CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTORY

In spite of geographical barriers and racial obstacles, the intercourse between India and other countries has remained almost uninterrupted since the early ages of history. Such an intercourse did not cease even during the times of armed invasions from across the frontiers; in fact it increased after each invasion.

We have learned that an extensive chalcolithic culture now called "Harappan Civilization" existed in the plains of the Indus and that it was closely connected with the contemporary cultures in Mesopotamia and Asia Minor. Dr. B.D. Sankalia has rightly pointed out at the likely relationship between India, Western Asia, Europe and Africa even during the Early and Middle Palaeolithic times on the basis of his recent (1968) explorations in Assam, Meghalaya, South Bihar, West Bengal, (Dangs) Gujarat and Tamil Nadu. In some other explorations done by him in Malwa and adjoining regions, Dr. Sankalia has found Iranian influence on India even during the Bronze Age and Early Iron Age. The commercial contacts between the Indus basin and the Persian Gulf remained intact during the period under review also.

There is evidence to suggest that the Phoenicians of the Levant and the Panis (merchants) of the Western coast of India had commercial contacts by sea routes as early as the tenth century B.C.

1. Dr. B.D. Sankalia, Prehistory and Protohistory of India and Pakistan, Introduction, p. v.

King Hiram of Tyre sent his fleet of ships of Tarshish to Ceber, a port then situated at the head of the gulf of Akaba in the Red Sea, to India with an object of bringing ivory, apes and peacocks from the port of Ophir, to decorate the palaces and the temple of King Solomon. Though it is not definitely established whether this port of Ophir was the well known port of Sopara now situated near Thana in the State of Maharashtra, or some other unidentified harbour; but there is no doubt that the commodities to be imported were definitely from India.

We can also presume that there was an exchange of other objects and merchandise such as pottery, jewellery and woven cloth, and this resulted in the exchange of ideas and philosophy between different cultures. This is an instance which suggests that the Phoenicians and the Mediterranean people were having cultural links with India much earlier than the legions of Cyrus I and Alexander the Great arrived here with their swords in hand. The subsequent history tells us that these invasions gave boost to these cultural contacts so much so that this country became known as 'India' among the foreigners as well as in the international affairs.
Ancient Names of Bharatavarsha

The sub-continent of India was named by its inhabitants after a king called Bharata, and before Bharata, it was called Himahva-varsha and Haimavata varsha. It may be mentioned that before the 5th century A.D., India was sometimes called Magadha after the name of its best known and richest province; and sometimes the Kingdom of Brahmanas, after the name of its principal inhabitants.

The Puranas have divided the world (Bhuvana) into seven parts called Dvipa and Jambu dvipa is the first and the foremost which is again divided into nine sub-parts, called Varshas.

1. Son of King Dushyanta of the Mahabharata. Many of the Puranas derive 'Bharatavarsha' from Bharata, son of Asabhya and grandson of Nabhi who was a descendant of Manu, while some of Puranic passages claim its derivation from Bharata, the second son of Manu himself.

Prof. K.D. Bajpai, (Ed.) The Geographical Encyclopaedia of Ancient and Mediaeval India, (GEOAMI), p.61

1a. Linga Puranas Purva Bhaga, Chap.47
N.L. Dey, The Geographical Dictionary of Ancient and Mediaeval India, p.32

2. Brahmanda Purana, Purva Bhaga, Chap.33 Sloka 55 quoted in N.L. Dey, op. cit, p. 32

3. Linga Purana, Part I, Chapt. 49

4. A Cunningham, The Ancient Geography of India, p.9

5. Bhuvana = the world Rigveda, 10.88.1.

6. Dvipa = Jambudvipa or Asia

7. Varsha, Bharat varsha, the Greater India. Sometimes nine parts are called islands.
Amarnath Das, India and Jambu Island, p. 76
According to Naishadhiya Charita\(^1\) and Bhagavata Purana,\(^2\) the terrestrial world Bhuvana is divided into four, or seven or nine, or more divisions (as per different authorities but seven is the usual number) all situated round the mountain Meru like the petals of a lotus and each being separated from the other by a different ocean.

Of the nine varshas, Ilavritta is the main sub-part. South of Ilavritta and beyond the Himalayas is situated Bharatavarsha.\(^3\)

---

1. Naishadhiya Charita, 1.5  
2. Bhagavata Purana, 5.1.32  
3. Amarnath Das, India and Jambu Island, p. 234  
   Dr. H.G. Shastri, Bharat Bahar Vistareli  
   Bharatiya Sanskriti- Indonesia Ma, pp. 6-7
Bharatavarna is again sub-divided into nine parts viz. Indradvipa, Kṣara, Ṛṣaṇa parya, Garbhā Śidha, Kādāvīpa, Śrava Kuddal, Candharva, or Ceylon (Ceylon) Voraśa and thus ninth division sometimes named Kusandvīpa or Kumārdvīpa. The last one is India proper. It is said to extend from Kumari (i.e. Kanyakumari) in South to the source of the Ganges in North. Possibly the other sub-divisions represented isles or lands in Indonesia, Indo-China, Sri Lanka. Accordingly Bharatavarna appears to represent Greater India rather than India proper.

In the Buddhist literature India has been called Jambudvīpa and portions of it Aryadesha and Maḥāyānadesa.

