

MEDIEVAL INDIA:

SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC CONDITIONS

*Being the substance of
Four Lectures delivered in Urdu to the
Hindustani Academy, Allahabad*

By

A. YUSUF ALI

C.B.E., M.A., LL.M. (Cantab.)

Fellow of the Royal Society of Literature

*Author of The Making of India; India
and Europe, &c.*

OXFORD UNIVERSITY PRESS
LONDON : HUMPHREY MILFORD

1932

OXFORD UNIVERSITY PRESS
AMEN HOUSE, E.C. 4
LONDON EDINBURGH GLASGOW
LEIPZIG NEW YORK TORONTO
MELBOURNE CAPETOWN BOMBAY
CALCUTTA MADRAS SHANGHAI
HUMPHREY MILFORD
PUBLISHER TO THE
UNIVERSITY

PRINTED IN GREAT BRITAIN

INTRODUCTORY NOTE

BY F. J. C. HEARNSHAW, M.A., LL.D.

*Professor of History, King's College,
University of London*

I AM much honoured by being invited to write a short Introductory Note to my friend Mr. Yusuf Ali's excellent lectures on the social and economic conditions of medieval India. Mr. Yusuf Ali was my contemporary in the University of Cambridge over thirty years ago, and ever since those remote Victorian days—days of enviable prosperity, tranquillity, and confidence—I have followed with admiration his distinguished career in the Civil Service and in the higher walks of education.

The four lectures herewith presented to the public are based on a wide survey of first-hand sources, and a deep study of their significance. They relate to a little-known but profoundly interesting period of Indian history. They deal, moreover, with an aspect of Indian life, namely, the social and economic, hitherto inadequately examined—an aspect incomparably harder to see in entirety and perspective than is the political or even the religious history of the great sub-continent.

In these anxious days, when misunderstandings are rife and suspicions quick, it is most important that everything possible should be done to awaken in England respect for Indian institutions, and in India faith in English goodwill. Mr. Yusuf Ali is an invaluable mediator between the two civilizations, with each of which he is intimately acquainted.

I sincerely trust that the interest which his masterly survey of medieval Indian culture is sure to arouse may further the great cause of Anglo-Indian amity and mutual comprehension.

PREFACE

THE following pages comprise the substance of four lectures delivered in Urdu at the Hindustani Academy of Allahabad in 1928. They attracted some notice in their Urdu garb, and it has been suggested that their publication in English may reach a wider audience in and outside India, and may even help in the study of our medieval history in our universities.

I have only made two alterations for this English edition. I have eliminated some matter that was mainly addressed to the Hindustani Academy and to my Urdu listeners. And I have added a few introductory remarks, in order to make the opening appear not too abrupt on account of the omission of the passages which may have no interest for English readers. I hope that in judging of the value of the lectures and my mode of presentment, the gentle reader will not lose sight of the date of the lectures and the audiences to which they were addressed.

The cultivation of the vernacular languages in India has reached a stage at which the demand for original historical and research work has far outstripped its supply. Urdu and Hindi are in this respect in no way behind any other vernacular. Urdu is still somewhat hampered by its antiquated system of printing. Most of its books are still lithographed. The Hindustani Academy uses type printing. But the existing Urdu type or type-printed work cannot be considered satisfactory. The attempt to copy in movable type all the variations of Urdu letters as seen in manuscript calligraphy must be pronounced a failure. The essence of manuscript calligraphy consists in varying the shapes and sizes of curves in different combinations and according to the position of given letters

at the beginning, the middle, or the end of words. The essence of good printing is to have letters of uniform size and shape, to have the lines printed with mathematical precision, and to make rapid reading by the eye (an everyday necessity) possible as well as an artistic pleasure. If by duplicating or triplicating the shapes of single letters the fount is made unwieldy, it adds to the difficulties and the expenses of compositors' work. In modern commercial printing cost is not a negligible quantity. With the initial prejudice of Urdu readers against type printing, type printing cannot be made a success unless it is cheaper and better than lithograph printing. It is not correct to say that type printing cannot be artistic or beautiful. Its artistic quality or beauty will depend upon other considerations than those which apply to manuscript calligraphy or its imitation, the lithographed book. First let us produce reasonably good and cheap type printing, and we shall gradually be able to evolve more and more artistic printing standards as time goes on. The great superiority of type printing consists in its accuracy and clearness. For accuracy it is necessary to have three shapes of the letter *wāw*, to represent the three sounds *ū*, *ō*, and *au*, and three shapes of the letter *ya*, to represent the three sounds *ī*, *ē*, and *ai*. No modern language can make much progress, or even hold its own, which depends upon lithography and is not able to use the latest resources of the modern printing-press.

I am much obliged to Professor F. J. C. Hearnshaw for the kindly interest he has taken in the work and for the Introductory Note he has been good enough to write for it.

A. YUSUF ALI.

CONTENTS

INTRODUCTORY NOTE. <i>By</i> PROF. F. J. C. HEARNshaw	v
PREFACE	vii
LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS for references in foot- notes	xi
LECTURE I. INTRODUCTORY	1-8
What were the Middle Ages?—Middle Ages in Europe—In Indian History—From Harsha to Prithi Rāj—From Prithi Rāj to Mughal Empire—Three Periods of Indian Middle Ages—Modern Period—Difficulties of Study—Historical Perspective—Sense of Continuity—Three Pictures of Social and Economic Life.	
LECTURE II. THE SEVENTH CENTURY	9-22
Social and Economic Facts—Authorities: (a) Drama—(b) Bāna's Panegyric and Romance—(c) Chinese Pilgrim—(d) Inscriptions and Art—King, Minister, and Household—Women and their Accomplishments—Brahman Jester—Royal Hall, and King's Habits—City of Ujjain—Life of the People—Country: Forests, Hermitages: Chandāla Camp—Ascetic of Shiva—Celebration on Birth of King's Son—A Village in the Vindhya—Races and Dresses—Land Tenures—Taxes—Produce: Manners and Customs—Illness and Death—Crime: Castes—Indian Character.	
LECTURE III. THE TENTH AND ELEVENTH CENTURIES	23-37
Authorities—Languages: Prakrits and Vernaculars—Relations between North and South India—Mixture of Races, and New Social Groupings—Shades of Complexion considered Territorially—Love of Magic and the Miraculous—Ornaments and Cosmetics—Jhūla Festival—Brahmans in Popular Tales—The Rajputs—Outcastes and Untouchables—Endowments to Brahmans and Temples—Writing and Books—Manners and Customs—Two Inscriptions—Land Grants to Brahmans—Forests in the Chola Kingdom—Rights attached to Land, and Dues payable by Tenants—Temple Service—Relations of Muslims to Hindus.	
LECTURE IV. THE FOURTEENTH CENTURY	38-53
Social Characteristics—Authorities—Rajput Manners: Princess of Kanauj—Waywardness of Love—Love's Harbinger in Disguise—	

Prithi himself on the Scene—Messages Exchanged—Challenge of the Rajput—The Lovers Meet—Fight for the Bride—Bride brought to Delhi—Shaikh Burhān in Rajputana—A Delhi Inscription—Ibn Batūta's Account—Delhi of Amīr Khusrau—Marco Polo in South India—Attempted Abolition of Social Inequalities—Currency Reforms—State's Attempt to Deal with Unemployment—Charitable Relief and Public Works—Conclusion.

INDEX 54-5

ABBREVIATIONS USED TO INDICATE REFERENCES
IN THE FOOTNOTES

- Alb. Alberuni's *India*, trans. E. C. Sachau. 2 vols. London, 1910.
- Alba. *Lay of Alba*, trans. Wm. Waterfield. Oxford, 1923.
- Bāgh. *The Bāgh Caves*. India Society. London, 1927.
- Bat. *Voyages d'Ibn Batoutab*, trans. C. Defrémery and Dr. B. R. Sanguinetti. 4 vols. Paris, 1874-9.
- Codr. K. de B. Codrington, *Ancient India*. London, 1926.
- El. Sir H. M. Elliot and J. Dowson; *History of India, as told by its own historians*. 8 vols. London, 1867-77.
- E.I. *Epigraphia Indica*, vol. xv (1929-20). Calcutta, 1925.
- E.I.M. *Epigraphia Indo-Moslemica*, 1913-14. Calcutta, 1917.
- Ett. M. L. Ettinghausen, *Harsha Vardhana*. Paris, 1906.
- Fer. Ferishta's *History*, by J. Briggs. 4 vols. London, 1829.
- H.C. *Harsha-Charita of Bāna*, trans. E. B. Cowell and F. W. Thomas. London, 1897.
- Herr. Lady Herringham's *Ajanta Frescoes*. India Society. London, 1915.
- Kād. *Kādambari of Bāna*, trans. C. M. Ridding. London, 1896.
- Keith. A. B. Keith, *The Sanskrit Drama*. Oxford, 1924.
- K.S.S. *Katha Sarit Sāgara*, by Soma Deva: Ocean of Story, trans. C. H. Tawney, ed. N. M. Penzer. 10 vols. 1924.
- Lalla. *The Word of Lalla the Prophetess*, trans. Sir Richard C. Temple. Cambridge, 1924.
- Nāg. *Nāgananda* (of Sri Harsha), English translation by Palmer Boyd. London, 1872.
- O.H.I. *Oxford History of India*, by Vincent A. Smith. Oxford, 1919.
- Polo. *Book of Ser Marco Polo*, trans. H. Yule. 2 vols. London, 1871.
- Pri. *Priyadarshika*, a Sanskrit drama by Harsha, trans. into English by G. K. Nariman, A. V. W. Jackson, and C. J. Ogden. New York, Columbia Univ. Press, 1923.
- Q.S. *Qirān-us-Sa'dain* of Amir Khusrau, Persian Text, with Urdu Introductions, ed. Saiyid Hasan Barni. Aligarh, 1918.
- Ratn. *Ratnāvali* (Sri Harsha's), text, with translation by Saradaranjan Ray. Calcutta, 1919.
- R.S. Rāja-Shekhara's *Kapūra-Manjari*; text by Sten Konow, English translation by C. H. Lanman. Harvard Univ. Press, Camb., Mass., 1901.

