern part of present Madhya Pradesh which might be also a part of old Vidarbha kingdom. It should also be noted that the most of the Puraṇas do not refer to the name of Narmadā as the battlefield of Kṛṣṇa and Rukmi. On the other hand, the Amaravati district is also located in the upper part, or the northernmost part of Mahārāṣṭra near Madhya Pradesh. Therefore, Bhatkuli is also a significant place to be considered as the city of old Bhojakata. Further more, the strong local tradition with the temple of Rukmi in Bhatkuli draws the attention of the modern researchers to think of the place as the old city Bhojakata of Rukmi. Thus it seems that the context of Bhatkuli, a place of Amaravati district provides scope to ascertain a probable location of the old city of Bhojakata of Rukmi.

192 Vide IA. 1923. p.263.
Vide. PHAI. p.279.
SOME MORE POINTS IN SUPPORT OF VIDARPHA IN DECCAN:

In addition to the evidences mentioned above, some more points may be cited to support the view that the Vidartha kingdom was located probably in southern India and not in the North-eastern region.

We do not have specific literary or historical evidences in Sanskrit works to support the view that Vidartha was in North-Eastern part of India. In the Sabhā Parva of the Mahābhārata as stated earlier, the route of expedition of Sahadeva is described as moving towards south from Indraprāṣṭha reaching the kingdom of Phīśmaka.

Again, Phīma as already mentioned, conquered the kingdoms situated in the eastern direction. Thus Phīma over-powered kingdoms, viz. Cedi, Kosala, Ayodhya, Malla, Matsya, Magadha of Jarāsandha's son Sahadeva etc. After conquering many kingdoms Phīma reached the kingdoms on the bank of Lauhitya i.e. Uraumaputra. Then he conquered the Mecchas, on the sea-shore, and collected from them various kinds of gems and jewels, silver, clothes and plenty of riches. Thus collecting wealth in expedition Phīma returned to Indraprāṣṭha. Here, Lauhitya means undoubtedly

the river Brahmaputra. But in the description of the conquest of Phima no kingdom of the name Vidarbha is mentioned.

Further, Arjuna's adventure was towards the north and extended up to Prāggyotisa ruled over by Phagadatta, which was situated in present lower Assam. After conquering Phagadatta Arjuna also returned to Indraprastha. In his expedition also no kingdom of the name Vidarbha was found. Therefore, these evidences do not support the view in favour of the existence in the North-East India of Vidarbha Kingdom and the king Bhīṣmaka connected with the Rukmini-harana legend.

As stated earlier, from the epic and the purānic evidences it is learnt that Bhojakata, the new city was also located within the territory of Vidarbha kingdom. But there is no any ruin or relic, or any sort of evidence to show that Bhojakata was located in the Vidarbha kingdom of North East India (i.e. present Assam and Arunachal Pradesh).

Moreover, some purānic versions state that Kṛṣṇa arrived at the city of Kūṣmāṇḍa within a night from Dwārakā by means of His fast chariot. From this record it may be...

195 lauhityaṁ brahmaputra madam ...
Mbh. (Vv. ed) Sāhā Parva.29.24 bhārat kaumudī commentry, p.256.

196 ...... ānartadeka rātreṇa vidarbhānagamadvayaṁ //
considered that Kṛṣṇa covered a distance of twelve hours journey by chariot. A.C. Prabhupada, however, remarks that Dvāraka is separated from Kṛṣṇa by a distance of not less than 1,000 miles.\(^{197}\) It should be noted that the distance between Dvāraka and Vidarbha of Arunācal would be more than 4,000 miles. From this it appears that Kṛṣṇa of Dvāraka might not have gone to that Vidarbha in North-East India. Now, regarding the notion of existence of Vidarbha kingdom in North-East India the following points may be taken into consideration.

The presence of the Vidarbha kingdom even in North-East India may be actually aftermath of Hinduisation and extension of Hindu civilization to the region. Or broadly speaking, due to the Aryanization, probably, the names like Bhīṣmaka and Rukmini and places like Kūḍīla and Vidarbha came into use and acceptance. This cultural assimilation in the North-East of India is, however, observed by Dr. L. Gogoi also.\(^{198}\) He further admits the incidence of the mixture of Prāhmanic blood with the Micimi tribes of present Arunācal. Therefore, just as a second Dvāravatī, is believed to have been established in Syam in imitation of original Dvārakā, so similarly another Vidarbha might have been established in the east and this is due to the result of the extension of Hindu or Aryan culture to the far east of India. From another

\(^{197}\) They are separated by a distance of not less than 1,000 miles, but the horses were so fast that they reached their destination, a town called Kūḍīla, within one night, or almost twelve hours.