One of the other names to be found in the Buddhist literature is Indra Vardana (Thomas Watters-On Yuan Guang Travels in India p. 123) but it appears that this name was not popular in this country as no reference to this name is forthcoming in any other Indian literature, though the word 'Indradvīpa' which connotes one of the divisions of India, has been referred to. The Brahmanical tradition refers to Indradvīpa as one of the divisions of Bharatavarna. The Buddhism give the first place to India Dvīpa while discussing the 9 Islands of India in detail.

However Jambudvīpa has an interesting connotation for the Jains.

Sanskrit:

2. Amaranath Das, India and Jambu Island pp. 76.
Jambudvipa (Jambuddiva), according to the Jain literature, was the centre of the most, concentric continent of the middle world (madhyama-loka). It is circular in shape and smallest of all the ring islands. It is surrounded by Lavana Samudra and other Islands (continents) and oceans in concentric rings. The diameter of this island measures 100,000 yojanas and the circumference somewhat more than 316,227 yojanas. 3 Krojas, 188 Bharvaras and 13½ angulas. In its centre there is Mount Mandara. There are other six Vasahara mountains in it. To the south of it there lie (from South to North) the Bharsaka, Hemavaya and Harivaya regions. In the centre of Jambuddiva and around the Himansu mountain. There is the Mahavideka region. The name 'Jambuddiva' is derived from the Jambu tree called Jambu sudanisana existing in the centre of this island. The Jambuddivapannati gives a detailed description of this island. There are also immemorable islands of this name in the middle world. Anakshiya is the presiding God of this Jambuddiva.

Bharatvarsha according to the Jain tradition was only a small part of Jambudvipa whereas according to Buddhist tradition Jambudvipa is only a synonym of Bharatvarsha.

2. In the traditional and legendary cosmography of the Hindus, it is called Bharata Shambha, part of Bharatavarsha to the South of the Meru (golden mountain) by another account it is Jambudvipa—of one the seven concentric islands comprising the earth. (The Gazetteer of India, p. 1)
Jambudvipa— one of the four Mahadipas, or great continents, which are included in the Cakravata and are ruled by a Cakravati. They are grouped round Mount Meru. In Jambudvipa is Mekava with its eighty four thousand peaks, its lakes, mountain ranges etc. This continent derives its name from the Jamba tree (also called Jaya) which grows there. Its trunk fifteen yojanas in earth, its outstanding branches fifty yojanas in length, its shade is one hundred yojanas in extent and its height one hundred yojanas. On account of this tree, Jambudvipa is also known Jambasandra. The continent is then thousand yojanas in extent, of these ten are covered by the ocean, three thousand by the Snowed, four thousand Himalaya mountains, while three thousand are inhabited by men. Sometimes in Jambudvipa there are as many as 84,000 cities. This number is sometimes reduced to 60,000, 40,000, 30,000; but never to less. In the time of Ambara, there were 84,000 cities, in each of which he built a monastery. In the Adhattara, Ambara, it is said that in Jambudvipa, trifling in number are, the Parks, groves, lakes, etc. more numerous to steep precipitous places, unfordable rivers, inaccessible mountains etc. At the time of Hattey, Buddha's appearance on earth, Jambudvipa will be pervaded by mankind as a jungle by its roots and bushes. There will be eighty four thousand cities with Janati (Bearees at the head).

The Buddha once declared that the people of Jambudvipa excel those of both Uttara Kuru, Guptavasa in three respects—courage, kindness and religious life.

Buddhas and Cakravatis are born only in Jambudvipa when opposed to other continents or Tushapamidipas. Jambudvipa indicates the continent of India.

1. Prakrit Proper names, p. 326. Dr. M. Moho, Dr. K. R. Choudhury
Bharatavarsa for the Jains is one of the seven regions situated in Jambudvīpa and also known as Bharahā and Bārakah.

It lies to the south of the mount Culla-Himatvanta and the east, north and west of eastern, western and eastern Lavana oceans respectively. It resembles the shape of a Paryānka (Couška) in the north and that of a Dhāmaprastha in the south.

Its area is 1 of the whole of Jambudvīpa. Its viskambha (width) is 526 1/40 yojanas, while its jiva (Chord) measures 6 1447 19 yojanas.

In the middle of Bharakavasa and Uttaradāha Bhāraha, Rivers Ganga and Sindhu further divide the whole region into six parts (three northern and three southern). However, the extent and connotation of India was different in the eyes of the foreigners. It begins from the sixth century B.C.

1. According to Amarnath Das, confusion has arisen from an attempt on the part of authors of the Puranas to avoid stating that there are two distinct Bharatvarshas, one in Jambudvīpa that is Barmah, and other to the South of the Himalayas and north of the sea, which is India. (India and Jambu-Island p. 206.)

1 Mohan Lal Mehta, Prakrit Proper Names II p. 526
Eakrata known as 'India' to foreigners.

India now acquired a new name Sindhu pronounced as 'Hindu' or In-tu' by the foreigners on the west. It was rendered into 'India' by the Greeks and adopted by the nations of the world.