- Thom. E. Thomas, *Chronicles of the Pathān Kings of Delhi*. London, 1871.
- T.T. *Three Travellers to India*, by A. Yusuf Ali. Lahore. (Rai Sahib Gulab Singh & Sons), 1926.
- Tod J. Tod, *Annals and Antiquities of Rajasthan*, ed. W. Crooke. 3 vols. Oxford, 1920.
- Vai. C. V. Vaidya, *Medieval Hindu India*. 3 vols. Poona, 1926.
- Y.C. Yuan Chwang's *Travels in India*, by Thomas Watters. 2 vols. London, 1904.

INTRODUCTORY

What were the Middle Ages? 'It is not possible', wrote Hallam in his Preface to the *State of Europe during the Middle Ages*, 'to fix accurate limits to the Middle Ages.' Our latest historical knowledge has even made us sceptical of the term itself. As the intimate life of the world unfolds itself to us, through excavations, inscriptions, the elucidation of art and language, and rude records that are even more eloquent than literature, we begin to feel a sense of continuity in human development. There have undoubtedly been ups and downs, progress and retrogression, dark ages and ages of active discovery and development. But we are beginning to speak less and less confidently of any sharp division between Ancient and Modern, with a sort of neutral unconnected period of time to be called Medieval. And yet medievalism is too well established, as a phrase if not as a fact, to be lightly abandoned. And if people want to hear about the Middle Ages, let us speak about them. Only let us search out the truth. For reality is more fascinating than fiction.

Middle Ages in Europe. But if the scroll of history is continuous, how shall we mark out our divisions? How shall we define the Middle Ages? In European history the Middle Ages, while not precisely defined, are roughly taken to extend from the extinction of the Western Roman Empire (A.D. 476) to the Fall of Constantinople (A.D. 1453). This period of about a thousand years certainly marks a stage in the evolution of Europe, or, indeed, of human history as a whole. It is the period which bridges over the old classical ages of Europe and its modern history. It marks the passing of the political

leadership from the races and cities which held sway under the classical influence of Greece and Rome. It is characterized by a regrouping of the European races and the spread and transformation of Germanic, Gothic, and Scandinavian institutions under the subtle influence of the earlier classical cultures which had exhausted their force and vitality. It got a certain amount of unity by the organization of the Roman Catholic Church and the Papacy, and their universal dominion over the minds of Europe. It evolved the distinctive laws, usages, and codes of honour of feudalism, which ultimately decayed, and were extinguished in the formation of strong specialized national monarchies in the different countries of Europe. Add to these characteristics the fact that the history of these ages is known to us in a sort of twilight, as contrasted with the abundant light we get both in ancient and in modern history on the thoughts, habits, social institutions, and lives of men.

In Indian History. Can we find any similar characteristics in Indian history, in which we can mark off a tolerably long period as our Middle Ages? I do not look upon the conventional division of history in the text-books into pre-Buddhist, Buddhist, Hindu, Muslim, and British periods as either scientifically correct or practically useful. We do not know how long the real Buddhist period lasted, and there is no reason to suppose that Brahmanism was extinct during the Buddhist period or that the word 'Hindu' helps us in making an accurate differentiation between any well-marked periods. It is similarly difficult to define the Muslim and British periods. It is more convenient to make three broad divisions of our history: into Ancient, Medieval, and Modern. There is a good deal of dateless information about India before history in the ordinary sense of the term begins. We might well

put this into a period and call it pre-history. But the difficulty begins when we attempt a chronological definition of these periods. Perhaps pre-history might include the period before the life of Buddha Gautama, and we might begin ancient history from the preaching of Buddhism. How far shall we carry ancient history in India? The *Cambridge History of India* takes ancient India down to about the Christian era. Mr. K. de B. Codrington suggests that ancient India comes down to the time of the Guptas, from which the medieval period begins. Mr. C. V. Vaidya, in his three-volume history of *Medieval Hindu India*, begins our Middle Ages at A.D. 600 and carries them on to 1200. Mr. Ishwari Prasad, of your own University School of History (Allahabad), begins this medieval India in A.D. 647, the date of Harsha's death, and carries it on to the Mughal conquest. We shall see that there is much to recommend this definition.

From Harsha to Prithi Rāj. If we could find some prominent features in Indian history to bridge the gulf between ancient and modern India at all comparable with the features which we found in European history, we should be the better able to speak of a definite period and call it our Middle Ages. If we look to the inroads of foreign races into India, we shall find that there is practically no period of Indian history until quite modern times when India was free from such invasions. We do not know precisely what invasions there were before the Aryan invasions of India, but we have now definite evidence to connect the Indus basin with the civilizations of Mesopotamia. The Aryan invasions themselves covered a long period and implied the inroads of many tribes, which have left their marks on the linguistic development of India. After the Indo-Aryans had settled in the country and become practically absorbed in it,

came the Persian and Greek invasions, followed by Turanian and mixed tribes from Central Asia. These continued for some centuries after the Christian era. The settled and well-developed civilization of the Gupta period of vigour (A.D. 320-455) was a sort of island in a sea of invasions that went before and after. The period of Harsha (A.D. 606-47) may, from a cultural point of view, be looked upon as a sort of last flash of Gupta civilization. After Harsha there were many invasions, the details of which are somewhat obscure to us. We know, however, that the four centuries after Harsha continued to introduce a large admixture of foreign blood. The scale on which this was done was now greater, and the Huna-Gujar-Jat predominance, the matrix of the Rajput clans, brought about a complete regrouping of the population. In truth these four centuries may be called the Rajput period. If we close the Rajput period with the death of Prithi Rāj of Delhi (1193), we have, I think, a definite epoch of twilight, which we might reasonably consider the beginning of the Middle Ages. From Harsha to Prithi Rāj will be the first stage of our Middle Ages.

From Prithi Rāj to the Mughal Empire. But the Rajput regrouping did not result in a settled reassortment of the Indian population. The Muslim invasions, bringing in their wake various ethnical elements and a strong, well-defined set of institutions and laws and a vigorous democratic social system, continued the radical churning process of Indian society. What is more, instead of being absorbed in Hinduism, it produced remarkable and permanent reactions. From about A.D. 1000 to about 1310 the Muslim power and Muslim culture came in waves of greater or less intensity, until, in the beginning of the fourteenth century, the whole of India, including the Deccan, may be said to have come under Muslim influence,

and the greater part of it under direct Muslim rule. But there was still no social settlement, no room for a cultural and abiding evolution of society. The decline of the Delhi Sultanate from about 1310 to about 1526 meant the rise of a number of local kingdoms, still mostly Muslim, with no settled boundaries and hardly able to work out a definite political system. With the coming of the Mughals in 1526, the atmosphere underwent a transformation. There was now some stability, some order, some permanence, if not in political power at least in the trend of social and political institutions.

Three Periods of Indian Middle Ages. To my mind, therefore, it is better to date the Indian Middle Ages from the age of Harsha (say about the middle of the seventh century) to the establishment of the Mughal Empire (say about the middle of the sixteenth century). This long period of nine centuries can further be subdivided into three distinct sub-periods, namely: (1) the regrouping and reconstruction of Hindu society (647-1000); (2) the further regrouping of Indian society by the gradual permeation, stage by stage, of Muslim influence (about 1000-1310); and (3) the break-up of the Delhi Sultanate into numerous fragments without any Indian unity, leading up to the Mughal conquest (1310-1526).

