CHAPTER II

SUNGA-KANVA RULE IN MÄLWA
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Decline of Pātaliputra

The Purānic evidence suggests Sisunāga's victory over the Pradyotās of Avanti and Nandarāja's dominance over the Haihayas and Vitihotras who seem to have been settled within Avanti. During the rule of the Mauryas Avanti was regarded as one of the important provinces of the Magadhan empire. This is evident from the fact that Aśoka himself was appointed as the Viceroy of Ujjayinī, the capital of Avanti, during the rule of his father Bindusāra. ¹ Avanti continued to be the seat of viceroyal authority even during the rule of the Maurya emperor Aśoka himself.

The death of Aśoka became the signal for the downfall of the mighty Magadhan empire. The successors of Aśoka had neither the capacity nor the power to maintain the fabric of the whole empire that showed the symptoms of disintegration. Divergent lists of successors of Aśoka found in different Purānic and other literary texts, make it difficult to ascertain the line of succession to the throne of Pātaliputra. There seems to have been a trouble over the question of succession leading to a fratricidal war and ultimately partition of the empire between the rival claimants for the throne.² This appears to have taken place,

when two grandsons of Asoka, Dasaratha and Samprati, put their claims to the throne of Magadha. The Mauryan empire was divided into two parts, Dasaratha and Samprati being rulers of eastern and western divisions respectively. The association of Dasaratha with the eastern part, having its capital at Pataliputra, can safely be assumed in the light of the Nagarjunī Hill Cave Inscription referring to this ruler.\(^3\) The situation of Nagarjunī Hill near Pataliputra is to be taken into consideration. On the other hand, the Jain authors, who describe Samprati as the conquerer of three worlds include specially Ujjayinī within his empire.\(^4\)

\[\text{'itascha Samprati nṛpa yayār Ujjayinī purīḥ'}.\]

The reference to Ujjayinī in the Jain literary text is of special significance. It may be reasonably suggested that Samprati commanded his authority over the western part of the Mauryan empire with his capital at Ujjayinī. The partition of the Maurya empire probably secured for Ujjayinī, the prestigious position of an alternative capital of the empire. The unrivalled position of Pataliputra as a metropolis was thus challenged even before the rise of the Śuṅgas.

Economic Factor

The fall of Pātaliputra leading to the rise of new cities in the west happened in an economic background that requires our attention. The loss of the state authority over the financial resources of the country due to lack of efficiency in the administrative machinery in the time of Aśoka's successors created an opportunity for the hoarding of capital in private possession of the people living on trade and commerce. The "Janapada-sannivesa" - section of Kauṭilya's 'Arthaśāstra' gives us to understand that the state in the Maurya period took an initiative for an expansion of agriculture, presumably in the valley of the river Ganges. Pātaliputra, situated at the confluence of the Ganges and Son, was a city dependent mainly upon the surplus wealth that could be derived from an expanding agrarian economy. But the trend and tendency towards the growth of mercantile capitalism in the post-Aśokan period naturally brought into limelight the cities of Vidiśā and Ujjayinī, where a flourishing mercantile community had been consolidating their position, while Pātaliputra commercially lagged behind.

Pushyamitra Suṅga 'Defacto' Ruler of Avanti

A statement in "Therāvalī" places Puṣyamitra Suṅga in

5. Kautilya, Arthaśāstra, translated by R. Shamasastri (Mysore, 1960), Book - II.
Avanti after the Mauryas. According to the Jain chronological table, Puṣyamitra Śūṅga ruled in Avanti for thirty years. The Purāṇas, on the other hand, place Puṣyamitra Śūṅga at Pāṭaliputra and assign to him a reign-period of thirty-six years. The Vāyu and Brahmāṇḍa attribute a reign-period of sixty years to this ruler. A reconciliation of these divergent accounts may be made only by assuming that Puṣyamitra Śūṅga, the commander-in-chief of the Mauryan army, began his political career by occupying Avanti sometime after the death of Samprati.