\(^{198}\) As. pp. 263-269

\(^{199}\) Ibid. p. 252.
point of view it may also be guessed that due to the deep influence and much popularity of Śrī Śaṅkaradeva's works on the Rukmini-harana legend, the names e.g. Vidarbha, Kuṇḍila, Bhīsmaka and others came to be associated with the local places and the characters at a later period and thus the traditional beliefs grew up. In this regard, the use of the term 'Kuṇḍila' in several works of Assamese literature in place of the Purānic term 'Kuṇḍina' deserves attention. The possibility of the existence of a second Vidarbha kingdom in the east is hinted at by Dr. Lakṣmi Devi also.200

Another important point in this regard is that the Gurucaritaśs are, as stated earlier considered as the works composed at a post Śaṅkarite period. Therefore, the narrations found in the Gurucaritaśs relating the significance of Pāṭvāusī, Dhanuṣchandāvil, etc. as already mentioned appear to be the result of the impact of the Rukmini-harana legend presented in the works of Śrī Śaṅkaradeva. It is obvious from the occurrence of the names such as Vedanidhi, Sumālinidhāi etc. which occur only in the works of Śrī Śaṅkaradeva and are not to be found in the original versions of the legend or in any other literature other than Assamese. Thus the evidences that we come across in the modern Assamese literature, the local traditions and belief and also the local colour given in narrating the

200 ADB. p.32.
legend in Post Śaṅkarite period may be considered as the result of the tremendous popularity of the works of Śrī Śaṅkaradeva in Assam.

THE CONCLUDING VIEW:

As for conclusion in this context we feel that the original Vidarbha kingdom, the city of Kuṇḍina, that of Bhojakaṭa connected with Bhīṣmaka, Rukmī and Rukmiṇī of the Rukmiṇī-harana legend all these most probably were located in a region centering Berar in present Mahārāṣṭra in the South India.

IDENTIFICATION OF ŚISUPTĀLA AND LOCATION OF HIS KINGDOM OF CEDI:

As gathered from the narrations, Śiśūpāla is one of the important characters of the Rukmiṇī-harana legend by way of standing as the rival against Kṛṣṇa in the affair of his love towards Rukmiṇī. Śiśūpāla was known as Caidya, because he was the king of Cedi and he was born in the Caidya clan of the original Yadu race. His father was king Damaghoṣa.201

The story of the killing of Śiśūpāla is very came to be a popular topic and Maḥā (7th century A.D.) composed his popular epic poem, the Śiśūpāla Vadhān on the theme of Śiśūpāla.

Cedi was one of the famous kingdoms of ancient India.
The reference to this kingdom occurs as early as in the Vedic literature. The Dinastuti (praise of gift) that occurs in the Rigveda refers to the name Vasu Caidya at the end of a hymn. Rapson identifies this Caidya king with the Cedis who dwelt in a later period in Pundelkhand to the north of Vindhyā.

Originally, the Cedi kingdom situated encircling the Kurus near the river Yamunā. Later on the kingdom extended to the bank of Narmadā, or Revā, or Purvagaṅgā (the eastern Ganges). The Mekala-Sutā was also another name for the river Narmadā. Anundoram Borooah is also of the opinion that the Narmadā valley, was once the seat of two important ancient kingdoms of India e.g. the kingdom of the Cedis and of the Haihayas. He further wants to identify the city of Trinura (i.e. three cities) as the capital of Cedi. The southern frontiers of Cedi up to the bank of river Narmadā existed to the mediaeval period. H.C. Ray Chaudhuri also observes this point.