Modern Period. One collateral advantage of this classification will be that it will correspond roughly to the period of the European Middle Ages and help us greatly in the study of comparative history. If this view is accepted, the modern period will include both the Mughal and British periods, between which there was an easy transition. We cannot tell when the Mughal period ended. Some suggest the date of Aurangzib's death, 1707. But this is much too early. Others suggest 1757, the date of the battle of Plassey. But the first constitutional footing of the British

was in virtue of the Sanad of 1765 from the Mughal Emperor. The last of the Mughal Emperors to sit on the throne of Delhi did not terminate his reign till 1857. And yet 1857 might seem too late a date for the commencement of British rule. A series of complex treaties and events gradually ushered in the rule of the British Parliament and the British Crown. And these gradual stages are not only noticeable in chronology, but in territorial expansion. The Mughals themselves had dealings with European powers after Europe was launched on the path of modern movements. Indian economic life under the Mughals began to take more and more a modern shape, with the gradual growth of foreign maritime commerce through the expansion of European activities in the Eastern seas. The fullness of records of the Mughal period also brings it within the definition of modernity.

Difficulties of Study. The study of the three sub-periods I have mentioned requires much time and labour. Ordinary histories are not even aware of the amount of material for social history that lies embedded in scattered inscriptions, in travellers' accounts, in dramatic and romance literature, in popular songs, and in the monuments of the graphic arts, if we could only date them. All such material lies scattered about all over the country. The books through which you can study them are not all easily accessible, and they are in many languages, current or archaic. An adequate study would mean a labour of years. But there is no reason why we should not catch glimpses of them wherever we can. In good time, no doubt, a full harvest will be reaped. We can in this way achieve two important objects. One is the acquisition of historical perspective. The other is a sense of continuity in history.

Historical Perspective. The pictures of our social and political life often suffer from want of historical perspec-

tive. You can understand the distortion of a picture if there is no foreshortening—if distant objects are drawn on the same scale as those which are near, or the foreground is imaged as if it were a part of a distant landscape. So in history a presentment without perspective might exaggerate the importance of past happenings. They might cast a shadow on our present, which might obscure the newer lights of our own day. Or, on the other hand, we might think of certain difficulties of our present day in a false setting of the past—a setting which forbids our emancipation and obstructs our progress. The past should be allowed to explain, but not to dominate our present and future.

Sense of Continuity. Perspective will give us a truer picture, and a sense of continuity will inspire in us more confidence. The breaking up of our history into watertight compartments works almost as much mischief as false history. If Muslims and Hindus fought with each other in the past, there is no reason why the feuds should be continued in changed circumstances in the present and in the future. If we realize that the conflicts were a part of the cosmic process that was inevitable and a necessary element in our evolution, we shall cease to indulge in vain regrets. With a robust understanding of human failings and human virtues, we shall see that those who went before us were not really very different from ourselves. Many of the things which we regret in the present had their roots in the past. But, on the other hand, many of the things for which we sigh were there on our soil, and could be made to grow and flourish again if we recognized them as constituent elements of our history and fostered them. The past was neither as gloomy nor as golden as some people imagine. Still less is there any warrant for lamenting that anything worth possessing

was irretrievably lost when one period closed and another opened. If we have faith, we take the ups and downs of history as stimulating experiences in our collective life.

Three Pictures of Social and Economic Life. What can we do in the course of four lectures? To cover the ground adequately we should have to draw a panoramic picture. But our canvas being limited in extent, it will be better to take three points of time as illustrating each sub-period, and concentrate our attention on them. This will give us three separate pictures in focus. And it will give us freedom to fill in the details in each according to the materials which we have available, and the opportunities we have of utilizing them. I propose to take the seventh century for the first picture; the tenth and eleventh centuries for the second; and the fourteenth century for the third. In the first, we shall have Harsha for the central figure. The second and third have no central hero, but we have good literary guides. A play of Rāja-Sekhara and the account of a philosophic Arab traveller will be our sources of light for the second picture. And Rajput manners will fill a large part of the third, though in a sense they represent the maturity of movements that began in the second sub-period.

THE SEVENTH CENTURY

Social and Economic Facts. We cannot do better than take the age of Harsha for our starting-point. It is true that we are dating our Middle Ages from the end of Harsha's reign. But in our view of continuous history there is no real break in evolution. Harsha's period is a good gateway through which to enter the Middle Ages. His story is full of body and romance. We have consummate literary artists to tell it, with contemporary local colour. We have a foreign observer to view the facts from a different angle and speak his mind freely. And we get some illumination from the artistic remains of an approximately corresponding period. In fact we have abundant materials for study. We can reconstruct almost a complete picture of social life, although the data for economic facts are scanty. Social and economic conditions are, however, so inextricably mixed together that we can draw no hard and fast line between them. We shall review briefly the facts as they appear from a careful study of the documents of the period.

Authorities: (a) Drama. These documents may be divided into four groups. The first consists of the dramatic literature of the period, and finds a fit expression in the three dramas attributed to King Harsha himself. These are the *Priyadarshika*, the *Ratnāvali*, and the *Nāgananda*. The weight of opinion is in favour of a single authorship of these plays. Even if they were not actually and entirely written by King Harsha, it is almost certain that they were produced in his time and under his patronage. For our purposes, all that we are concerned with is their approximate date, and as there is not the slightest

doubt about it, we may accept the picture given in them as reflecting the true facts of the social life of the seventh century. It is true that the horizon of these plays is limited. They were produced merely for a court audience, and their plots do not go beyond depicting certain phases of palace intrigues of an amorous character. Even with these limitations they are of the highest value in realizing the actual life of the age in which they were written.

(b) *Bāna's Panegyric and Romance*. The second group of documents comprises two romances by Bāna, who lived in the court of Harsha and has left marvellously vivid descriptions of contemporary life and manners. One is the *Harsha-Charita*, a romantic panegyric of the early part of Harsha's life and career, with a highly poetic account of the rise of his family. The second, the *Kādambari*, a remarkable example of Sanskrit prose, has always been popular in India. It tells with charming meanderings the story of a wonderful parrot, in an atmosphere of elaborate realism, combined with stories of love and adventure (stories within stories) and supernatural transformations. The pictures which Bāna draws of life in various phases are worked up in highly coloured mosaics. His style of miniature descriptive pictures resembles that of Compton Mackenzie's novels in modern English literature. But Bāna is to Mackenzie what an elaborate piece of Oriental filigree-work is to the bolder strokes of the European goldsmith's art. We have to make large allowances for Bāna's ornate and florid style, but making all possible allowances, we yet get a graphic description and can realize the age in a way which is not open to us for much later centuries. Both these romances can be read in very good English translations, comprised in the Oriental Translation Fund Series. The *Kādambari* has been translated by Miss C. M. Ridding, and the *Harsha-*

Charita by Messrs. E. B. Cowell and F. W. Thomas. If the Hindustani Academy wishes to translate Sanskrit works into Urdu, these two books may be confidently recommended to their attention. The question whether they are translatable into Urdu must be solved by those who undertake the rash adventure.

(c) *Chinese Pilgrim*. Our third set of authorities for the period is the account of the Chinese pilgrim Yuan Chwang (also written Hiuen Tsiang) and his *Life*, written in Chinese. Both have been translated into English. The latest and best English translation of his *Travels* is that of Thomas Watters (Oriental Translation Fund of London), and the only English translation of his *Life* is by Mr. S. Beal, which was published a century ago, and is not very accurate. I have given a rapid sketch of the pilgrim's account of India in my little English book *Three Travellers to India*, written for young students entering the Panjab University.

(d) *Inscriptions and Art*. The fourth group of authorities are coins, inscriptions, and contemporary works of art in sculpture and painting. Of the coins of Harsha we have hardly any; and we are not surprised, for Yuan Chwang¹ notes the prevalence of barter in valuable goods from the seaports; and for inland trade, besides gold and silver coins, he notes the use of cowries and small pearls. Of inscriptions we have three, and two of them are copper-plate grants. They tell us a little of the dues usually collected in the villages. The sculptures and paintings of the period may be studied in Ajanta, in the north of the Nizam's dominions, and in Bāgh, in the south of Gwalior State, some fifty miles west of Dhar. Selections of both of these have been published by the India Society of London, and a few more may be studied in Mr. Codrington's *Ancient India*.

King, Minister, and Household. King Harsha himself was the hero of Bāna's panegyric, and we hear very little to his disadvantage, except in his imperious treatment of friends and allies.¹ His strong and vigorous character, his toleration of different forms of faith, his love and devotion for his sister, his interest in literature, song, music, and art are all attested by the Chinese pilgrim. While we may therefore look upon Harsha as an exceptional character, as indeed he was, the typical king as depicted in Harsha's plays was soft and dissolute. His kingdom was kept together by the wisdom of a faithful Brahman minister, who, however, was not above the wiles of Kautilya's political philosophy. The king usually had many wives, who performed sati at his death.² In addition he kept a numerous harem, guarded by hunchbacks, dwarfs, and old men.³ Women guarded palace doors, and carried *chauris*, or yak-tail fly-whisks, which were originally among the insignia of royalty. The king often leaned on the arm of one of his female attendants. The senior queen was generally very jealous of young and pretty women in the zenana, but where one of them was proved of noble birth, the queen had to agree to receive her as a co-wife.