The new name owes its origin to the Persians who could not go beyond the Indus or Sindhu valley at the time of their conquests of the Indian provinces—particularly during the reign of Darius Hyestaspes (c. 521-486 B.C.) Ptolemy informs us that even before this time India and Indians were known by their names which were derived from Sindhu—the name of their frontier river. The neighbouring tribes who spoke Iranian languages all pronounced, like the Persians, the 's' as an 'h' (Pliny Lib VI. c. x. p. 7)

Thus the Achaemenian inscriptions refer to Hi(n)dus(Hindu) as one of the provinces included in their empire. Thus the name 'Hindu' was derived from the 'Sindhu' or Indus river, the great river in the north-west part of this country, but in fact this was but a small part of the vast country. About the river Indus, Arrain says, that the Indus is the greatest of all the rivers of Asia, except the Ganges which is itself an Indian river.

(Arrains Anabasis fifth Book Chap. IV p. 24 by N. Crinale)

Thus Sindhu * became Hindu' (Hindu) and as 'h's were dropped, even at that early time, 'Hindu' became 'Indu'.

(H) IND a U

Indus insulius sindus appellatus.

* Sindhu' probably meant originally, 'the divider', 'keeper' and 'defender from 'Mau' to 'keep off' (India is described by Ptolemy p. 32).

1. SCMHI, p. 1.
Thus the river was called 'Indus' and the people were called 'Indoi' by the Greeks who first heard of India from the Persians. They rendered 'Indu' into India, while referring to this country just as they usually ended names of countries with 'ia' e.g. Persia, Babylonia, Assyria, Arabia, Parthia, Bactria, Scythia etc.

India was known to the Chinese in the time of emperor Wu-ti (123 BC) of the later Han dynasty. In the accounts of his famous envoy Chang-Ch'en(kien) India is mentioned as T'ien-tu-ku i.e. Sinhale. This has been testified by Yuan Chwang (Watters, On Yuan Chwang's Travels in India, p.138). It is said that all the other-designations for India in Chinese books, such as Hsen-tou, Hsen-tu, Tien-tu, Kuan-tu Ti'en-Chu, Tien-tu and Yin-tu are only phonetic corruptions of T'ien-tu, though this has been doubted by some scholars.

In the days of Fa-hien, India was called 'Tien-chu'(tuk). Regarding the change of earlier name Shin-tuk or duk into Tien-Tuk, James Legge opines that this was probably done by the Buddhists to give a good suspicious name to the father land of their Law 'the Heavenly region' (James Legge, The Travels of Fa-hien, p.14)

Samuel Beal says that on examination, we find that the names of India(T'ien-chu) are various and perplexing as to their authority. It was called 'Shin-tu' also'Hien-Ten', but now, according to the right pronunciation, it is called 'In-tu'. The people of In-tu call their country, by different names according to their district. Each country has diverse customs. Among at general name, which is the best sounding, we call the country 'In-tu'.

1. The French translated into 'Yin-tu' as they cannot pronounce initial 'T' without the aid of 'Y'.
In Chinese, this name signifies the moon. The moon has many names of which this is one. For it is said that all necessary things senselessly revolve in the wheel (of transmigration), through the long night of ignorance without a guiding star. Their case is like (the world) the sun gone down, as then the torch affords its connecting light, though there be the shining of stars, how different from the bright (cool) moon, just so the bright of holy men and sages, guiding the world as the shining of the moon, have made this country eminent and it is called 'In-tu'.


It is interesting to note that Yuan Chwang (629-45 A.D.) calls the great country 'Yin-tu'. His statements about the name may be rendered as follows:

"We find that different counsels have confused the designations of Tien-chu (India); the old names were 'Shin-tu' and Hien (or Hien)-tu'; now we must conform to the correct pronunciation and call it 'Yun-tu'. The people of Yun-tu use local appellations for their respective countries; the various districts having different customs; adopting a general designation and one which people like, we call the country Yin-tu which means the 'Moon'."

The Pilgrim regards Tien-chu, Shen-tu and Sien-tou as only dialectical varieties or mistaken transcriptions of Yin-tu which was the standard pronunciation. In some other works we find it stated that Yin-tu was the native name for the whole country and 'Indu-desha' given as the original Sanskrit.
Watter, quoting a Chinese Writer says that name 'Ti'an-Chu' was first applied to India in the Han(Ho-ti) period (AD-89 to 106) but the authority for the statement is not given. Whatever the name Ti'en-shu may have signified originally, however, it came to be given by the Chinese in their literature to the great extent of territory between the Bay of Bengal and the Arabian sea and reaching from the Kapis country in the north to Ceylon in the south.

Thus the old — She'n-tu and all other names for India among the Chinese, continued to be the general literary designation for India down to the Tsang period (618-907 A.D.) when the new name Yin-tu was brought into fashion. We even find that the Hun T'en-shu used with a wider application and it is employed as a synonym for 'Buddhist countries', 'Yin-tu' is the Chinese name for India as Chi-na and Chen-tan are terms used in that country to denote China. This was the country 'Yin-tu' that, according to Yuen Chwang, was mapped into five great divisions". (Thomas Watters, On Yu an Chowang's Travels in India, p. 140)

Itsing calls India in general, the West (Si-fang), the five countries of India(Wu-tien), Aryan-desh(A-li-ya-ti-She)'Madhya desh (Moti-Fishe), Brahman rashtra(po-lo-men-Kuo) or Jambudvipa (Chen-pu-cho)"Hindu(Hsin-tu)" he says "is the name used only by the northern tribes (p.113) and the people of India themselves do not know it. Indu²(Yin-tu)is by some derived from the name of the moon, Indu(Huien-Tsang Mem,ii p.56) but it is not a proper name. 'Hindu' in Persian and 'Indo' in Greek were perhaps corrupted from Sindhu.²

2. Takakusa(I-tsin), Record of the Buddhist Religion by I-tsing, p. 111}
The point is that the popular name of this country Hindu
Yin-tu, In-tu or India is given by the foreigners and she has
been known by this name since the early age.
Again in later times, this country was named, 'Hindustan' (the
land of the Hindus) by the Muslims after her original inhabitants
called by them 'Hindus'. But this name came into vogue much after
600 A.D., the lower limit of our period under review.

