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Rise of Hindu Kingdom

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curiously enough it will be found from these pages that Harsha resembled the two great Roman emperors in many and most marked points. And it is interesting to note that as reliable materials are available for giving an account of the reign of Harsha and the *condition of his times*, as were available to Gibbon in writing about the age of the Antonines. The records of the travels of Hiuen Tsang and the life of Harsha written by the court-poet Bāṇa, supply us with two most vivid and detailed pictures drawn by eye witnesses, which are invaluable to the historian of ancient India. It is no wonder, therefore, that we have in this volume based most of our remarks on the observations of these two writers who, it is refreshing to find, corroborate each other in the minutest details.

The momentous question will here be naturally asked—a question to which the writer of these pages is expected to give a reply—what were the causes which led to the decline and down-fall of the Aryans in India? They had withstood successive invasions by the Greeks, the Śakas, the Kushans and the Huus. They had not only stubbornly resisted these invasions but freed India within a hundred years each time. What is it that made them unable to beat back the Arabs who permanently enslaved Sind in 712 A. D. and the Turks and the Afghans who finally subjected India to Mahomedan rule in 1000 and 1200 A. D.? What was it in the history of India from 500 A. D., when approximately the last foreign rule of the Huns was overthrown, down to about 1000 A.D. that sapped the strength of the Indian people and made their warriors fall like card-board sepoy before the Turks of the Ghaznavide Mahmud? The historian of India who has studied this period of about 500 years of Indian history is bound to throw light on the solution of this momentous question and we proceed to indicate our views succinctly in this matter.

The first and the foremost cause of the fall of the Indo-Aryans was the complete ascendancy gained during this period by what may be called the doctrine of the divine right of kings. During the Aryan period Indian kingdoms were looked upon as belonging to the people. In Alexander's days there were even some states where there were

no kings and which are described by Greek writers as republics. States and even kings were then known by the names of the peoples and not by the names of kingly families. Gradually during the Aryo-Buddhistic period, owing to the recurrence of foreign invasion and foreign rule, the people were less consulted in governmental concerns, the kingly power gradually became absolute and kingship was eventually looked upon as derived not from the people but from divine favour. It came to be believed that those who had performed severe austerities in their previous births became kings in this. During the Hindu period, therefore, kingdoms came to be known by the names of kingly families or by the names of the capitals they ruled. Instead of the Kurus and the Pāncchālas, the Madras and the Surasenas of the Aryan period we find in Hiuen Tsang, the same kingdoms called by the names of Thanesar and Kanauj, Jālandhara and Mathurā. The mass of the people ceased to care who ruled them and were in fact ready to transfer their allegiance to any new king or kingly family which was strong or fortunate enough to establish his or its power. As explained in Chapter VII Book I at length, under such view the sentiment of patriotism had no scope and in fact did never develop in India. The sentiment of loyalty alone could flourish and did develop in this country. But this system of political philosophy conduced to the development of treason also along with loyalty and treason has consequently always been more in evidence in the history of India than in the history of the West. Not only, therefore, did the Indian people as a whole never fight against the Mahomedans but traitors were always found ready to serve as instruments in the hands of foreign invaders. For Hindu superstition looked equally upon foreigners as enjoying divine favour, as is illustrated by the history of Sind recorded in this volume. Where the feeling of nationality is well-developed and strong, not only is there less inclination towards treason, but the whole people offer stubborn resistance at each point in time and space to foreign conquest and make it almost impossible. The case in India during the Hindu period was exactly the reverse of this.

The people of India were prevented by another and more important reason from offering resistance as a whole