Puṣyamitra Śūṅga probably ruled in Avanti for about thirty years, when the weak descendants of the Imperial Maurya dynasty were still ruling at Pāṭaliputra. The Śūṅga chief, in spite of his independent status, formally acknowledged the overlordship of the Mauryas. Thus, towards the end of the Maurya rule, Puṣyamitra was the 'defacto' ruler in Avanti region, while 'dejure' power still remained in the hands of the Magadhan rulers. This assumption may be supported by a statement in the Vāyu and Brahmāṇḍa Purāṇas that Puṣyamitra ruled for sixty years. The period of thirty-six years, assigned by the Matsya Purāṇa to Puṣyamitra's reign is to be taken into account from the year of

8. Ibid. P.70, fn.12.
his accession to the throne of Magadha after having murdered Bhradratha, the last Mauryan ruler. When the Vāyu and Brahmāṇḍa Purāṇas state that Puṣyamitra ruled for sixty years, his career as a ruler both in Avantī and Magadha seems to be taken into account.

**Long reign period of Puṣyamitra Śunga**

It may be argued that Puṣyamitra is unnecessarily assigned an abnormally long reign period in order to reconcile the divergent accounts of the Purāṇas and the Jain gāthās. But the possibility of a long reign period of Puṣyamitra Śunga cannot be ruled out in view of the fact that during his reign, his grandson Vasumitra, being put in charge of the sacrificial horse, fought against the Yavanas. Presumably, Vasumitra was quite mature in age during the reign period of his grand-father Puṣyamitra Śunga. Sixty years of Puṣyamitra's reign may be divided into two parts - 24 years as a ruler of Avantī and 36 years as that of Magadha.

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9. Kālidāsa, Mālavikāgnimitram, Act. V.

10. The Jain gāthā assigned a period of 30 years to Puṣyamitra as a ruler of Avantī. We have assigned 24 years. The Jain gāthā might have confused some years, which has recorded a genealogical table of Ujjayini for a long period.
The period of twenty four years of Puşyamitra's career as a ruler of Avantī under the Mauryas was preparatory to Coup d'etat at Pātaliputra. Puşyamitra, as the Commander-in-chief (Senapati) could maintain his hold over the Mauryan army by formal acknowledgement of 'dejure' authority of the Mauryas. He seems to have been waiting for an opportunity with a military base in Avantī.

Puşyamitra - Ruler of Pātaliputra

According to the Purāṇas, the suzerainty of Magadha passed from the Mauryas to the Śuṅgas by the murder of the last Maurya emperor Bhrādṛatha. Bāna12 tells us - "While reviewing the army, under the pretext of showing him his forces, the base-born (anārya) general Puşyamitra crushed his master, Bhrādṛatha, the Maurya, who was seek in keeping his coronation oath."13

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The weakness of the Maurya rulers as referred to by Bāna, was distinctly revealed when they failed to protect the realm against the invasion of the Greeks who seem to have advanced, without any check, to the very outskirts of the imperial capital, Pātaliputra.

Greek Invasion

The Yuga-Purāṇa section of the Gārgī Saṃhitā speak of the Yavana invasion of Puṣpapura (i.e. the city of Pātaliputra which was the capital of the Mauryas) and other places, apparently included within the Maurya empire. It is stated: 'the viciously valiant Greeks overran Sāketa or Oudh, Pañchāla, Mathurā and reached Pātaliputra.' It is suggested by some that the Yavana invasion took place during the reign of Puṣyamitra Śuṅga. In this regard their main source of information is Patanjali's 'Mahābhāṣya'. While illustrating the use of the affix lan, which denotes 'an action that happened out of sight but within the range of the sight of the narrator', Patanjali gives the following examples; "arunad yavanaḥ Sāketaṁ arunad yavanaḥ Madhyamikāṁ", i.e. the Yavana beseiged

Sāketa (Ayodhya), the yavana besieged Madhyamikā. Patañjali was a contemporary of Puṣyamitra, since while illustrating the use of the present tense he gives the example. "Iha Puṣyamitraṁ yājayāmah", 'here we are causing Puṣyamitra to perform sacrifice'.

The evidence deduced from the 'Mahābhāṣyā' does not necessarily suggest that the Yavana invasion of Sāketa and Madhyamikā occurred during the reign of Puṣyamitra. The event might have taken place before Puṣyamitra ascended the throne, but it was still remembered or rather was 'within the range of sight' of Patañjali. In this connection it may be noted that the "Yuga Purāṇa" section of the 'Gārgi Samhitā' speaks of the Yavana invasion occurring sometime after the reign of the Maurya king Śāliśūka. Śāliśūka was probably a descendant of Āśoka and flourished about the end of the third century B.C. or the beginning of the second century B.C.