In the international administration and foreign correspondence and
the English language, the name became very popular during the
British rule. Even the Indians who settled in Africa, England,
America and other foreign countries called this country 'India'
under the dominant influence of the English language.

In fact 'India', became so much current in English that the name
is retained even after the partition of the country in 1947 A.D.
when she became independent, though the Indus valley (after which
she named so) is lost to Pakistan. Of course, this country is
now better designated 'Hindustan' in the Indian languages. 1

1. In the Constitution of India, this country is officially
named as 'Bharat', vide Article 1 of the Constitution of India.
Extent of India.

India has, in the past, meant different things to different people, sometime merely a narrow strip of coast, at others, the greater portion of southern India or the region lying between the Himalayas and the Indian ocean, excluding Burma and Ceylon, but including Nepal, Kashmir, Pakistan, a larger part of Afghanistan and Bangladesh. North India extends from the Vindhyas to the Himalayas with their western continuation— the Himalush.

In the puranic period, according to Nandeolal Day, Bharatvarsha was bounded on the north by the Himalayas, on the south by the ocean, on the east by the country of theKRATAS and on the West by the country of the Yavanas (Vishnu-Puran-II Ch.3 Markandeya Purana Ch.57).

Bharatvarsha represents a political conception of India, being under one King, whereas Jambudivipa represents a geographical conception. (GEOAMTP. 61)

Strabo (1st BC) says "the Indians occupy some of the countries situated along the Indus which formerly belonged to the Persians (Geography, XIV, 3.1) In another place, he states that the Indus was the boundary of India and of Ariana situated towards the west and in the possession of the Persians, for afterwards the Indians occupied a larger portion of Ariana, which they had received from the Macedonians."

According to Irshen David's "Gandhara—modern Kandahar was the district of eastern Afghanistan and also included in north

1. Moreland & Chatterjee A Short History of India p. 17

2. Cunningham, An Ancient Geography of India, p. 9

According to Cunningham (114.9-16) Bharat is 1000 Yojanas in extent from north to south. It extends from Cape Comarim to the source of the Ganges. In its oblique extent in the north it is ten thousand yojanas— (Prof. K.D. Bajpai [84], GEOAMTP. 63)
west of the Punjab. Its capital was Taxila in the Punjab and has always been considered a city of India. The king of Gandhara in the Buddha's time, Pakkusati is said to have sent an embassy and a letter to King Bindusara (c 544-498 BC) of Magadha, showing intimate relationship between the two Indian Kings. Mention of Gandhara among the sixteen Mahajanapadas of India shows that Gandhara was considered a part of ancient India.

Dr. Motichandra holds that the whole of eastern Afghanistan was included in India (Dr. Motichandra-Geographical and Economic studies in the Mahabharata: Upayana Parva); according to Chinese India i.e. Hen-Chau signifies the great extent of territory between the Bay of Bengal and the Arabian Sea reaching from Kepis country at the north to Ceylon (Thomas Walters on Yasa Chwang Travels in India p.137).

However, India means a definite and recognised area of land for the purpose of this work in so far as the particular period of this study is concerned. Here by India we mean, the pre-partition sub-continent now known as India, Pakistan and Bangladesh. During the relevant period, in the north-west, India included Gandhara which covered not only western Punjab and North Western Frontier Province (now in Pakistan) but also extended over eastern Afghanistan. India should, therefore, mean territories which an Indian had reasonably and emotionally considered to be India, even though the part might be included in another country now and this is the area which is sought to be surveyed in the context of the specified time. In other words India here means, India that was culturally and geographically known so during the period under review.

1. Reys Davies, Buddhist India, p. 1
2. Dr. Motichandra, Upayana Parva, p.137
Period of foreign invasions

Between the advent of the Aryans into India and the early invasions of the Muslims, some foreign invasions modified the history and culture of India to a considerable extent. How these invasions changed the course of history and influenced the culture is the subject matter of this work. This necessitates the survey of these invasions and the races that were instrumental in shaping the armed incursions. The period from the sixth century before Christ to the sixth century of the Christian era covers most of these invasions. Our investigation is confined to this specific span of time with a view to making an intensive study of the limited period in detail. The cultural impact of the Muslim invasions that followed, could form the theme of another research work dealing with the subsequent period. The Muslims have introduced considerable impact on the Indian life, in administration, dress, diet, religious, language literature, politics, customs, etc. The same is the case with the subsequent western rulers of the modern period with their over-whelming cultural impact. The European powers such as Portuguese, French, Spanish and the English came to India in the 17th cent. A.D. first as traders and then as conquerors. But they made a tremendous impact on this country in almost every walk of national life. They cannot be called as invaders in the sense in which other invasions have been discussed hereinafter, but they gave India political unity which was denied to even Ashoka the great. The whole administrative pattern was changed. The language, dress, food habits, modes of transport, were completely westernised. The impact of the European culture penetrated to the very marrow of the life of an average Indian and more so the members of the upper class. But the cultural impact of the
Western nations could form a theme of another research work. In this work we shall confine ourselves to the ancient period ranging from the 6th Cent. B.C. to the 6th Cent. A.D. and survey the cultural impact of the successive foreign invasions in detail.