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203 No other Aryan tribe plays a great figure in the Rigveda. The chedies, who in later times dwelt in Pundelkhand to the north of the Vindhyā, and their king Vasu are mentioned but once in a late Dinastuti. EHI. p.75.
204 revenduḥ pūrvagaṅgā narmadā mekaladrijā / HC (Hemachandra) 4. 149
revātu narmadā somodbhavā mekala kanyakā / A.K. Amara Kosa l.10.32.
205 ...Its Narmadā’s valley was the seat of two important kingdoms viz., of the Chedis and the Haihayas. The first were also called Dahalas and Traipuras from their chief town Tripuri, or Tripura. AGL. p.85.
206 PHAl. p.115.
The Mahābhārata refers to the kingdom of Cedi in many places. As stated earlier, the Sabha Parva of the Mahābhārata states the conquest of Bhimasena, which passed to the eastern direction. According to this account, Bhīma, after conquering the city of South-pulinda, proceeded towards the Cedi kingdom of Sisupāla and conquered him remembering the advice of Yudhiṣṭhira. Bhīma halted there in Cedi for thirteen days enjoying hearty reception from Sisunāla. 207

The route of Bhima's conquest denotes that Bhīma first proceeded towards the north-east by the north bank of Yamunā. Thereafter, he reached Videha i.e. present north Bihar. Then the route turned southward and reached Pulindas and then the kingdom of Cedi. 208 It should also be noted that Bhīma turned to the south bank of Yamunā to conquer Cedi with the instruction of Yudhiṣṭhira. 209 It clearly shows that Cedi was situated to the south of Pāñcāla, Videha etc. Therefore, Bhīma reached the kingdoms, namely Kumāradeśa, Kośala, Ayodhyā, Uttara Somaka, Malla, Kāśi etc. 210 It seems that Bhīma crossed the river Yamunā to its north bank and proceeded again to the east. Because, these kingdoms were situated on the north bank of Yamunā, in present Uttar Pradesh and a part of west Bihar. The evidence

from this account shows that Cedi was located to the south of Ayodhyā (i.e. to the south bank of Yamunā) and to the west of Kāśī. Further, the Vana Parva of the Mahābhārata relates about the shelter offered to Damayantī in the kingdom of Cedi.211

E.J. Papson refers to sixteen great nationalities of ancient India, supposed to have existed in Buddhist period. These are, Aṅga, Magadha, Kāśī, Kośala, Vajji, Malla, Cheti, Vaśa, Kuru, Pāñcāla, Maccha, Surasena, Assaka, Avanti, Gāndhāra, and Kamboja.212 H.C. Chaudhuri also mentions the same names as the those of sixteen Mahājanapadas (great kingdoms).213 Here the name Cheti, or Chetiya is used for the Sanskrit name Cedi. It should also be noted that the Buddhist work Chetiya Jātaka refers to a city Sotthivatī-nagara which means a capital city by the side of the river Sotthivatī. The term Sotthivatī comes from the Sanskrit term Suktimatī, meaning the river that flowed by the capital of Cedi. Pergiter identifies the river with the Kena and he wants to place the city of Suktimatī in a nearest possible place of Banda.214

From the records stated above, it may be guessed that Cedi, some times (specially in the medieval time),

211 Ibid (Vv.ed). Vana Parva, pp.576-532
213 Vide. PHAI. p.36.
214 Ibid. p.116.
occupied a vast area extending from the south bank of Yamunā on the north, and to the south it ran up to the banks of Narmadā. On the east, probably, there was the river Kenā that flows through present Madhya Pradesh and the southern part of Uttar Pradesh. To the north-west, Cedi extended most probably up to Matsya beyond present chambal. The remarks of some modern historians as mentioned earlier seem to support this view. Pargiter also observes an extended Cedi.215

It is further to be noted that some historical records of ancient India mention of an era called Glachurī or Cedi era that originated perhaps in 248-49 A.D., most probably in the time of Īśvarasena of Satavāhanas.216

JARĀŚANDHA AND HIS MAGADHA KINGDOM:

Jarāśandha, the powerful king of Magadha is another important character indirectly connected with the Rukmiṇī-harana legend. Vrhadratha, the son of Vasu was the father of Jarāśandha.217 By the grace of the sage Canda Caufika, Jarāśandha became a very powerful king in Magadha, overpowering all the rulers of his time.218 The significance of

215 Pargiter (JASB. 1895.253) places Chedi along the south bank of Jumna from the Chambal on the north-west as far as Kurus on the south-east; its limits southwards may have been, according to him, plateau of Malwa and the hills of Fundelkhand. Ibid. p.116.

216 Īśvarasena was perhaps the famous of the dynasty(satava-hana) about which nothing more is known than that in A.D. 248-49 it originated an era called Kalachurī, or Chedi in later times. AHEI. p.99.