If the Greek invasion took place during the rule of the later Mauryas, as it has been indicated above, it needs clarification why the great poet Kālidāsa refers to the event in his

16. Ibid. III. 2. 123.
"Mālavikāgnimitram" as occurring during Puṣyamitra's reign at Pātaliputra and his son Āgnimitra's viceroyalty at Viḍiśā. It may be suggested that the Greek invasion began during the reign of Bhrādratha, the last Maurya king, but continued till Puṣyamitra's coup d'etat. It may be assumed that when the Greeks occupied Madhyamikā, Pañchāla, Sāketa & Mathurā, Bhrādratha hopelessly failed to protect his subjects from oppression by the invaders. Because of his cowardly attitude in the face of foreign invasion, Bhrādratha has been referred to in Bāṇa's 'Harshacharita' as "pratijñā- dūrbala", one who is weak to keep a promise. This was reasonable ground of his being unpopular with the subjects. Puṣyamitra seems to have availed of this opportunity. It appears that Puṣyamitra showed his eagerness to fight with the foreigners, but his master was not hopeful of his success against the Greeks, even though he had declared his intention to drive out the invaders at an earlier stage. Probably, Bhrādratha did not feel himself strong enough to launch counter-attack against the Greeks and Puṣyamitra made an attempt to convince him of the strength of


the Maurya forces by parading the entire army before the emperor. On that occasion a military rising seems to have taken place.

**Agnimitra as a Viceroy of Vidişā**

After the seizure of power at Pātaliputra, Puṣyamittra appointed his son Agnimitra as a viceroy of Vidişā to protect the western part of the empire. It may be suggested that the viceregal province was used as a bulwark against the Greek garrison already stationed at 'Madhyamikā' near Chitor.

**Identification of the river Sindh**

The sacrificial horse, let loose by Puṣyamittra under the charge of his grandson Vasumitra, seems to have been seized by a cavalry squadron of the Yavanas on the southern bank of the river Sindh, as it is evident from 'Mālavikāgnimitram' of Kālidāsa. The unrivalled supremacy of Puṣyamittra being thus challenged by the Greeks, a fierce battle was fought. With regard to the identification of the river 'Sindhu' there remains difference of opinion amongst the scholars.

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20. Kālidāsa, Mālavikāgnimitram, Act. IV.
21. Ibid. Act. V.
Prof. Rapson\textsuperscript{22} and Smith\textsuperscript{23} have identified the river with the Sindhu, tributary river of West Mālwa. According to them, the 'Sindhu' referred to in the drama is no other than the Kāli-Sindhu of Western Mālwa. On the other hand, Dr. R.C. Majumdar has identified it with Indus. Cunningham\textsuperscript{24} took a different view and identified the 'Sindhu' with the river of the same name that flows from Yamna through Sindhia's territory. As it has already been pointed out, this view has been accepted by Smith\textsuperscript{25} who wrote: "As Puṣyamitra and his son Agnimitra are called rulers of Vidiśā which is described as lying to the north of the Vindhyā Mountain and as bounded by the kingdom of Vidarbha or Berar on the south, the 'Sindhu' of the drama cannot be possibly the Indus. The great Indus flows from north to south and has no south bank, on which the skirmish with the yavana cavalry, as described by Kālidāsa could have taken place - the only one which has a south bank is the famous Sindhu of Narwar."