Races of Foreign Invaders.

During this period, cultures of different races such as the Persians, the Macedonians, the Greeks, the Sakas, the Parthians, the Kushans and even the Hunas played their part as a natural accompaniment of the invasions. They influenced the Indian culture either silently or violently depending upon their inherent nature. The cultures of these invaders may be here very briefly introduced in order to know the genesis of the invasions and whether they had any moral strength apart from the strength of the sword which enabled them to conquer India.
Cultural Impact

When the two cultures come into contact with each other, one always received some impact from the other to a large or small extent. The quantum or intensity of the impact depends upon the military or national superiority of the people, the superiority of the culture etc. Each affects the other to a larger or lesser degree. In case one race or culture is far superior to the other, the former would yield to the dominant impact. The quantum and spread of the impact would depend upon the gulf lying between quality or standard of the two. In case both culture are well developed in their respective ways, they would act and react mutually almost in an equal proportion. If, however, one culture is eminently superior, the other would be affected by it so dominantly that it may lose much of its entity and get almost merged into/other. Nevertheless even the under developed culture has some distinct traits of its own which sooner or later leave some impact even on the highly developed culture.

In anthropology culture means social heritage of artifacts techniques, habits, customs, ideas etc. Here in cultural impact, it is intended to include various aspects of human culture, such as religion and philosophy, language, literature, art and architecture, social customs, political and administrative organisation, fine arts, trade and commerce, dress and etiquettes of the people etc.
Persian Culture

Persia came in contact with India during the Achaemenian period in the sixth century before Christ. By that time the Aryanisation of Persia was completed, as was the case with India also. Similarly a great religious movement started by Zoroastra had swept Persia much earlier than the one that caused religious upheaval in India. But as there was some time gap between these events, and Persian Zoroastrian religion being of earlier age, it might have made some impact on India when the two nations came in contact with each other.

Similarly in the field of public administration, the Achaemenian empire was the forerunner of any historical empire in India, it might have made its impact on this country. There is, however, no detailed evidence. How a far-flung empire could be administered, what was the role of the provincial administration, how rebellion could be checked in the far away provinces, how a better communication system and transport help in the stability of an empire, how the people's participation in war and national economy be ensured as the Persians did, had really the same thing to tell Indians also, no doubt, had the theories/on such matters in the Vedas and the Epics.

The Achaemenian kings never forgot that religion is bigger than the state and they, in practice followed the policy of toleration which could have given some practical lessons to the neighbouring countries, including India. It is true that the Persian culture was in no way superior to that of India, yet the time was in their favour. Events occurred in Persia first.
Greek Civilization

The Greeks had a highly developed culture when Alexander the Great over-ran North West of India. In all walks of life, Greece had made tremendous progress by the end of the fourth century B.C. The religion and philosophy of Greece were well developed. The World famous philosophers like Plato and Aristotle had already given their superb theories to the world.

Their art and architecture, literature, science and mathematics were well developed. Even in the field of democracy and public administration, their City States were effectively governed and their citizens had a high sense of political freedom. In the art of war, they proved by welding their sword from Hellespont to the Bess, that they were militarily superior to any other power in the world.

Their Trade and Commerce were competing with the other prosperous countries of the Mediterranean and shipping was second to none in the world. In the matter of coinage and astronomy, they had much to tell or teach others. In the field of literature, democracy/City states the world looked toward Greece for guidance. Therefore, of all the invaders that attacked India, Greeks were the most advanced culturally. If Alexander’s sword shed so much Indian blood, the Greek culture, as would be seen later, compensated India to some extent for this loss.
Central Asian Nomads

The Sakas, Kusanas and the Hunas were nomadic tribes or pastoral barbarians. They had no developed culture of their own, it was due to sheer numbers that they overwhelmed India. The Sakas had assimilated the Persian and Greek cultures before they came to India. They had lost their tribal habits before moving towards this country. In Sakstan where they remained for a long time, they adopted Greek language and script for their administration. There they had culturally inter-mingled with the Parthians and adopted their culture as well. The Kusanas came to India directly. They had military might but hardly anything worth emulating culturally. They did not give their culture to India but made their own contribution to its advancement. They adopted Indian language and script. They also brought the deities of different faiths together and adopted royal titles of different nations.

About the Hunas, the less said the better. They were the unschooled barbarian hordes who had only mastered the shock tactics of warfare and overrun vast area only due to numbers. Wherever they went, they made a negative contribution i.e. the destruction of the culture of the vanquished. In case fully of India, they did not succeed in this act of vandalism, and ultimately were conquered by the Indian culture and vanished within its folds.

The dictum that Indian culture was attacked by those who lacked culture, is fully applicable in the case of these Central Asian tribes.