218 Ibid. (Vv. ed) Sabha Parva.18.5-12. pp.178-79.
Jarāsandha's name is stated in the Purānic works also.

Jarāsandha, became very powerful in time and as stated earlier, he even stood against Kṛṣṇa, because Kṛṣṇa killed Kamsa, the son-in-law of Jarāsandha. Jarāsandha could keep under his sway all the kings like Sīṣupāla and Danta Vaktra, Sīṣupāla and other chieftains led by Jarāsandha went to the marriage ceremony of Rukminī at Kuṇḍinapura.

The beautiful city of Girivraja (a mountain fort) was the capital of Jarāsandha. Jarāsandha attained power to such an extent that he captured many kings and kept them locked-up in the fort of Girivraja.

Kṛṣṇa came to know of the extreme oppressive nature of Jarāsandha and therefore, He being accompanied by Dīma and Arjuna arrived at Girivraja, the capital of Magadha. He tactfully compelled Jarāsandha to fight with Bhāmasena. Dīma defeated him in a terrible fight and disjoined the body of Jarāsandha into two parts, thus mighty Jarāsandha came to be killed. As a king of Magadha, Jarāsandha was famous by the name Magadha also.

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220 Bhāg P.X. 72.42. p.579.
221 Bhāg. P.X. 70.2+. p.563.
222 bhīmasenoarjunah kṛṣṇo vrahmaṇiṅga dharāśrayah / jagmurgirivrajāṁ tātā vrahadrathasuto yataḥ //
224 sthiro yudhyasva magadha ........etc.................
Magadha is one of the famous and prominent kingdoms of ancient India. It was not only well-known in the epics and the Puranic age but its reputation, by the name Magadha continued up to the medieval period of Indian history.

The reference to the Magadha kingdom occurs in the early Vedic literature. The *Rgveda* makes mention of a territory called Kikata ruled over by a chieftain Pramaganda by name. Yaskacarya, in his *Mirukta* describes Kikata as a non-Aryan country. The later works like the *Bhagavata-Purana* regard Kikata as a synonym of Magadha. H.C. Chaudhuri also identifies Kikata with the Gaya district, covering a major unholy region corresponding to Yaska's 'anarya nivasa' (the dwelling place of the non-Aryan people). With reference to *Trikandasepa* Anundoram Borooah also identifies Kikata with Magadha.

225 *kitive krnvantl kikatesu gavo* // *RV. 3.53.14.*

226 *de'sanarya nivasa// / kikatah ki'n krtah, kin kriya thiri ti prep sa va* // *Nir. 6. 127. p.31v.*

228 It is clear from these that Kikata included the Gaya district, but the greater part of it was looked upon as an unholy region (Papabhumi) doubtless corresponding to anarya nivasa of Yaska.  
*PHAI. pp.99-100.*  
229 Magadha was also called Kikata in later literature.  
*AGI. p.60.*
The name, Magadha first appears in the *Atharva-Veda* together with the names of Maujavata and Aṅga. It is interesting to note that the *Yajur-Veda* refers to the birds of Magadha. In the age of the Brāhmaṇas also Magadha occupied its place with other kingdoms, e.g. Kuru, Pāṇcalā, Uṣīnara, Vidēha, Kāśi, Vidarbha etc.

The *Mahābhārata* as well as the Purāṇas present vivid picture of ancient Magadha and its capital city of Girivraja in course of descriptions of the life and activities of Vṛhadraṭha, Jarāsandha, and his son Sahadeva. It is described in the *Mahābhārata* that the city of Girivraja was surrounded by five hills, viz. Vaihāra, Vipula, Varāha, Vṛṣabha and Caityaka, all possessing five high peaks, full of cool or green trees. These hills stood in such an adjoining position, as it to guard or protect the city. Thus the city became well-protected from the enemy.

From the description of the route from Indraprastha to Magadha, followed by Kṛṣṇa, Dhima and Arjuna is met with in the *Sabhā Parva*, it is learnt that they went by the

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gandrīthēyāṁ mujavadbhyo sāragesbhyo ..........
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231 *YV. Vaṣaṁ*. 305
The birds of Magadha are, however, mentioned as early as the *Yajur Veda.* PHAI. p.101.