\textsuperscript{22} Rapson, Cambridge History of India (Delhi, 1962), Vol. I, P. 469.
\textsuperscript{23} Smith, Early History of India (Oxford, 1957), P. 211.
\textsuperscript{24} R.C. Majumdar, some observations on Puṣyamitra and his empire, I.H.Q. (Calcutta, 1925), Vol. I, PP. 91f.
\textsuperscript{25} Cunningham, Numismatic Chronicle (London, 1870), PP. 226-227.
\textsuperscript{26} Op. cit., P. 200-1.
The above statement of Smith may be considered in two parts:

1. Puṣyamitra was the ruler of yidiśā and his forces therefore cannot be expected so far north as the Punjab.

2. The Indus has no south bank.

Smith was mistaken in stating that Puṣyamitra was called the ruler of Vidiśā. According to Dr. R.C. Majumdar,27 there is no inherent improbability in the assumption that the arms of Puṣyamitra Śuṅga reached the Indus. It has been further pointed out by pr. Majumdar that the contention of Smith that the river Indus has no southern bank may be disposed of easily. The Sindhu of Narwar flows from north to south, but it takes a bend near Narwar for some distance in the direction of east to the west thus creating a south bank. A similar bend might have existed in the course of Indus, for it is well-known fact that the river-courses have considerably changed during the long period that has elapsed since second century B.C. Further, it is to be remembered that the word "Dakṣiṇa" means 'South' as well as 'right' (as opposed to 'left'). The passage of the drama might therefore refer to the right bank of the Indus.

Dr. Majumdar has again brought under his consideration a fact for determination of the identification of the river Sindhu. It is related in the 'Mālavikāgnimitram' that the news of young Vasumitra's sanguinary fights with the Greeks on the bank of the Sindhu was first reported to the court of Vidiśā by Puṣyamitra in a letter which he addressed to his son from the city of Pāṭaliputra. That the court of Vidiśā was still then ignorant of the whole thing follows clearly from the breathless anxiety with which Vasumitra's mother was listening to the letter in order to learn the fate of his son. If the river 'Sindhu' stood for the 'Sindhu of Narwar', a few miles from the kingdom of Vidiśā, it is inconceivable how Agnimitra would have remained ignorant of it till the receipt of the letter from Pāṭaliputra. On the other hand, as there was a royal road from Pāṭaliputra to the Punjab, we can easily understand how the royal courtiers carried the news from the Indus to Pāṭaliputra before the provinces in Central India could know anything of it. It appears, therefore, that by the river 'sindhu' Kālidāsa certainly meant the famous river of the Punjab.

**Criticism of Dr. Majumdar's arguments**

The arguments put forward by Dr. Majumdar require scrutiny before their acceptance.
1. It has been argued that as Puṣyamitra succeeded the Mauryas whose empire at one time certainly extended to the Indus and beyond, there is no inherent improbability in the assumption that the arms of Puṣyamitra reached the Indus. But, in fact, Puṣyamitra did not inherit the Maurya empire in its entirety. The whole of the Maurya empire was parcelled off after the death of Asoka. It seems improbable that all these territories could be united under one rule by Puṣyamitra even at the very beginning of his career.

2. Again, it is argued that there is uncertainty with regard to the implication of the term "Dakṣiṇa" which is taken by Cunningham to stand for the southern bank. In case of such uncertainty, the meaning of "Dakṣiṇa" in the sense of right bank may not be true. It is difficult to understand why Kālidāsa used the name 'sindhu' (if he meant the Indus) instead of 'Pañcha-sindhu', the well-known name of the river Indus since ancient times.

3. Dr. Majumdar has again shown that if the battle took place at Narwar the court of vīdīśā, situated not very far from it, should not have remained ignorant about it till the receipt of the news from Pāṭaliputra. But the court of Pāṭaliputra, being the seat of central authority had the prior claim to receive the news.
Above all, it is not expected that the poet should have recorded all the details accurately for the use of a historian. It is doubtful whether Kālidāsa had a first-hand knowledge of the event or had to depend upon a tradition handed down to him. All these considerations make it difficult to accept the suggestion of Dr. Majumdar identifying Kālidāsa's 'Sindhu' with the river Indus. It is more reasonable to identify the river 'Sindhu' with the 'Kāli-Sindhu' of Mālwa. According to Rapson, though we are not certain as to the river on whose bank the encounter between the Yavanas and Šuṅgas took place, the choice seems to lie with the Kāli-Sindhu, a tributary of the Charmanvati (Chambal) flowing within a hundred miles of Madhyamikā, which was besieged by the Yavanas. 'Madhyamikā' is a place in Chitor which is not very far from Mālwa. Other scholars like R.K.Mookherjee, D.C.Sircar have also identified the river 'Sindh' with the 'Kāli-Sindhu' of Mālwa.