We would see in the succeeding pages how India's political integration was interrupted off and on, but she did make progress in the field of art, literature, philosophy, political science and other sciences due to mutual exchange.
Mutual Influence of Cultures

Whenever countries come into intimate contact with one another, they are bound to be influenced by each other. It cannot be contended that India was altogether impervious to the influence of the west; likewise it is ridiculous to maintain that "Indian civilization was a bye-product of the Macedonian or Achaemenian invasions."\(^1\)

According to Prof. Sailaja Mahajan, "the fact of the matter is that like Greeks, the Hindus were not averse to borrowing from peoples who had something really good to give and when they borrowed discriminately, they assimilated the foreign elements in an admirable manner. So much so that in some cases the proof of indebtedness is difficult to elucidate."\(^2\)

Tarn has correctly opined that two peoples can hardly live side by side for a long period without a certain amount of borrowing.\(^3\) But in case of India, this side by side living was proceeded by hard and long struggle and physical violence.

Long Struggle and the Indian Scene.

According to Rapson, the history of India is in a large measure the story of struggle between the new comers and the earlier inhabitants. Such invasions may be compared to waves breaking on the shores. Their force becomes less the farther they proceed and their direction is determined by the obstacles with which they came into contact. The most effective of these obstacles even when human effort is the direct means of resistance are the geographical barriers which nature had itself set up.\(^4\)

---

2. *Ibid.* p. 344
The foreign invasions dashed with greater force in the
Gandhara area and part of Afghanistan. The geographical
situation of the country, lying as it does, between two great
zones of civilization, the Indian and the west Asiatic and
athwart the natural outlet of the hive of the nomadic hordes
inhabiting the Steppes of central Asia, has fixed the role
which it was destined to play on the stage of history. It has
been from the earliest times the meeting place of races,
languages and cultures, confronting each other often unarmed
conflict and sometime in peaceful intercourse.1

After two massive invasions of Achæmenids and Alexander
the Great, the expansion and consolidation of the Mauryan
empire dominates the scene for a century and the cherished
dream of ancient Indian polity of universal monarchy—Samarajya,
become a reality.

Chandragupta Maurya faces a foreign invasion by Seleucus
and repulses the attack successfully. For the first time in
the recorded history of India what a universal empire can
achieve, came to the notice of the people.

The towering personality of Asoka, the Great, then
occupies a central place. Not only the foreign invasions
ceased during his time, but his missionaries went to other
countries for effecting religious conquests. The reign of
Asoka demonstrates the mutual influence of foreign countries
and
vis a vis India. His inscriptions/palaces show the influence
of Persia to counter balance his religious impact on those
countries. Asokan religious and cultural activities in
neighbouring countries, was not witnessed again till the
Kushana King Kaniska came to rule over India. In between these
1. U.N. Ghosal, Ancient Indian Culture in Afghanistan, p. 9
two important monarchs, came the invaders from Bactria, Parthia and the Sakas from the Central Asia. If the Bactrian Greeks penetrated farthest in the east at the time of military expeditions, the Sakas went farthest in the south. Both played different roles in the cultural field of India.

The Kushans built up a dominion which lasted for a long time and stretched from the Central Asia to the very heart of India. The downfall of the Kushan empire was brought about by a resurgence of the indigenous rule in the third century and the petty States paved the way for the united Gupta Empire in the following century.

Upto the time of Imperial Guptas, there was a remarkable output of noble architectural, monumental and figural and decorative sculpture but the process was reversed thereafter. With a few breathing periods, India was subjected to most destructive invasions by the Huns which almost destroyed whatever she built during the past millenium.

Foreign domination of India.

An important aspect of the foreign invasions that emerges after the survey of Indian history is the monopoly of political power in this country by the foreigners particularly in the North-West parts of India. The first two centuries of our period were dominated by the Scythians, Alexander's invasions lasted for only two years but he paved the way for the Mauryan interlude and the worse was to follow.

Soon after the demise of Aoka, the Bactrian Greeks led their armies to the very centre of political gravity in Magadha. This Indo-Greek domination of India lasted for several decades, but these inroads opened a passage into India to the various wild
herds, such as the Sakas, Pahalavas, Kushanas, Hunas and so forth, whom we find pouring unceasingly into the country till the sixth century A.D. and eclipsing the sovereignty of the indigenous rulers with such few exceptions only as the Sungas and the Guptas.

It can be said that though almost all the invaders kept their identity for a long time at least during the period they were the rulers, yet they were all Hinduised after they were settled or assimilated in the Indian Society. A careful scrutiny of the history of these invasions would also show that the political power of the country or northern parts of the country was, to some extent, monopolised by these foreigners up till the advent of the Mohammedans. In fact the Muslim domination lasted the longest and covered the major part of India before the peaceful commercial penetration by the European powers extended India's slavery under a foreign yoke. Thus India or large chunks of her territory remained under the heel of foreign domination throughout the period of recorded history with only a few exceptions such as the Mauryas, the Gupta-Vakataka age and the Republic of India.

"The old Hindu genus for political originally and evolution thus remained dormant and died a natural death and the world domain to which India at one time seems to aspire resolved itself into a mere chimera." This was one of the most important results of these foreign invasions of India.

But why the invaders kept on coming to India ceaselessly?

See footnotes on the following page
Footnotes

1. 'Hinduised' means when the invaders adopted the religions of the Hindus and also socially came to be known as 'Hindus'.

2. 'Settled' means politically, socially and emotionally settled.

3. Political domination of India or parts of India by the invaders:

   (a) Persians(628 B.C.-330 B.C.) dominated the areas now called Pakistan.