232 Vide. IAE. p.83.

233 vaihāra vipulah 'ailo....................girivrajam //

234 Ibid. (Vv.ed) Sabhā Parva. 20.11. p.192.

northern bank of Yamunā and also the Ganges through Mithilā (northern part of Bihar), Kośala (modern Oudh) and reached Magadha crossing the Ganges. This evidence apparently proves the location of Magadha on the south bank of Ganges, occupying an area of present south Bihar. Again, from the description of the city of Girivraja it seems that the city might be located, probably, among the hilly region of present Gaya district in Bihar. The city was also known by a later name 'Rājagrha' (the royal house). It was probably, at a nearest area of present Rajgir, about 7 miles south of Nālandā. The remarks of modern scholars also support this view. Further, the name Bihar, or the modern province of Northern India, was most probably, originated from the name of the hill Vaihāra, found in the Mahābhārata version as stated above. The palitexts supply us valuable information regarding Magadha and its city. Thus 'Bimbisārapura', another name for Girivraja occurs in the works of Indian Buddhist writers. It should also be noted that at the time of Buddha Bimbisāra ruled over Magadha. It is, of course, noteworthy that there was another Rājagrha in Kekaya and Huien Tsang mentioned still of a third Rājagrha. Further,

236 Vide. AGI. p.61.
237 Indian Buddhist writers give a seventh name, Bimbisārapura. PHAI. p.100.
238 The king of Magadha i. the Buddha's time, was Bimbisāra. CHI. p.162.
239 PHAI. p. 58.
"Kusāgrapura" is mentioned as the capital of Magadha at the time of Hiuen Tsang's visit. Moreover, Pātaliputra, or Kusumapura was the later capital of Magadha which is mentioned by Megasthenes and which is now identified with present city of Patna in Bihar.240

Thus from these records regarding ancient Magadha stated above, it appears that Magadha kingdom was situated in present South Bihar, centering Patna and the Gaya district. The rivers Ganges and Son became its northern boundary. The kingdom further extended to the Vindhya range on the south and to the Cambā in the east. Such a location of ancient Magadha, however, seems to be supported by some modern scholars also.241

The imperial capital Pataliputra or Kusumapura.........the Son is described by Megasthenes. Its ruins lie for the most part under the modern city of Patna-Bankipore.

CHI. pp.+29-+30.

Magadha corresponded ....to the modern district of Patna, but with the addition of northern half of the modern district of Gaya. The inhabitants of this region still call it Maga, a name doubtless derived from Magadha. The boundaries were probably the Ganges to the north, the Son to the west, a dense forest reaching to the plateau of Chota-Nagpur to the south and Anga to the east.

Ibid. p. 162.
The Magadha country is identified with the southern part of Bihar.

IAF. p.7.
Magadha, embracing the districts of Patna and Gaya in the southern part of Bihar, could boast of powerful chieftains even in the days of the Vedic Rishis and the epic poets.

AAHI. p.57.
It is needless to add that Magadha kingdom occupies an important place in the works of Indian history. Thus Dhanananda (about 4th century B.C.) is described as a very powerful ruler at the seat of Magadha in northern India at the time of the invasion of the Alexander the great (326 B.C.). Furthermore, in Magadha the ruin of Dhanananda by the famous diplomat Čaṇākya, the author of Artha Śāstra (321-300 B.C.), the establishment of Candragupta's Maurya empire, the glorious reign of Aśoka, the great (third century B.C.), etc. are all most remarkable events of Indian history. A noteworthy point is that the Magadha Kingdom came to have most possible extension in the time of Aśoka, the great. 

It is also to be noted that the Māgadhī dialect mentioned by Kavirāja Viśvanātha (about 1st century A.D.), originated from Magadha which is very significant.

DANTAVAKTRA AND HIS KINGDOM:

Dantavaktra is, of course, not an important character, playing major part in the Rukminī-haraṇa legend. He accompanied Ĝisupāla with other kings to the marriage ceremony of Rukminī in Kuṇḍina. Dantavaktra, as stated earlier, fought

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242 Vide CHI. p.423.
243 Aśoka is most famous of all rulers of India up to the time of Akbar. With him Magadha reached its climax, comorising nearly the whole of India........ the whole of undivided India proper, except the southern extremity. CAS. p.4.
244 atrōktā māgadhī bhāsā....................// SD. VI. p.273.
against Kṛṣṇa and other Yādavas and being defeated fled away from the battle field.\(^{245}\)

Dantavaktra was the son of Vṛhadhārma, the king of Karuṣa, and Śrutadevi was his mother.\(^{246}\) His friends, namely, Śisupāla, Śālva and Pauṇḍraka met death in the hands of Kṛṣṇa. He then became very angry and taking club in his hand he alone faced Kṛṣṇa, his enemy to take revenge upon Him.\(^{247}\) Kṛṣṇa also faced him in battle and like Śisupāla Dantavaktra also met his death at the hand of Kṛṣṇa.\(^{248}\)