**North-western Political Factor**

The Greek invasion was successfully resisted by the Šuṅga rulers. But the gradual expansion of Greek rule in the north-west was considered as a threat to the Šuṅga dominion. The successors of Puṣyamitra Šuṅga shifted their capital from

Pātaliputra to Vidiśā. It seems that the problems created by the appearance of the Yavanas in Indian politics could not be fruitfully tackled without transfer of capital from the east to the west.

The Mauryas, on the whole maintained friendly relation with the frontier states and the question of guarding the frontiers did not arise. But after the fall of Mauryas and with the invasion of the Greeks, the problem of guarding the western frontier assumed a gravity of unprecedented nature. The Śunga rulers probably considered that it was quite difficult for them to keep a watchful eye on the frontier, having their seat of authority at Pātaliputra.

**Economic factor**

The economic necessity was no less a factor that expedited the transfer of the capital from Pātaliputra. So long as the Mauryas ruled, smooth conduct of trade between Pātaliputra, the imperial capital and the outside world by land-route through the north-west went on unabated. The advent and settlement of foreigners in the frontier of the country in the post-Mauryan period seem to have disturbed commercial intercourses of Pātaliputra with the western world. This consideration probably provided the Magadhan rulers with an impetus to seek
for a new link with the West for the purpose of trade and commerce. Vidisha, the new capital was situated in a more convenient position than that of Pataliputra.

**Importance of Vidisha**

Vidisha, situated on the bank of the river Vetravati in Central India, was on the direct lines of communication between the ports on the western sea-coast and Pataliputra and between Pratiṣṭhāna (Paiṭhān) on the south-west and Śrāvasti on the north-east. This position of Vidisha facilitated the growth of extensive inland trade. Again, from this place it was easy to reach Barygaza, the great trade-emporium on the western sea-coast of India. Holding such an advantageous position, Vidisha had already become an important trade-centre. We may refer, in this connection, to the votive Inscriptions at Sāńchi recording the donations and gifts made by merchants and bankers who formed a flourishing mercantile community in Eastern Malwa.

**"Mitra" rule in Magadha**

Inscriptions and coins of kings like Indramitra, Indragnimitra, Brhaspatimitra and Brhamamitra in Bihar and eastern

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part of U.P. and assigned to the first century B.C. appear to point to the loss of Magadha suffered by the later Sāṇgas belonging to the dynasty founded by Puṣyamitra Sūṅga.

Prof. H.C. Roychaudhuri has shown that the rulers of note in the Christian era, whom we know from the epigraphic evidence to have ruled in Magadha and the neighbouring provinces are the so-called 'Mitrās'. The prevalence of 'Mitra' rule is also hinted at by references in the Jain literature to Bālamitra and Bhanumitra among the successors of Puṣyamitra. From a study of the available epigraphs Dr. Barua has compiled a list of Mitra kings. It includes the name of Brhatsvatimitra, Indrāgnimitra, Brahmamitra, (Dhar) mamitra and Vishṇumitra. To these should perhaps be added the names of Varunamitra and Gomitra.

Incidentally, we may refer that the Hāta-gumpha Inscription of Khārvela referred to a king named Bahasatimitra identified with Brhaspatimitra ruling in Magadha. Among the above mentioned kings, Indrāgnimitra, Brahmamitra and possibly Brhaspatimitra are associated with Magadha in addition to adjacent principalities.

It is not known in what relationship most of these "Mitra" kings stood to one another or to the celebrated family of the

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33. Select Ins., P.97.
34. H.C.Roychaudhuri, Political History of Ancient India (Calcutta, 1953), P.401.
Śuniga. It appears that those "Mitra" kings were the feudatories of the Imperial Mauryas and also of the Śunigas. After Puṣyamitra Śuniga, they declared their independence and issued coins from Magadha and the adjoining regions.

**Rise of Independent States**

Apart from Magadha, the greater part of Northern India became divided into a number of petty independent states after the decline of the Mauryas. The numismatic evidences suggest the existence of independent states like Pañchāla, Mathurā, Kauśāmbī and Kośala. The coins of the 'Mitra' kings bearing the names of rulers like Indrāgnimitra, Brahmamitra have been found not only at Pātaliputra, but also in Oudh, the Basti district, as well as in Pañchāla. The names of these rulers are also found engraved on two rail-pillars at Bodh Gaya as well as on coins discovered at Mathurā, Pañchāla and Kumaraharā.