Women and their Accomplishments. The higher women observed a certain amount of seclusion. The queen's veil is mentioned,⁴ as also the fact that the king had the hall cleared of people before he invited the queen to come and witness a magician's show.⁵ An elderly lady of rank, a companion of the queen, is mentioned as a blue-stocking, who wrote and arranged little plays or scenes for the

¹ *T.T.* 24.

² *Pri.*, p. 17.

³ *Pri.*, p. 75. Eunuchs must have been known, for they are mentioned in Manu and the *Mahābhārata*.

⁴ *Ratn.*, Act 3; *Nāg.*, Act 3.

⁵ *Ratn.*, Act 4.

amusement of royalty.¹ Noble damsels were taught singing, dancing, and instrumental music.

Brahman Jester. The king's love intrigues were usually promoted by the Vidushak or jester. Though a Brahman, he is usually made a very contemptible character. He is greedy and covetous, and the butt of laughter even for slaves. In one play² a slave drags the Brahman Vidushak roughly, breaks his sacred thread, and addresses him opprobriously as 'you tawny monkey!' Even the Brahman Bāna speaks of 'shrieking quarrelsome Brahmans':³ they climbed to the tops of trees to see the king pass, and were roughly treated by the rods of chamberlains standing on the ground.

Royal Hall, and King's Habits. The royal hall was hung with white silk tapestries. The floor was cooled with sandal water, to which was added fragrant musk. Aloe perfumes were freely used. There was an alcove with a white bed and jewelled footstool. The king, after exercise and his midday bath, reclined there, while a maiden gently rubbed his feet 'with a palm soft as the leaves of fresh lotuses'. Here he received other kings, ministers, and friends of sufficient rank to be received at that hour of comparative privacy.⁴ Some of the palace rooms were adorned with wall paintings, and were called *chitra-shālas*.⁵ An accomplished king usually knew the magic arts, and was expert in the antidotes for poisons.⁶ But his relations with his subjects did not necessarily inspire national sentiments. Even at the beginning of an invasion by an enemy, the zamindars bowed temporarily to the enemy, instead of resisting him. If the king had Buddhistic inclinations, he became careless of his Kshatriya duties of

defending his subjects by force of arms; he only saw the cruelty of destroying life for the sake of a kingdom.¹

City of Ujjain. Let us take Bāna's word-picture of the capital city of Ujjain. It was a flourishing and happy city, commanding from its central position all the wealth of southern and western India. It was surrounded by a deep moat and defended by fenced walls, white with plaster. At various points we may suppose that there were elevated towers showing against the blue sky. The bazaars were rich with merchandise. Pearls, corals, and emeralds were objects of everyday traffic. The picture halls of the city had lively scenes painted on their walls. The subjects of these pictures we can well imagine from the remains which we still have in the caves of Ajanta and Bāgh. The stories of gods, demons, Nāgas (snake-gods), and other mythological beings were depicted, in tempera or in frescoes, but not many incidents of daily life. The prevailing worship under Harsha was that of the god Shiva, whom we find prominent in the dramas and the romances. At the crossways were his temples flying white banners. Honours were also paid to Kāma, the god of love, whose banners contained the emblem of the fish. In the plays we find the celebration of special public festivals in spring and autumn. In these festivals there must have been a good deal of saturnalia or horseplay, comparable to that in the modern festival of Holi. The sound of bells was heard ringing merrily, and special announcements, such as the coming and going of the king, were made with the sound of the conch-shell. The recitation or chant of sacred books was heard frequently. There were green gardens, watered by means of buckets constantly at work. The wells were adorned with brick seats, and probably had staircases leading to subterranean chambers, as in

modern *bāolis*. There were dark and shady groves in the suburbs around. The river Sipra, a feeder of the Chambal, flowed past the town, and numerous lakes covered with lotus flowers were dotted about the landscape.¹

Life of the People. The citizens of Ujjain were a merry, light-hearted people, as befitted the inhabitants of such a wealthy city. They delighted in their public works, which included wells, bridges, temples, and pleasure grounds. There were wayside sheds for watering the cattle. There were hostels for religious students and halls of assembly for the people. The best treasures of the ocean were attracted to the city for them. In Bāna's quaint words, though bold, they were courteous; though pleasant of speech, they were truthful; though handsome, they were chaste; though they welcomed strangers, they asked not for presents; though votaries of love and wealth, they were strictly just. They took a delight in the arts. Their conversation was full of humour, and they dressed elegantly and spotlessly. They were skilled in foreign languages and loved the recitation of stories and of the sacred Epics and Purānas. They were also inveterate gamblers.² Parrots and talking starlings (*mainas*) were favourite cage-birds. Elephants, saddled and unsaddled, were to be seen everywhere, as well as horses. This description of Ujjain by Bāna is also borne out by the cave pictures.

Country: Forests, Hermitages: Chandāla Camp. The country could not have been very thickly inhabited. There is nothing to show that roads were well kept up. A good deal of the area must have been under forests, haunted by elephants and 'hundreds of lions'.³ Among the forests were found hermitages and penance groves, at which kings often alighted in the course of their hunting expeditions. The hermitages were not devoid of female

interest. Many of the kings' intrigues in the dramas centre round some high-born maiden nurtured by the hermit as a daughter amongst many companions of her own sex. A curious barbarian settlement is described by Bāna. It was a Chandāla camp, 'a very market-place of evil deeds'. Boys were to be found engaged in the chase, unleashing their hounds, teaching their falcons, mending their snares, carrying weapons, and fishing. Their dwellings were hidden by thick growths of bamboos. The enclosures were made with skulls. The dust-heaps of the roads were filled with bones. The yards of the huts were miry with blood, fat, and meat chopped up. Their garments were of coarse silk (the silk of the wild *eri*?) and their couches of dried skins. Their household attendants were dogs, and they rode on cows. This horrible word-picture is crowned by Bāna in the terse sentence: 'The place was the image of all hells.'¹ Perhaps these were the prototypes of some of the criminal tribes' encampments to be found in India even at the present day. Only, these savages were not then kept under as they are now, and they seem to have been more prosperous. Perhaps they represented races large portions of which have since been absorbed.

Ascetic of Shiva. There is a very detailed description of the dress and appearance of a Shaiva ascetic in the *Harsha-Charita*, which we might examine with profit. He was surrounded by a throng of devotees. He bathed early, presented the eight-fold offering of flowers, and attended to the sacrificial fire. The ground was smeared with fresh cow-dung. The ascetic was seated on a tiger skin, whose outline was marked by a ridge of ashes. He was wrapped in a black woollen cloak. His hair was knotted at the top and showed the round shells of his rosary hanging from its braids. He was about five and fifty years of age, and

had a few white hairs in his head. His skull showed signs of baldness. His ears were covered with hair. His forehead was broad and covered with a mark of smeared ashes. Occasionally he frowned. His long eyes were yellowish, with corners of red. The tip of his nose was curved, like the end of Garuda's beak. His teeth were in the process of going, but those that remained were still white, 'like the crest of that Shiva who was ever treasured in his heart'. His lip hung a little downwards. A pair of crystal ear-rings dangled from his pendulous ears. On one forearm he wore an iron bracelet and a charm-thread compounded with various herbs. His right hand worked at a rosary. His beard, dangling upon his breast and somewhat tawny at the ends, 'was like a broom sweeping away all the dust of passions contained therein'. His loin-cloth was of pure white linen. The soles of his feet were tender and red, and always covered with a pair of pure white water-washed slippers. At his side was a bamboo staff with a barb of iron inserted in the end. He spoke but rarely, slowly smiling. There was a look of beneficence and wisdom in his austere face. His kindly features betokened sincerity, purity, patience, constancy, and inner pleasure or happiness. 'Such was the holy Bhairavachārya, a very Shiva incarnate.'¹

There are many such word-pictures. We shall content ourselves with glancing at two more, namely his description of the birth ceremony in the king's household and his description of a remote village in the Vindhya.