From the purānic evidences it is learnt that Dantavaktra's kingdom was known by the name Karuṣa and therefore, he was called Kāruṣa (the ruler of Karuṣa). The Mahābhārata too, makes mention of the kingdom of Dantavaktra. From the very description of the southward victory march of Sahideva as found in the Sabha Parva, it is learnt that Dantavaktra's kingdom was located towards the south of Surasena (i.e. Mathurā region of present Uttar Pradesh) and Matsya(i.e. north-west part of Madhya Pradesh and probably present Jaipur) and on the north of Sumitra. The Karuṣa, most probably, occupied a tract on the bank of the Ganges below present Penaras in

\(^{245}\) Vide VSP. 5.26. 7-8. p.269.
\(^{246}\) Ibid. 4.14. 39-40. p.85
\(^{247}\) Lhāg. P.X.. 78. +5. p.60+.
\(^{248}\) Ibid. X. 73. 10. p.605.
the state of Uttar Pradesh. Anundoram Borooah also gives a similar opinion.249

Apart from Jarāsandha and Dantavaktra mentioned above, in the *Visṇu-Purāṇa* as well as the *Phāgavata-Purāṇa* versions the names of three other kings viz. Paundra, Śalva, and Vidūratha are met with. These kings in particular accompanied Śiśupāla, the bride groom to Kūndina.250 All of them fought against Kṛṣṇa and got defeated. An attempt for their identification is made below.

**PAUNDRAKA AND HIS KINGDOM:**

The *Visṇu-Purāṇa* states that Vālī, the son of Sutapā had five sons. They were Aṅga, Vaṅga, Kaliṅga, Suhya and Paundra. Later on five kingdoms were established in their names.251 Paundra was the ruler of that Paundra kingdom. Regarding other kingdoms, discussion has been made in the later pages of the present work.

Paundra, as stated earlier, fought for Śiśupāla against Kṛṣṇa, for his abduction of Rukmiṇī. The *Visṇu-purāṇa*252 as well as the *Phāgavata-Purāṇa*253 present an

249 AGI. p.11
251 ...dirghatamasāṅga-vaṅga-kaliṅga-suhya-paundra-vahān vāleyam-īsatramajanyata... pancavisayāḥ vabhuvāḥ /// VSP. 4.13. 12-14. p.94.
252 Ibid. 5.34. 1-27. pp.311-314.
interesting narration relating the extreme pride of Paundraka, his animosity against Krsna and also his death that was met at the hand of Krsna.

From the Viṣṇu-Purāṇa as well as the Mahābhārata it appears that Paundraka's other name was Vāsudeva. According to the Bhāgavata Purāṇa version Paundraka was also the ruler of Karuṣa kingdom. Among the five kingdoms, stated earlier, the Paundra kingdom was, probably located to the northern part a few miles south from present Maldah of west Bengal. Its older capital may be identified with Paundra Vardhana, frequently mentioned in the Kathāsarit-Sāgara.

Sālva and his Kingdom:

Sālva was another rival king who stood against Kṛṣṇa. While Sālva got defeated in the hands of Kṛṣṇa and other Yādavas, as already mentioned, he took fierce vow to take revenge upon the Yādavas. Sālva prayed Mahādeva for boon. Being pleased with Sālva Mahādeva offered him an air-car Saubha by name, which carried him wherever he desired to go. Sālva then attacked the city of Dvārakā

254 VSP. 5.34.4. p.311.
256 tatpurām paundra vardhanaṃ // KŚ. 19. 16-21.
258 Ibid. k. 76. 7-8. pp.596-597.
with a mighty troop of soldiers. A terrible fight took place in Dvārakā between Sālva and the Yādava heroes. Though Sālva fled from the battle yet Kṛṣṇa killed him afterwards in a fierce fight.²⁵⁹

Sālva's attack of the city of Dvārakā, his fight with the Yādavas and his death in the hands of Kṛṣṇa have been elaborately described in the Mahābhārata²⁶⁰ also.

The Mahābhārata mentions the name of the city of Sālva as 'Saubhanagarī' (the city of Saubha). The very name Saubha comes from the name of his chariot or plane which was beautifully decorated with gems and jewels.²⁶¹ Therefore, Sālva was known as Saubhapatī (the Lord of Saubha).