The Ayodhya inscription of Dhanadeva described himself 'Puṣyamitrasya ṣaṣṭha', sixth in descent from Puṣyamitra. It might be that a branch of the Śuniga dynasty ruled at Ayodhyā and declared its independence after Puṣyamitra Śuniga.

There was no empire of the Śunigas after the death of Puṣyamitra. North India was studded with various petty

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35. Allan's Catalogue, PP. CXIX.
local states\textsuperscript{37} without any political cohesion. Attempts have been made to point out similarities between the names of kings occurring in the Śuniga Kāṇva list of the Purāṇas and those occurring on the local coins of the Post-Maurya period and thus conclude that North Indian empire was in existence even after the time of the early Śuniga kings. John Allan has shown the futility of the attempt to identify rulers of the Pāńchāla series of coins with those found in the Purāṇic list of the Śuniga kings.

The only name found in the list is Agnimitra, which is too common a name for any deduction to be made from it. Sujyestha or Vasujyestha has been identified with Jyesthamitra (Jethamitra), but the latter has no connection with the Pāńchāla series, even if we accept the possibility of the contraction. Bhadraghoṣa is identified with Ghoṣa of the Purāṇic list, which is very unlikely. Bhūmimitra is identified with Kāṇva king of the same name, but his coins cannot be removed from the middle of the Pāńchāla series, while the Kāṇva was the second of the successors of the Śunigas.\textsuperscript{38}

There is dearth of evidence to show that the successors of Puṣyamitra Śuniga ruled over a considerable part of North India.

\textsuperscript{37} The evidence of the existence of local states is furnished by coins. Cf. Allan's Catalogue, P. CXVII.

\textsuperscript{38} Ibid. P. CXX.
Evidence is lacking to show their connection with the royal city of Pāṭaliputra. The later Śuṅga kingdom seems to have been confined to Bhilsa and the adjoining regions of Central India. This is indicated by the Bhārhat Pillar Inscription\(^{39}\) (assigned to the second century B.C. on palaeographic grounds) referring to "Sunganamraje". Bhārhat in Central India seems to have been included within the Śuṅga kingdom.

**Śuṅga Capital at Vidiśā**

The next evidence of importance is the Besnagar Garuḍa Pillar Inscription. Engraved on the pillar at Besnagar it records the erection of the Garuḍa-dhvaja i.e. a column surmounted by Garuḍa in honour of the god Vāsudeva by Heliodoras, son of Dion. He is therein spoken of as a Bhāgavata i.e. worshipper of Bhagavat (Vāsudev) and a resident at Taxila. He had been sent as an envoy by the Greek King Antialkidas of Taxila to the court of King Bhāgabhadrā at Vidiśā in the 14th regnal year of the latter.

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Identification of Bhāgabhadra

Marshall⁴¹ is inclined to identify Bhāgabhadra of the inscription with the fifth king of the Śunga dynasty, called Bhadraka in the Bhāgavata Purāṇa, Odraka in the Vishnu and Andhraka in the Vāyu and Antaka in the Matsya Purāṇa. Dr. H.C. Roychoudhuri has also supported this identification.⁴²

But fifth king of the Śunga dynasty known from the Purāṇas ruled only for two years, whereas king Bhāgabhadra of the record ruled for at least 14 years. Moreover, there exists a great deal of doubt as to whether Bhadraka belonged to the Śunga dynasty. Prof. Jagannath⁴³ has put forward a suggestion which seems to be more reasonable. According to him, after Vasumitra, the fourth king of the dynasty, the next three kings of the Purānic list i.e. those of Andhraka, Pulindraka and Ghoṣa do not appear to belong to the Śungas and have crept into the Purāṇas on account of some confusion or the editor of the Purānic texts. Taking advantage of the turmoil consequent on the murder of Vasumitra, the Āndhras appear to have raided Magadhā. It may be on account of this unrecorded raid resulting

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in a temporary occupation of Pāṭaliputra that the two names Andhraka and Pulindraka got into the list of the Śūṅga kings. Ghoṣa of the Purāṇic list may be identified with the ruler of Pāṇchāla whose copper coins are known. That these three names are extraneous to the Śūṅga dynasty is clearly indicated by the fact that their inclusion creates a chronological anomaly. The Purāṇas assign a total duration of 112 years to the Śūṅga dynasty. But if we add up the period of the rule of each king including those three - Andhraka, Pulindraka and Ghoṣa - the total duration of the whole dynasty comes to 120. By excluding them we can arrive at the true figure given by the Purāṇas.