Celebration on the Birth of a King's Son. When a son was born to the king, the joyful news was communicated to the city, which rejoiced exuberantly at this happy event. Even inanimate objects felt the thrill of delight! Unblown horns rang out spontaneously loud and sweet. Unbeaten

tabor and timbrel sounded aloud as if they rejoiced unbidden. The horses tossed their manes and neighed with joy. The elephants uplifted their trunks and joined in the merry chorus. Bonfires blazed. The white-clad Brahmans approached, reciting the Vedas, to bless the new-born life. The elders of the family hastened to the palace. Prisoners were released in honour of the event, and with long matted beards ran about in disorderly crowds. The order of the royal household was changed to disorder in this rush of joy. The crowd defied the mace-bearers. Even the women's quarters were invaded. Master and servants were reduced to a level; young and old confounded; learned and unlearned on one footing; drunk and sober not to be distinguished; noble maidens and women of the streets lost their balance; the whole population of the capital danced in a wild orgy. Wives of the neighbouring kings could be observed in thousands approaching the palace, with presents borne by servants behind them. The drink booths ran like shower-baths, and frolic and mirth of the coarsest kind were indulged in without restraint. The whole crowd ran mad as at a Bacchic festival, because a son was born to the king.¹

A Village in the Vindhyas. The forest village in the Vindhyas was surrounded by woodland districts. Here might be seen huge banyan trees encircled with cow-pens formed of dry branches. Tiger traps were set in revenge for the slaughter of young calves. Here and there among the forests were parcels of rice land, threshing-floors, and cultivation. It was very thin cultivation, mainly with spade culture. Among the cultivated fields there were *machāns* raised high, from which men could watch and frighten away wild beasts. Cool arbours made out of wayside trees, with water-jars placed on wooden stands,

gave shelter from the heat of the sun. Here and there were blacksmiths burning heaps of wood to produce charcoal. The villagers came to gather fuel, with strong axes on their shoulders and bundles of food slung round their necks. Sometimes teams of strong oxen marched in front of them. Hunters and fowlers roamed about with snares and cages, to ply their trade. All sorts of wild produce, such as honey, peacocks' tail-feathers, wax, &c., were gathered and taken to the village. The women carried on their heads baskets of forest fruits. There were sugar-cane enclosures, carefully tended and properly fenced, and the ubiquitous bounding black buck. The dwellings of the villagers were thinly scattered, amid bamboos and thorny bushes. Young calves were tied to stakes fixed in the ground. The sound of cock-crow indicated the position of the scattered houses. The walls were made of bamboo leaves, stalks, and weeds, with a dash of colour here and there. Living pets such as wild cats, tame snakes, mongooses (*nevla*), and the like showed how closely these villages lived at one with forest life.¹

Races and Dresses. Before we pass from these high-flavoured descriptions from the literary artist's pen to the more soberly told economic facts revealed in the Chinese pilgrim's account, we might note a few points revealed by the sculpture and paintings of the period. In Ajanta, Cave I (sixth to seventh century)² there is some beautiful carving on the corbels of the capitals, which are so high that the figures are missed by the ordinary visitors. The female figures are almost Greek in their character. There are also Persian head-dresses and faces elsewhere in the cave paintings. Were they worked on Persian or Greek models? The fine drawing³ of the figure of Buddha or Bodhisatva or Indra, with a flower like a pink in his hand,

shows the refinement to which the pictorial art was carried at that day. The picture of the prince at his bath,¹ with his long black curls, sitting on a four-legged stool, while his men are pouring jars of water over him, admirably illustrates Bāna's word-descriptions. At Bāgh the two groups of female musicians² show great powers of pictorial composition, a beautiful drawing of hands and faces, and altogether a remarkable standard of the graphic art. It may be noticed that the complexions of the faces vary from the lightest to the darkest hue, with all sorts of gradations between, and the features and head-dresses vary in the same way. The amount of clothing on the figures also varies from the almost complete nude to the completely clothed figures like those of the centres of the musical groups. Evidently the racial mixture in the Indian population had not yet stabilized itself, and this we should also conclude from other evidence coming to us in a literary or traditional form.

Land Tenures. As regards economic facts they may be briefly noted, in addition to those already referred to. The copper-plate grant of Madhuban (District Azamgarh) mentions³ five kinds of dues which the holder of land in a village had to render. They were: (1) The *Tula-Maya*, (2) a share in the produce, (3) money payment, (4) services in kind, and (5) other dues. What was the *Tula-Maya*? It may have been something akin to weighment dues (*tulai*) still levied in old-fashioned village marts. Whether the share of the produce, the money payment, and the services in kind were concurrent dues, or alternative dues on different kinds of land, we are not in a position to say. The probability is that one or other of these was leviable from any given holdings, but that all these were known in the village or villages taken as a whole. The comprehen-

sive term 'other dues' may have included cesses of the various kinds that are still levied in villages.

Taxes. Compared with China, Yuan Chwang found India lightly taxed and the Government mild, and yet he would not change his country for India. Families were not registered in India, and individuals were not subject to forced labour. He evidently did not consider service tenures or part-service tenures as implying forced labour. The royal domain was divided into four parts: one for the expenses of government and state worship; one for the endowment of great public servants; one to reward high intellectual eminence; and one for gifts to the various sects. The rent taken from the king's tenants was one-sixth of the produce. Land grants were freely made, and assignments to public servants were common in lieu of salaries.¹

Produce: Manners and Customs. There was octroi, and there were light duties on trade at the ferries. Much rice and wheat were produced in the fields, besides ginger, mustard, melons, and pumpkins. The common food was milk, ghi, sugar, cakes, and parched grain, with mustard oil. Fish, mutton, and venison were also eaten as dainties. The different castes had distinctive drinks special to them; the Vaishyas drank a strong distilled spirit. They ate with their hands, and not like the Chinese with spoons and chop-sticks. In cases of illness copper spoons were used.²

Illness and Death. In illness the food of the patient was cut off for seven days. If the fast did not cure him, medicine was administered. Probably then, as now, those who were well off ate too much, and those on the margin of subsistence had too little to eat. The disposal of the dead was in one of three ways: by fire, or by floating the body into a stream, or by being cast away to feed wild

animals. The Brahmanists wailed aloud for their dead, but not so the Buddhists.¹ The proportion of those who professed the two religions varied from place to place; often they were half and half.

Crime: Castes. The punishments for crime were severe, but crime was not common. The criminal was outcasted and imprisoned for life. For offences against social morality, or disloyalty to the state or to the offender's father, a member was cut off, e.g. the nose, an ear, a hand, or a foot; or the offender was banished. Some offences could be compounded for by a fine. There were ordeals by water, by fire, by weighing, or by poison.² Besides the four classical castes, there were innumerable mixed castes.³

Indian Character. These details are not very precise, but they record the Chinese pilgrim's impressions, and we are grateful for them. He also formed a very kindly estimate of the Indian character. The evidence of the Indian literature of the period on these points is both fuller and more precise, as coming from within.

THE TENTH AND ELEVENTH CENTURIES

Authorities. In considering our second period of medieval India, which began about the tenth and eleventh centuries, we shall miss the graphic word-pictures of a romancist like Bāna. On the other hand, we have the serious account of Indian thought by the Muslim philosopher and mathematician, Al-Birūni, who wrote about A.D. 1030, and who has incidentally mentioned many facts and customs which throw light on Indian social life. In addition we have many notices of India in the Muslim geographers and historians, but they are fragmentary, as the Muslims had limited access beyond Sindh, the Panjab, and the sea-coast. They are, however, valuable in elucidating and supplementing information from other sources. In dramatic literature we have Rāja-Shekhara's *Kapūra-Manjari*, whose date may be placed roughly about A.D. 900. There are other works of Rāja-Shekhara which also help us, if not exactly in the same degree. *Kapūra-Manjari* is a play entirely in Prakrit, and its text may be studied in the admirable edition of Sten Konow, with the English translation by C. H. Lanman, published by the Harvard University. It may interest you to know that a Hindi translation was published in Benares by the famous Hindi scholar Harish Chandra in Sambat 1939 (A.D. 1883). As regards inscriptions, a large number have been collected, edited, and interpreted. They may be studied in the portly volumes of the *Epigraphia Indica* or of the *Indian Antiquary* or in the journals of the Asiatic Society of Bengal or the Bombay branch of the Royal Asiatic Society, as well as the parent Royal Asiatic Society and other learned societies dealing with the East. The

Katha Sarit Sāgara, of Soma Deva, dates from about 1070. This collection of stories incorporates some very old matter, both from folk-lore and literature. But from the way the stories are told, we may gather hints about the social life of the period. The art of the period may best be studied in the caves of Elephanta or Ellora or in the Chandel architecture, of which fine specimens exist in Khajurāho. Some of the sculptures in the Temple of Jagannath at Puri, which was built about 1150, belong actually to a later age than the tenth and eleventh centuries, but reflect some tendencies that arose in that period.

Languages: Prakrits and Vernaculars. Pandit Harish Chandra speaks of *Kapūra-Manjari* as having been written in pure Prakrit. His words are: 'Yah nātak shuddha Prākṛit bhāsha men Rāja-Shekhara kabi ka banāya hua hai.' Modern European research has shown that both Sanskrit and Prakrit were dead languages to Rāja-Shekhara. He mixes up the Sauraseni and Maharashtri Prakrits in his plays. In his age (tenth century) the real vernaculars of India were already asserting themselves, and he occasionally uses vernacular words, including Marathi.¹ He was himself a Brahman from Maharashtra, but he went to the court of Kanauj, and was a preceptor to the king there. The new spoken vernaculars were still in the process of formation, and were not probably yet so sharply divided from each other as they became later on. With the study of Sanskrit and the Prakrits, the learned men could move about all over India and make themselves intelligible not only among the learned through the languages of the books, but also amongst the people at large through the Apabhṛansas, which must have borne the same relation to the learned languages as Italian or French in medieval Europe bore to classical or theological or

legal Latin. Even the Dravidian languages of the south had Sanskritized their vocabularies, and southern Pandits were ready to claim descent for their tongues from the classical language of India.