The location of the city of Sālva may be imagined from some records found in the Mahābhārata. While the Pāṇḍavas lived in the Kāmyaka forest, Jayadratha went to visit the city of Sālva and then he entered into the Kāmyakvaṇa and abducted Draupadī. It seems that Sālva's kingdom might be located in a place beyond the region of Kāmyaka forest. From the records of the Mahābhārata, it is learnt that the Kāmyaka forest was situated in a mountainous region full of various kinds of sweet fruits on

²⁵⁹ Ibid. X. 77. 36. p.603.
the bank of the river Sarasvati. This evidence apparently shows that the Kāmyaka forest was situated on the bank of the river Sarasvati towards the north-west direction from Hastināpura. Therefore, it seems that the kingdom of Śālva might be situated beyond Kāmyaka forest including a tract between the Sarasvati and the Yamunā in the north-west India.

VIDŪRATHA:

Vidūratha was another chieftain friend of Śiśunāla, who attended the marriage ceremony of Rukmiṇī and fought against Kṛṣṇa. He also got defeated and fled away from the battle as mentioned in the narrations of the Rukmiṇī-harana legend.

Vidūratha belonged to the Andhaka family of Jadu race. The Visnu Purāṇa states that Andhaka had four sons, viz., Kukura, Bhajamāna, Sujikambala, and Varhiṣa. Vidūratha was the son of Bhajamāna. But according to the Phāgavata-Purāṇa, Vidūratha was the son of Citraratha, and he is described not as a prince of Andhaka family but as a descendent of the vṛṣṇis. Thus Vidūratha appears as belonging to the Jadu race. This Vidūratha was killed by Kṛṣṇa.

264 ............tathācitramāṇah / prthūvīḍūrathādyācca vahmūḥvṛṣṇinindanaḥ // Phāg. P.IX. 2+.18. p.106.
BALARAMA AND SOME OTHER YADAVA HEROES:

Some other characters, viz., Balarama or Sankara, Gada, Satiyaki etc. are obviously the Yadava heroes as described earlier in the narrations.

KINGS OF ANGA, VANGA AND KALINGA:

In some narrations of the Rukmini-harana legend, mentioned earlier, some characters (specially kings) are introduced not by their names but by that of their kingdoms. Thus the Harivamsa version of the legend refers to the Lords of Anga, Vanga and Kalinga and others who attended the marriage ceremony of Rukmini in Kundina. It is further stated there that Vangaraja (the king of Vanga) was killed by Balarama in battle. The origin of these kingdoms as referred to in the Vishnu-Purana is stated earlier. The Purana adds a new name Andhra to the list that has occurred in the Vishnu-Purana.

ANGA: ITS LOCATION:

The mention of the Anga kingdom is found in the Vedic literature. The Aitareya Brahmana glorifies the

The imperial glory of Anga is doubtless reflected in the songs of the Aitareya Brahmana, which describes the world conquest of one of its ancient kings.
kings of Aṅga, who possessed the required quality for conquering the world.

The Rāmāyāna states that king Dāsirātha had good friendship with Romapāda, the king of Aṅga.²⁶⁹

The Mahābhārata makes a reference to the Aṅga kingdom which was awarded to Karna by Duryodhana, his best friend. The eastward expedition of Bhima, described in the Sabhā Parva of the great epic helps us to determine the location of Aṅga, by way of denoting the route of expedition. According to this account, Bhima, after having conquered Magadha, the kingdom of Sahadeva, the son of Jarāsandha reached Aṅga dominion of Karna.²⁷⁰ Bhima conquered Karna there in a battle and then he overpowered the mountain dwellers (Parvatavāsināḥ) and reached Modagiri.²⁷¹

From such evidences it is learnt that Aṅga country, was probably situated to the east of Magadha and on the west, there existed the Parvatavasināḥ. Further, Campā river, most probably, was the boundary line between Magadha and Aṅga. Campāpura was its capital. The hilly region of the Parvatavāsināḥ may be identified with the Rājamahal hills and the river Campā with the modern Chandan.²⁷² Thus Aṅga

²⁶⁹ aṅgarājena sakhyam .......... romapāda iti śrutaḥ // VR. Vālakāmānde. 11.3. p.92.
²⁷⁰ ibid. (VV.ed). Sabhā Parva. 29.16. n.255.
²⁷² vide PHAI. pp. 95-96.
probably comprised of a region covering present north-east West Bengal, including a part probably of present south-east Bihar. Two villages still exist by the names 'Campa-nagara' and 'Campāpura' near Bhagalpur. These two villages appear to indicate a probable location of the original capital city of Campā of Āṅga kingdom.