Following the argument put forward above, Bhadraka may be excluded from the list of Śūṅga kings. In that case, the question of his identification with Bhāgabhadra of Besnagar Pillar Inscription should not arise.

King Bhāgabhadra of the record may be identified with Bhāgavata, the 9th ruler of the Śūṅga dynasty, who had a long reign period of 32 years, according to the Purāṇas. The same ruler is probably referred to in another Besnagar Garuḍa Pillar Inscription that was engraved in the 12th year after
installation of Mahārāja Bhāgavata. 44 Bhāgavata and Bhāgabhadra were probably the two names of the same ruler, or Bhāgavata might be the corrupt form of Bhāgabhadra, the last but one ruler of the dynasty.

From the above it seems that the later Śunga rulers were reduced to the position of a local dynasty of Vidiśā. The end of the reign of Puṣyamitra, simultaneously with the fall of Pāṭaliputra, brought an end to Magadhan imperialism. The Purāṇas give us the account of the Śunga dynasty without any reference to its kingdom and capital. But it appears that till the time of Puṣyamitra only the Purānic accounts had reference to the rulers of Pāṭaliputra after which the Purānic point of view was shifted to Madhya Bharat with its capital at Vidiśā. 45

Kāṇvas at Vidiśā

The Śungas were succeeded by the Kāṇvas. According to the Purāṇas - "The minister Vasudeva, forcibly overthrowing the dissolute king Devabhūmi because of his youth, will become

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44. ARASIJ., 1913-14, P.190.
king among the Šuṅgas". From this statement it is clear that the last of the Šuṅga rulers was killed at the hands of his minister Vasudeva who thus founded a new dynasty known as 'Kāṇva'.

As it has already been discussed, the Šuṅgas had shifted their capital from Pātaliputra to Vidiśā in Central India. In that case, it is reasonable to assume that the Kāṇvas, being the successors of the Šuṅgas also ruled at Vidiśā. If it is held that the Kāṇvas ruled in Magadha with their capital at Pātaliputra, we have to believe that the Kāṇvas had succeeded the Šuṅgas at Vidiśā, but later on transferred their capital to Pātaliputra. But this is not warranted by available evidences.

Prof. Jagannath is of opinion that the Kāṇvas ruled at Magadha, while the Šuṅgas continued to reside at Vidiśā. According to him, the Purāṇas do not mention a single Kāṇva king among the rulers of Vidiśā.

But the Purāṇas do not explicitly associate the Kāṇvas with Pātaliputra either. The relevant passage in the Purāṇas is as follows:

Amātyo Vasudevas tu bālyād vyasaninām nrpaṁ
Devabhūmīṁ ath=ōtsādya Devabhūmīṁ tath=ōtpātya
Śauṅgas tu bhavitā nrpaḥ Śuṅgeṣu bhavitā nrpaḥ
Bhaviṣyati samā rājā nava Kāṇvāyano dvijaḥ. 48

There is no hint in the passage to show that Devabhūti was killed by Vasudeva Kāṇva at Pātaliputra.

Moreover, if it is held that Pātaliputra was ruled over by independent 'Mitra' kings in the 2nd-1st Century B.C., as it has been pointed out above, it is difficult to accommodate the Kāṇvas at Pātaliputra in the 1st Century B.C.

Relation between the Kāṇvas and the Śuṅgas

Although the Śuṅga rule at Vidiśā was overthrown by the Kāṇvas, it appears from the Purāṇic evidences that the scions of this family continued to rule at some places, probably situated not very far from Vidiśā. The Purāṇas describe the 'Kāṇvas' as

'Śuṅga-bhṛtya', indicating probably their feudatory status. Again, in some versions of the Purāṇas the Kāṇvas are said to have become kings among the Śuṅgas. This has created a confusion with regard to the relation between the Śuṅgas and the Kāṇvas.