Relations between North and South India. The relations between northern and southern India were already close in the time of Harsha, but they became even more intimate in our period. In the *Harsha-Charita* the learned ascetics, especially those who performed magical rites, came from the south. Contemporary with Harsha was the Pallava king of the South, Mahendra Vikrama Varman, who ruled in Kanchi (modern Conjeevaram) early in the seventh century A.D. He wrote a farce, in which Sanskrit and the two northern Prakrits (the Sauraseni and the Magadhi) are found. The forms of religion which appear in the play are Buddhism and Shaivism, both shown in rather a derisive light. This may have been due to the character of the farce, in which everything is made fun of, including ascetics of all orders. Though the scene of the play is in Kanchi, the atmosphere is very little different from that of any play of the north. In the time of Shankara (late eighth century or early ninth century) the great religious upheaval in the thought of India was really led from the south. Shankara's travels, north and south, east and west, did much to unify Indian religious thought, to strengthen the campaign against Buddhism, and to reconcile the jarring strife of sectarianism in a broad religious philosophy. By the time we come to Rāja-Sekhara (about 900) we find that the political conflicts between the north and the south had really tended to bring the north and south closer together in a linguistic, literary, and social sense. In his *Kārya-Mimāṃsā*, Chapter 17, he goes out of his way to give geographical details of a precise nature covering the whole of India. The Arya-varta is still the country

between the Himalayas and the Vindhya. But the four regions east, west, north, and south are more fully particularized, and the Middle Country is considered too well known to need description. 'East' in this connexion means east of Benares.¹

Mixture of Races and New Social Groupings. Rāja-Shekhara was a Brahman, but his wife was a Rajput princess of the Chauhān family. Other instances of the higher castes still intermarrying could be quoted. Perhaps the rule was that the Brahman man could marry a Rajput woman, but not vice versa. The Kshatriyas frequently took Vaishya women as subordinate wives.² In religion Rāja-Shekhara was a Shaiva, but he honoured the Jains. He delights in references to southern scenes and southern manners and customs. In referring to the Dravida women he notes their 'black cheeks, pure smile, and teeth rubbed white with the rind of the betel'. He was also attracted by the 'ringlets of the maidens of Karnāta and the pleasure-seeking propensities of Lata' (the tract of country north of the Lower Narbada).³ The Gandharva form of marriage, which means merely a physical union between a man and woman, without any rites or ceremonies, was common during this age, and the mixture of races and castes may be inferred from the *Katha Sarit Sāgara*.⁴ It was permissible to take meals together, not only as between members of the three higher castes, but also as between them and certain classes of Shudras,⁵ although there was certainly a large class of untouchables, who were beyond the pale for any form of social life. The movement which resulted in the absorption of foreign and aboriginal races into the new Hinduism was concurrent with the great religious movements of the seventh to the tenth

centuries, of which the records of external events are so scanty. It resulted in the new social groupings which brought the Rajputs to the front, created a large number of new castes, subdivided castes (like the Brahman) into a number of territorial subdivisions which were to all intents and purposes mutually exclusive, and gave rise to new conventions about occupations, the taking of meals, and intermarriage. We may adopt the generalization of Sir Richard Temple¹ that while the caste system was extended to the non-Aryan masses, the latter by their reflex action completely transformed the temper of the old Aryan thought and the texture of its outward vestments.

Shades of Complexion considered Territorially. A curious remark of Rāja-Shekhara in his *Kāvya-Mimāṃsā*² may be quoted as showing the racial generalizations indicated by the shades of complexion in the tenth century. 'The complexions of the people', he says, 'are dark in the eastern country, black in the southern, whitish in the western, and white in the northern. In poetical descriptions there is not much difference between the dark and the black complexions and the fair and the white. But the speciality is that in the eastern country the complexion of Rajput women and others may be fair or white; so also in the southern.' From this we may deduce two conclusions; first, that the fair-complexioned races were spreading all over India, and, secondly, that there was a great deal of mixture and absorption, concealed under fictions which brought the facts into conformity with the older and classical theories of castes and Varnas. In the literature of stories we have accounts of wild robber tribes, such as Bhillas (Bhils?), Sāvaras, Kirātas, Pulindas, &c. The Bhillas were said to be low-born and rude; but it was

allowed that they might sometimes be noble and distinguished. They sacrificed to the terrible goddess Durga, but in spite of this they were sometimes open to kind impulses and a sense of gratitude.¹ Evidently the worship of Durga had not yet become fashionable or widespread, and some apology was yet needed for her votaries.

Love of Magic and the Miraculous. The love of magic and the supernatural and the marvellous has at all times been strong in the popular mind, but in this period of darkness it seems to have overspread the realm of literature. A magician is the pivot of action in the play of *Kapūra-Manjari*. The heroine's merit is chiefly shown by the blossoming of the Asoka tree at her touch. The battles are fought with magic weapons instead of depending upon the valour of men. The love intrigues are carried on not by the play of character upon character but by means of secret tunnels and miraculous interventions, and the use of the ubiquitous magician's name. It is instructive to note how the noble story of Rāma and Sīta is handled in Rāja-Shekhara's *Bāla-Rāmāyana*. This is a portentous play of ten Acts, of which the hero is practically Rāvana. He was a suitor for the hand of Sīta, and his defeat lets loose the whole series of incidents of which the spring is not so much human motives, good or evil, as magic tricks and the personations of men and women. Dolls with speaking parrots in their mouths are presented as Sīta and her sister, and apparently such a rude device actually succeeds in deceiving people into thinking that they were Sīta and her sister.²

Ornaments and Cosmetics. Life seems to have been on a very artificial plane. The description of the ornaments and cosmetics of the court ladies leaves no room for doubt that luxury had sapped the foundations of refine-

ment. The body was anointed yellow with a paste of saffron essence to keep it cool. The cheeks were similarly rubbed with saffron paste. It is not specified with what substance the sectarian marks were placed on the forehead. Two blue silk garments were wrapped round Kapūra-Manjari. Her girdle was jewelled with rubies. She had bracelets on her forearms. With regard to this a very homely modern Hindi proverb was already current in the tenth century: '*Hāth kangan ko ārsi kya?*'—as much as to say, 'for putting a bracelet on your arm, what need is there of a mirror?' The mirrors referred to were probably of metal—steel or silver or bronze, with a highly polished surface and a handle—such as you see among the treasured relics of ancient India in the Taxila Museum near Rawalpiridi. There was a necklace of big pearls round the neck, and a pair of ear-rings studded with gems in the ears. A pretty touch of fresh nature was given by wreaths of flowers to hide the black curly locks. The fragrant golden blooms of the champak flower were used for the decoration of the hair and ears. It was a sign of beauty to have long almond eyes, reaching, says the play, 'from ear to ear'. The eyes were adorned with collyrium, which when it was washed off left the eyes red. Wax was put on the lips in the winter to prevent them chapping, and saffron seems to have been chewed against colds. In the summer the large fronds of the talipot palm were used as hand-fans to make the breeze, and shower-baths were indulged in.¹ Scents, perfumes, and incense were fashionable, and the incense of aloes is specifically mentioned by the dramatist.²

Jhūla Festival. The Jhūla festival was a great occasion for amorous dalliance. The girls indulged in the swings 'in maiden meditation, fancy free'. The alternate motion

up and down, with the sound of jewels and the sweep of the garments, is well described in the play.