VANGA : ITS LOCATION :

The Mahābhārata refers to the Vaṅga kingdom in many places. Āṅgarāja Karṇa, once conquered Vaṅga during his regional conquest. Again, Bhiṣma also conquered Vaṅga in course of his expedition stated in the Saṭṭhā Parva of the Mahābhārata. It is stated that Bhiṣma conquered Vaṅga after the conquest of Vāsudeva of Paunḍra Kingdom and the rulers on the bank of Kusūśikī. Moreover, the Mādhava-Campū, a later Sanskrit work describes Vaṅga to be the country through which the rivers Padmā and Brahmaputra flow.

Now, from these records it seems that Vaṅga was located in a region between the kingdoms of Paunḍra, Āṅga and the region of sea-shore. Most probably, Vaṅga sometimes extended to the sea. It further covered the banks of Padmā and the Brahmaputra.

274 astitīvadvaṅga nāma desaḥ, yaśmin ......................
apāṇāvati ......yatra ca paṇvāno brahmaputra nāma mahānado ........
M. Cam.26.
The name Vaṅga still exists in modern India standing for a province (i.e. modern west Bengal). But from the descriptions as referred to above in respect of Vaṅga, it appears that the old Vaṅga probably comprised of an area of the south-east Bengal (i.e. present west Bengal) including a major part of the south-west region of present Bangladesh.

KALINGA: ITS LOCATION:

Kalinga mentioned in the narration of the Rukmini-haraṇa legend is also another important kingdom of ancient India. As stated earlier, Kaliṅgarāja, a friend of Pulmi, attended the marriage ceremony of Rukmavatī, Rukmīś daughter at the city of Bhojakāṭa.

The Rgveda makes mention of the kingdom of Kalinga with reference to the sage Pīrghatamās and his son Vārśīvīn. Kalinga was probably an independent kingdom in the period of the Brāhmaṇa literature. The reference to Kalinga goes in many places of the Mahābhārata. Thus Arjuna, in his pilgrimage visited this country. As stated in the Sathī Parva Sahadeva conquered Kalinga. Again,

275 The present name of this (Vaṅga) country is Bengal.

276 RV. 1.13.125.

277 .... Kaliṅga existed as an independent kingdom in the time of which the Brāhmaṇas speak.

people from Kalinga attended the Rajasuya sacrifice of Yu-
dhiṣṭhira and made gifts to him.279

Moreover, Kalinga is referred to in some later works of Sanskrit literature. Thus Kalidāsa mentions Kalinga in
course of the description of Raghu's conquest.280 From
this account of Raghuvams'ām it is learnt that Kalinga was
extended from the Mahendra range up to the sea on the
south. Again, 'Kavirāja-Vīśvanātha uses the term 'Kaliṅga-
sāhasikāḥ' (i.e. people of Kalinga are valiant)281 as an
example of rudhimūla Laksana (i.e. secondary verbal func-
tion based on convention).

Moreover, the kingdom of Kalinga occupies an important
place in the records of Indian history. It is needless to
state that the conquest of Kalinga by Asoka, the great is
one of the important events of Indian history.232

From various evidences it is learnt that Kalinga
comprised, probably of the whole coast of the present

280 WK.Raghu. 4. 38-40. p.66.
281 kaliṅgaḥ sāhasikāḥ ityādau kaliṅgādīsābdo..............
SD.II. explanation after verse 5. p.40.
282 The conquest of Kalinga by Asoka (c.260 B.C.) is one
of the best known events of his reign and formed the
turning point in his spiritual career.
AHSI. pp.86-87.
southern Orissa. It covered the plains between the eastern Ghāṭs or Mahendraa range and the sea. It seems that sometimes Kaliṅga extended up to Godāvari valley of Andhra on the west and the upper Narmadā on the north. Modern scholars like H.C. Raychaudhuri and Anundoram Borooah also support such a location of Kaliṅga. 283

283 Kaliṅga as settled kingdom appears to have consisted probably of the plain between the eastern ghāṭs (Mahendra range) and the sea ..... the Amara Kāntā range, in which Narmadā rises, is said to be in the western part of Kaliṅga.

PHAI. p.79

I think it (Kaliṅga) included the whole of the eastern Ghāṭs between the Mahānādi and Godāvari.

AGI. p.5.