   (b) Indo Greeks(187 B.C.-20 B.C.) occupied the areas now known as Pakistan & North India excepting eastern Bihar, Southern M.P. & Rajasthan.

   (c) Parthians(249 B.C.-46 A.D.) ruled over the areas now included in Northern Pakistan.

   (d) Sakas(57 B.C.-320 A.D.) dominated almost the whole country excepting eastern India, Southern India minus Maharashtra.

   (e) Kushan (2nd Gen. A.D.-9th Gen. A.D.) ruled over the areas now known as Pakistan upto Multan and India upto Mathura from the West.

   (f) Sassainians(249 A.D.-571 A.D.) ruled over the areas now known as Pakistan minus some northern and eastern parts.

   (g) Hunas (465 A.D.- 605 A.D.) ruled over the areas now known as northern Pakistan and India upto Varanasi.

   (h) Muslims, Arabs, Gazanis & Gori. (711-1198 A.D.) occupied Sindh, North West Frontier province and West Punjab; invaded various parts of India.

   (i) Elave dynasty, Khilji, Afghans and Lodie(1198-1526 A.D.) whole of north India and other parts of India.

   (j) Mughal dynasty(1526-1857) ruled over parts of north India. Sometimes including big chunks of Southern & Western India.


   (l) Portuguese(1535-1961 A.D.) carved and ruled the pockets of Goa, Daman & dio upto 19.12.1961 A.D.

   (m) British(1757-1947 A.D.) rule started with Bengal South and North Indian possession dominated whole of the country for about 125 years.

4. ACHI,p.xvi
Why the Invaders Came to India.

In all the ages, the fertility and the riches of certain regions, above all the plains of the Indus and the Ganges, have attracted the invaders from outside worlds. Over population and dislocation of the land had given an impulse to the movements of the peoples from the adjacent regions of Asia. Thus both the attracting and expulsive forces which determine immigrations acted in the same direction.¹

One more reason can be assigned to these horde invading India, particularly from the Central Asian regions. They followed the wave of the invaders whom they had earlier dislodged and defeated on the field of battle and compelled them to move in the direction of India. Thus a sense of superiority and an implied confidence in the future victories kept the invaders coming to India one after another.

We have no knowledge that the Aryans were attracted towards India by her wealth and prosperity, but long before she had the opportunity to become a harmonious integrated unit under the Aryans, news spread far beyond the borders about her seers, sages, visionaries, tremendous wealth and prosperity. This news must have travelled with the normal people such as tradesmen, tourists and wanderers.

It was also the rich and abundant Indus Gangetic pastures with their affluent society which attracted the people of the barren high lands of Central Asia and the desert land of the middle East, both for themselves and for their cattle. Desire to possess permanent power over such prosperous and fertile land was a magic spell which set the Persians, Greeks, Parthians, Kushanas, Sakas, the Huns on the move.

¹ CHI p. 33
These invaders came to raid, plunder and to extend their own power and territory and in many cases they were easily successful sometimes getting just a walk over. Why?

Why India succumbed to invasions

In almost all invasions, India was overrun by the invaders and could not put up the resistance which her size and resources demanded. One reason was that the marked variety of race, religion and culture, taken all together presented an almost unsurmountable obstacle to political unity. India has been described as an ethnological museum in which a number of races of mankind are found. This diversity created weakness in the Indian society.

Weakened by division, it succumbed to invaders, impoverished by invaders it lost all power of resistance and took refuge in super natural conulations; it argued that both mercy and slavery were superficial delusions and concluded that freedom of the body or the nation was hardly worth defending in so brief a life. The better lesson that may be drawn from this tragedy is that eternal vigilance is the price of civilization. A nation must love peace but 'Keep its powder dry.' Some people even trace Indian weakness in the concept of Ahimsa; From the early days of the Aryans, the love for Cow generated the general attitude not to kill and with plenty of milk, vegetables, cereals and fruits, there was no need to add meat to the diet. Thus Indians became mostly vegetarians. This practice at the highest moments of history developed into a conscious philosophy of life of non-killing, non-injuring Ahimsa. But the foreign invasions accompanied by immense bloodshed, loot and rapine gave a severe jolt to this

2. OCH, p. 463
concept and put the Indians to a great disadvantage in times of crisis. Ahimsa might have reduced their will to fight and kill the invaders. Though this view is controversial, yet the force of argument cannot altogether be denied.

Why did India not resist successfully? India does not appear to have evaded the war, though there were many instances when the foreign rulers were invited.

One reason for India's military weakness was that she was politically never a single unit. The battles were fought mostly by individual rajas and kings, who had hardly made a common cause against an invader. They were so indifferent that they lacked normal intelligence of an approaching enemy and were caught napping or taken by surprise.

According to some scholars another reason was that no war was fought by the people as a whole. Many victories were lost by the indifference of the out-caste population. A kingdom without the cooperation of normal quota of workers from sweepers to armament makers must have been helpless against a determined besieging army.

Can the neglect of defence be held responsible for Indian debacle? The separation of India from the rest of the world by natural barriers gave the people of ancient India a sense of security and they ignored the defence of the country. In fact, they never paid adequate attention to the security of their frontiers. This invariably resulted into a number of invasions, in India from outside. This neglect of military preparedness was responsible for the enslavement of the country by the foreigners.  