With the tinkling, jewelled anklets,
 With the flashing, jingling necklace,
 With the show of girdles garrulous,
 From their ringing, ringing bells,
 With the sound of lovely jingles,
 From the rows of rolling bangles—
 Pray, whose heart is not bewildered
 While the moon-faced maiden swings? ¹

These festivals were numerous and afforded many occasions for public and private gaiety. They also enabled dramatists to produce plays for their royal patrons. But, alas! as in all ages, runs the pathetic plaint of the playwright of medieval India: 'Learned men were ever poor.'²

Brahmans in Popular Tales. The Brahmans as a class still monopolized all learning as well as the higher posts of administration. They were expected to have brilliant intellects and all the virtues of character and religion. In practice, however, they did not necessarily enjoy a very high reputation. The story of the miserly and covetous Brahman of Ujjain, the chaplain to the king himself, is told with a great deal of gusto by Soma Deva, himself a Brahman. The riches of this chaplain and his selfishness became a by-word. Two rogues determined to relieve him of all his wealth and at the same time make a laughing-stock of him. One of them took on the disguise of a Rajput from the Deccan and lodged outside the city. His confederate pretended to be a devout ascetic, and performed penances by the riverside. The pretended Rajput went into the city and sang aloud the praises and merits

¹ R.S. 255. Lanman's spirited English version reproduces the jingle well.

of the other as if in casual talk. He flattered the chaplain, and through him entered the king's service. They both pretended to be very devout men and quite unworldly. He won the confidence of the chaplain, who in the hope of presents gave him lodging in his house. He brought a box full of false jewellery, of which, however, he pretended not to know the value, as he was an unworldly man. This, however, aroused the cupidity of the Brahman. The guest pretended to be ill, and asked for the services of a holy man, on whom he could bestow his riches. The pretended ascetic was brought in. He said he despised riches, but agreed to marry the chaplain's daughter, and give the riches to the chaplain, who no doubt understood their value better than he did. He only stipulated for a small amount of money in return at the chaplain's own valuation of the jewels. As the chaplain thought the jewels were priceless, he gave a large sum of money, thinking in his own niggardly mind that he was giving only a nominal sum for a fabulous treasure. After the marriage was completed the poor chaplain discovered the fraud, and no one was more delighted at the trick than the king himself, who knew all the foibles of his chaplain.¹

The Rajputs. The origin of the Rajputs is a subject on which there is much controversy. I do not propose to enter into the disputed points on the present occasion. What is certain is that the ruling castes had been reorganized and regrouped in the eighth, ninth, and tenth centuries.² Their social structure had now become that of clans rather than of castes. Their marriage customs required them to marry out of their clans. They were gradually developing a new code of honour and new traditions, which we shall consider in their full maturity in the next period.

The Outcastes and Untouchables. The large numbers of untouchables, even below the Shudras, and altogether outside the classical scheme of caste, are referred to by Al-Birūni. They were divided into eight classes, who freely intermarried with each other, except the fuller, the shoemaker, and the weaver, with whom none of the other classes would have anything to do. Besides these three, the other five were the juggler, the basket and shield maker, the sailor, the fisherman, and the hunter of wild animals and birds. These eight classes had to live outside the villages or towns, but were allowed to live near them. As they were distinguished by their professions they might be called guilds. Even lower than these outcaste guilds were the Hādis, the Domas, the Chandālas, and the Badhataus. They did the dirty work of the village and were looked upon as degraded outcastes. Even amongst these the Hādis were a little above the others. The Domas sang and played on the lute. In them we recognize the modern criminal tribe of Doms. The classes below them, presumably the Chandālas, were professional executioners. As to the Badhataus they not only ate the flesh of dead animals but even of dogs and wild beasts.¹

Endowments to Brahmans and Temples. A great social and economic feature of the time was the large number of endowments granted to individual Brahmans and to temples and religious foundations. The famous sun temple at Multan was the cause of the prosperity of the city. When the Arabs first took the city early in the eighth century, they spared the idol in the temple, as the city's prosperity depended upon it. The temple at Thaneshwar was also richly endowed. The temple at Somnāth, on the southern coast of the peninsula of Kāthiawār, owed its prosperity to maritime traffic.

According to Kazwīnī¹ it was endowed with the revenue of ten thousand villages, besides the rich offerings that were brought to it by the pilgrims. A thousand Brahmans were employed in attending to the worship and the needs of the temple, and five hundred damsels sang and danced at the door. All these were maintained from the endowments of the temple.

Writing and Books. The writing material in northern and central India was a kind of birch bark. They oiled and polished it to make it hard and smooth, and then wrote on it. The various leaves were fastened between two tablets and wrapped up in a piece of cloth. In southern India the common writing material was palm leaves. These leaves had a hole bored in the middle of one of the sides, through which a cord was passed which held the leaves together in the form of a book.² Both these kinds of manuscripts have been preserved in great numbers, and are quite familiar to manuscript hunters all over India. Al-Birūnī, however, is careful to note that a great deal of knowledge, especially religious knowledge, was handed down by oral tradition. The Vedas were not ordinarily allowed to be committed to writing, and it was only a short time before him that a Kashmiri first produced a written version of them.³

Manners and Customs. A number of miscellaneous manners and customs are noted by Al-Birūnī which struck him as curious. One was that they did not cut the hair of the head or any part of the body, and that they divided the moustaches into plaits. They allowed the nails to grow long. They ate singly and not in company, on ground that was smeared over with cow-dung. On account of the chewing of betel leaves with betel nuts and lime (and catechu, though Al-Birūnī does not mention

this) their teeth appeared red. When a child was born people showed particular attention to the father rather than to the mother. Their chess was somewhat like the modern game of Pachīsi, as it was played by four persons and with a pair of dice. Al-Birūni gives a figure of the chess-board and the rules of the play, from which, however, it would appear that it was a different game from the modern Pachīsi. In judging about the prevalence of these customs we must remember that Al-Birūni's observations were confined to the Panjab and Sindh. Probably the dress in those regions was entirely different from the dress in eastern and southern India, and tended to approach the fashions of the colder regions beyond the north-western passes.¹

Two Inscriptions. The numerous inscriptions of the period enable us to get a glimpse into some of the social and economic features of the time. I will draw your attention to two inscriptions from southern India. One is contained in the Anbil copper-plates of the Chola dynasty of Tanjore, and the other is a Kanarese inscription from the Dharwar district of the Bombay Presidency.

Land Grants to Brahmans. The Anbil plates of Sundara Chola date from the latter part of the tenth century and were found in the neighbourhood of Tanjore. There were eleven plates in all, held together by a ring which carried a well-executed seal. The seal bore the figures of a tiger, two fishes (carp), a bow, two lamp-stands, two *chauris*, and an umbrella, with a Sanskrit verse round the margin. These figures were worked out in half-relief. The first part of the record was written in the Sanskrit language, and contained the words of the Chola king's grant to his learned Brahman minister. The second part was in Tamil and contained an acknowledgement of the

grant by the officials and people of the village. The land granted amounted to about 45 acres, which were supposed to be sufficient for the maintenance of a Brahman of the position of the king's minister. The king merely specified roughly the grant of a holding. It was for the villagers to demarcate actually the land, of which the dues were henceforward to be paid not to the king but to the grantee. The method of demarcation was that a she-elephant was let loose from a certain point and allowed to mark out a rough circuit of land. Presumably there was some method by which her return to the point from which she was let loose was ensured. The demarcation boundary was marked with earth-mounds and living cactus plants.¹

Forests in the Chola Kingdom. It is recorded of the grantee that his mother had made a pious endowment for providing sumptuous meals served in a silver vessel to a learned Brahman every day till the world's end, and also a big lamp to Hari (Vishnu) at Srirangam. Some idea may be obtained of the face of the country included in the Chola kingdom from the allusion to the 'dense forests of the seashore, crowded with the palm (presumably the talipot palm), the sāl, the ebony, the areca (*supāri*) palm, and plantain trees, and groves of betel leaves'.²

Rights attached to Land, and Dues payable by Tenants. The subject-matter of the grant is described in detail and gives us a good idea of the economic life of the villages. We may consider this under four heads: (1) the land and everything on it, (2) the water and everything connected with it, (3) the dues and taxes which were to be received by the donee, and (4) the liberties which were granted to him. Along with the land he was to enjoy the fruit trees and other trees, gardens, clefts of rock in which bees had their hives, wells, halls, and wastes in which calves grazed,

along with the village site, ant-hills, platforms built round trees, with buildings and temples, and waste and marshy land. His water rights extended to rivers, ponds, alluvial deposits, tanks, and fish-ponds. As regards the dues to which he was entitled, the list includes fines and forfeitures by process of the local court, betel leaves, the tax on a certain number of pieces of cloth woven in each loom, presents levied from the tenants on occasions of marriage in their family, the lease of markets, and the fines on the eviction of old tenants, besides special articles fit for the king's consumption, which would now go to the grantee in place of the king. The liberties which were granted to the Brahman included permission to erect halls and upper storeys, with burnt bricks or tiles; to dig big and small wells; to cut channels and irrigate the land; and to cultivate certain sweet-smelling roots and plants.¹ From this we may gather that the normal buildings in the village were of mud, and the king's permission had to be specially obtained for the erection of *pucca* buildings. It would also seem that crops of a special character could not be grown except by the special permission of the king.