Keeping in view the Purānic statements, Sir R.G. Bhandarkar has opined that "when the prince of the Śuṅga family became weak, the Kāṇvas usurped the whole power and ruled like the Peshwas in modern times, not uprooting the dynasty of their masters, but reducing them to the character of nominal sovereigns." In his opinion, therefore, the period of 112 years, assigned to the Śuṅgas by the Purāṇas, included 45 years' rule of the Kāṇvas. In other words, the Kāṇvas were the defacto rulers during the last 45 years of Śuṅga rule.

The Purānic chronological scheme does not permit the overlapping of the reign-periods of the two dynasties. The Kāṇvas who may have begun as "Śuṅga-bhṛtyas", later on asserted their own power and claimed their authority over the Śuṅgas. The expression "King among the Śuṅgas" otherwise remains unexplained. The analogy of the Peshwas is not warranted.

because, in spite of all their power, they acknowledged formally the suzerainty of the rulers belonging to the time of Shivaji. No evidence can be adduced to show that the Kānyāyānas, after their accession to power, ever admitted any fiction of legal suzerainty in their relation to the Śūṅgas. The Purāṇas clearly state that before Vasudeva Kāņva assumed power, he slew the tenth Śūṅga King Devabhūmi and this is fully corroborated by Bāṇa's 'Harshacharita'. We cannot, therefore, ignore the dynastic succession as given in the Purāṇas. The Purānic statement of 'King among the Śūṅgas' may be explained by the fact that even after the death of Devabhūti and overthrow of the Śūṅga power at Vidiśā, some scions of the family continued to rule somewhere.

It may be suggested that scions of the Śūṅga dynasty continued to rule at Vidarbha, that had been previously conquered by the Śūṅgas, as it is known from the "Mālavikā-gnimitram" of Kālidāsa. As a result of this conquest it was divided into two parts separated by the river Varada (modern Wardha) which became the boundary between Berar and Central Province. The northern part of this newly conquered territory was brought under the possession of the Śūṅgas.

Relation between the Śūṅga-Kāṇva and Āndhras

The continuance of Śūṅga rule most probably at Vidarbha or Berar ultimately brought them into conflict with the Āndhras of the Deccan. It is stated in the Purāṇas 55 that the Āndhras not only slew Susāram last of Kāṇva rulers, but also destroyed the remnants of the Śūṅga power. The relevant passage in question runs as follows:

Kāṇvāyanāms tato bhṛtyāḥ
Susārmāṇḥ prasahya tam
Śūṅgānāṃ c-aiva yac cheṣāṁ
Kṣapitvā tu baliyaśāḥ

From the above passage it appears that at the time of the rise of the Śātavāhanas to power, the Śūṅgas were still maintaining their precarious existence at a place not very far from Vidīśā where the Kāṇvas had been ruling. The Āndhras who overthrew the Kāṇvas at Vidīśā also brought an end to the Śūṅga power at Vidarbha. The conflict between the Śūṅga and Śātavāhanas was most probably inevitable. The overthrow of the Śūṅgas at Vidarbha had probably paved the way to the overthrow of the Kāṇva power at Vidīśā by the Āndhras.

The analysis of the evidences at our disposal leaves little scope for doubt about the transfer of the capital of the Imperial Śunāgas from Pātaliputra to Vidiśā where they gradually turned into a local dynasty. It is difficult to ascertain the reign-period of Agnimitra and Vasumitra who were more closely associated with Vidiśā than with Pātaliputra. The epigraphic evidences which we have discussed above, vouchsafe for the continuity of the Śunāga rule at Vidiśā till the rise of the Kāṇvas. In the light of the Purāṇic evidences relating to the position of the Śunāgas in the background of the rise of the Kāṇvas and of the Āndhras, it may be suggested that the Śunāgas maintained their existence, however, precarious it might be till the end of the 1st Century B.C. The view of Kāṇva rule at Pātaliputra stands on shaky grounds. It is more plausible to associate them with Vidiśā. Because, the Āndhras rose to power by overthrowing the Kāṇvas and it is difficult to associate the former, in any case, with Pātaliputra.