1. SCRI, p.6.
The only exception that can be met would in regard to military preparedness of some of the Mauryas and the Guptas. Some natural causes had their share in the story. Diversities of climate and soil produce great variation in plant and animal life. Frequent floods, droughts, disease and wild beasts of jungle at times, made life difficult for the people and their organization hindered.

Will Durant opines that the terrorism and exploration by the foreigners, advanced that weakening of Hindu physique and moral which had begun by an exhausting climate, and inadequate diet, political disunity and pessimistic religions. How such an India could provide a pretext for attack and invasions by the foreigners?

---

1. Climate is the chief among those physical agents which define within what limits and in what ways man can seek his livelihood (W.G. East, the geography behind history p.15) This man's effort to earn livelihood is the Chief Constituent of History. Climate also effects the vegetation of the region as all plant can grow only with certain climatic conditions as human life is generally sustained on vegetation it had its own learning on history of our country. The history of Kashmir has been different from that of Rajastan or the events of Bengal had been different from those in the North Western frontier of India.

Even the soil of Indus did not lend itself willingly to civilization the biological struggle to free the land from the enemies (of human beings) had continued underneath all the surfaces dramas of economic and political strife. (Will Durant) DOH p. 475

2. SE. SWAN, A History of World Civilization p. 190.

3. DOH, p. 462
India provided no casus belli.

One important aspect of the foreign invasions of India seems to be a complete absence of any casus belli on the part of India. She does not seem to have given any reason or pretext to invaders to attack her. The Achaemenian Kings occupied large tracts of India without any cause. No apparent reason existed except the expansionist attitude of Persian Kings.

Though Alexander the Great had reason to attack Persian empire to settle old scores, India provided no such casus belli to the Macedonian conqueror. If he crossed the Hindu Kush to mop-up the Achaemenian possessions in India, why did he want to proceed beyond the Beas and measure sword with the Magadhan empire? He wanted to test the strength and weakness of India.

Similarly the Hellenic Greeks, Sakas, Parthians, Kushans and the Huns, all overran large parts of India without any reason. India appears throughout the period as a mild and innocent victim of invaders, but she did not lack the power of assimilation or to absorb these aliens into her bosom.

Power of Assimilation by Indian Culture.

The foreign conquests brought in their train other alien races to India who held sway successfully over the greater part of India or north India. Some of these invaders settled in India and established their colonies and separate settlements. We have no adequate evidence to trace their impact on India but the logical conclusion would be that in course of time they all were assimilated by this country and became one with her. Many of these foreigners, however, were not mere conquerors from outside, they identified themselves, in course of time, with the children of the soil of the country they had conquered.

1. Strabo (XVI, I, 11) states that at the time of invasion of Alexander, the Indus was the boundary of India. E. G. Godet, 1910, p. 17. A Cunningham, Ancient Geography of India, p. 13.
Though they are generally referred to in the Indian epic literature as outsiders, their gradual amalgamation with the original inhabitants was so complete that they lost their separate identity and came to constitute an important and virile section of the Indian society. As has already been pointed out above, of these foreigners only the Greeks were inheritors of a great culture which could be compared with that of the Indians. The others, not so advanced, were deeply influenced by the two superior trends of cultures Hellistic and Indian—which again had mutual reaction upon each other.¹

Some invaders withdrew after fulfilling their appetite and some stayed on. Those who stayed on, have left an unmistakable imprint on the evolution of India, and have together with what was indigenously India, shaped India into what she is today. In fact, India has always been steadily changing and the main factor of contribution has been the 'push' from without i.e. the foreign invasions violent as well as peaceful.

Peaceful impact.

In the peaceful cultural impact can be included the influence of far away Rome and a distant neighbour China. In case of the former this was brought about largely by commercial and trade contact. The borders of the Roman empire and India always remained away and separated by one thousand kilometers. The trade and commerce developed when Rome was at the height of her power and in India the Kushan earned the maximum benefit out of the contacts. As this is not the subject matter of this work, it has been dealt with in a separate appendix (A) to make the story complete.

¹. CHI, p. 136
The contacts with China were also largely cultural and commercial. There were only stray incidents when the two countries came to blows. The cultural contacts were largely religious from the side of India and commercial from the Chinese side. While India exported Religion to China, China exported her silk to India. Thus Buddhism made a far reaching impact on China than what Chinese silk could do to India.

Though this inquiry is concerned mainly with the cultural impact of the invasions, the peaceful contacts of countries like Rome and China, were no less important. This 'give and take' was as important as in the case of the cultural exchanges resulting from armed invasions of Greece and Persia.

Continuity in modifications.

The culture and civilization of the Guptas was different from that of the Mauryas, though both were Indian imperial powers, even the Buddhist India was different from the India of Chankya. The country of Perses Vardhan was not the same as in the days of the Guptas. The tremendous developments between the Mauryas and the Guptas owe their origin to foreign invasions as well as to the internal causes. But in the process of change, there has always been a cultural continuity, while in Egypt or Iraq the people have forgotten. Ramseses or Bismurabi; Rams and Krishna are part of the life of a common man in India today. In respect of continuous traditions, China comes second to India, Greece makes a poor third, while the countries of Egypt and Iraq or Crete stand nowhere.

A survey of ever changing cultural scene of India shows that the country has never been stagnant but has steadily developed through the ages. India has enjoyed some 4000 years of civilization and every period of her history has left something for the present day.