Temple Service. The Kanarese inscription which we are going to discuss came from the Kulenur village in Dharwar district and is dated Saka 950, corresponding to A.D. 1028. The inscription is on a stone, of which the top is decorated with sculptures. In the centre is a shrine containing a *Linga* (Shiva's emblem) and surmounted by a cupola with a finial (*kalasha*). On each side of the cupola is a *chattri*. To the proper right of the shrine is a squatting votary facing full front. Above are two fishes in a circle and over them the moon. To the proper left of the shrine is a cow with a sucking calf, and above her is a plough and over it the sun. These little details of sculpture are

of interest as throwing light on the conditions of village life. The actual grant is for the benefit of a temple, and consists of certain paddy fields and twelve houses. Part of the income is for the maintenance of the god in the temple; part is for the monastery for religious instruction; part is for the flute players (presumably those who performed in the temple); and part, including the houses, is for the drummers who also served the temple. It is interesting to note that the ascetics were strictly enjoined to keep the vow of chastity.¹

Relations of Muslims to Hindus. Before closing our discussion of this part of the subject we may note that the Muslims were thinly spread over the coasts of southern India long before they penetrated the Gangetic valley as conquerors. The great Rashtrakuta kingdom of the south was well known to the Arabs, who spoke of its king as Balhara (Vallabh Rai). Mas'udi (who died about A.D. 956) writes: 'Of all the kings of Sindh and Hind there is no one who pays greater respect to the Musalmans than the Balhara. In his kingdom Islam is honoured and protected.'² Evidently the clash of arms in the north put the Musalmans on a different footing in relation to the Hindus from that which they occupied from the pursuit of commerce and navigation in the south.

IV

THE FOURTEENTH CENTURY

Social Characteristics. Our third period begins with the fourteenth century. Muslim influence had by then spread itself all over India. The Delhi Sultanate had been consolidated, and spread out its arms far and wide. But the state of communications then existing did not allow of a central authority making its rule effective over such long distances, exceeding a thousand miles in all directions. Nor had the Muslim people, who came to India in a wave of religious enthusiasm, sufficiently unified their social life to act as one unit in loyal obedience to a central government. The many races, Turkish, Afghan, Persian, Arab, Mongol, and Muslimized Indians of various tribes, had not yet reached a stage of homogeneous culture in which they could support a large and strong empire with one will. And their relations with the Hindus were not yet on a footing of cordial understanding. As far as administration and conquest were concerned, the Rajputs had gained complete ascendancy among the Hindus before the Muslim conquest. After that conquest the Rajputs continued to develop their institutions and their code of chivalry, and may be considered still to represent the manly portion of the Hindu population. The Hindu thinkers of India had receded into the background, but they felt the influence of the ruling power. Muslim saints and Sūfis were scattered all over the land, and their influence was felt indirectly on Hindu thought, and also directly in the social and political life of the country. The indirect influences are reflected in the development of the Bhakti doctrines in the schools of the new Vaishnavism as well as the new Shaivaism, and in the protest move-

ments of medieval Theism. These, by the reactions produced against them, intensified the exclusiveness of caste and its unsocial features, and multiplied its numbers enormously. The direct influence was seen in the wholesale absorption of large numbers into the fold of Islam and in the rise of the various Panths and schools of religious thought which began in this period and continued their work for a century or two later. Kabir and Guru Nānak may be cited as amongst the foremost examples in a large galaxy of religious and social reformers who prepared the way for modern India.

Authorities. For such a formative period, whose activities extended to so many departments of Indian life, the number of authorities is large. We are embarrassed in our task of selection. The critical study of the period too has not penetrated as deep as might be desired, partly and paradoxically owing to this very abundance of easily accessible material. We have not sufficiently taken toll of literature and folk-lore nor sufficiently explored the influence of religious movements on the social and economic life of the country. Many dark points are susceptible of being illuminated from this source. In this lecture we can consider only a few authorities, in order to give us a graphic picture of the later ages of medieval India. The Bardic literature may be studied in the *Prithi Rāj Rāsaū* of Chand Bardāi and in the cycle of legends sung in the monsoons by itinerant bards all over the United Provinces, known by the name of *Ālha-khand*. Much light will also be thrown on the Bardic literature by Tod's *Rājasthān*, of which an excellent edition was recently published by Mr. W. Crooke, whom many of us remember well in these Provinces as a member of the last generation of Civilians. The religious movement which brought the new Shaivism into touch with the Naqshbandia school

of Sūfī mystics is admirably exemplified in the work of Lalla the Prophetess (Lāl Ded) of Kashmir, who lived in the fourteenth century, when Islam was receiving almost universal acceptance in her country. Besides the scholarly edition of Sir George Grierson (*Lalla Vākyaṇī*), there is the excellent verse translation of Sir Richard Temple, to which a most valuable dissertation has been affixed, placing the religious atmosphere of the fourteenth century in India in a fresh light. Amongst the travellers we may note Ibn Batūta, of whose travels an excellent edition with a French translation has been published by the Société Asiatique of Paris, under the editorship of C. Defrémery and Dr. B. R. Sanguinetti, in four volumes. This prince of Oriental travellers came to India about a generation after that prince of Western travellers, Marco Polo, whose work can be studied in the excellent edition of Colonel Yule. The Egyptian traveller Shihāb-ud-din Abul 'Abbās Ahmad also visited the Tughluq court at Delhi about the same time, and has left us an excellent account of the city and the people, the court and social life of the time. Then there are the Muslim historians of India, including Farishta, Barni, 'Afīf, and the little autobiography of Firoz Shah Tughluq, the *Tārikh-i-Firoz-Shāhi*. The works of Amīr Khusrau of Delhi also give us vivid pictures of many sides of life which we do not get in the professed historians. These works may now be studied in the excellent edition issued from Aligarh under the patronage of His Exalted Highness the Nizam of **Hyderabad**. I specially commend to your attention the two romances of *Dewal Rāni Khizār Khan* and *Qirān-us-Sa'dain*. Of coins and inscriptions the number is large. In this branch of study we shall find much assistance from the volumes of the *Epigraphia Indo-Moslemica* and the works of Mr. E. Thomas.

Rajput Manners: Princess of Kanauj. Both Chand Bardāi's poem and the *Ālha-khand*, as we have them, though they refer to the twelfth century, contain a good deal of matter of later growth. The *Ālha-khand*, as handed down by oral tradition, probably reflects on the whole a picture of Rajput manners and life in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. The tale of how King Prithi won his bride is so characteristic that, with your permission, I shall try to tell it very briefly, in order to whet your appetite for the spirited bardic version which so graphically depicts the manners of the Rajput courts. In Kanauj reigned the Rāthor King Jai Chand. (Modern research shows that Jai Chand was really a Gaharwār, but the Gaharwārs were connected with the Rāthors, and for certain genealogical reasons the Bardic tradition always spoke of the Kanauj king as a Rāthor.) Jai Chand had a beautiful daughter Sanjogin, who was of marriageable age. The king decided to hold a Swayamvar Darbār, in order that the princess might choose her husband. This kind of Darbār was not common, but the king who held it was understood to claim some sort of supremacy amongst the Rajputs by this kind of rite for his daughter. All the noted Rajput kings and princes were invited from far and near. Among them was the celebrated Chauhān King Prithi Rāj of Delhi. He on his side thought it presumption on the part of Jai Chand to hold such a Darbār. He did not come as a suitor, but secretly as a conqueror, to put Jai Chand in his place. He determined to win Jai Chand's daughter as a bride by capture.

Waywardness of Love. The Darbār was held. The kings and princes came and sat in their respective chairs. The chair of the Chauhān was empty. His marked absence showed in what contempt he held Jai Chand. Jai Chand, in order to pay off the insult to his pride had an image of

Prithi Rāj set up standing at the door, as much as to say that Prithi Rāj was only fit to be his door-keeper. But he had not counted on the young princess's own feelings. She came to the Darbār with the garland which she was to throw round the neck of the husband of her choice. She passed by all the princes assembled, and placed it round the neck of the image of the door-keeper. There was great consternation and anger in the Darbār. 'Jai Chand's wrath did blaze; his daughter he shut in the prison tower; and the Rājas rode their way.'

Love's Harbinger in Disguise. Meanwhile a woman was sent from Prithi Rāj's court to prepare the way for the abduction of the Kanauj princess. She came disguised as a man, but was discovered by the fact that in the hole in her nostril 'the button of gold was left in place, which none but women wear'. She was not dismayed by the discovery. She said she was a slave of the King of Delhi, and had fled from his court. She asked for refuge in the court of the Kanauj king, as she knew he would never refuse shelter to injured fugitives. In the circumstances Jai Chand felt that her feelings would be against Prithi Rāj and he set her to guard his daughter in prison and to 'heal her of her fantasy'.

Prithi himself on the Scene. In Delhi, Prithi Rāj held a consultation with his bard Chand, who advised him to start forthwith for Kanauj. The bard was, of course, well known by face in all the Rajput courts, but Prithi disguised himself as the bard's servant, and started with a few trusty followers. Arrived in the Kanauj Court, Prithi nearly betrayed himself by trying to twirl his moustache with his braceleted hand—a characteristic gesture of a Rajput warrior offering defiance. Chand prevented this in time. The King of Kanauj welcomed the bard, as was his heraldic due, and asked him what manner

of man was the King of Delhi. The bard replied truthfully: 'Like my servant here is the Delhi king; a brave *Chauhān* is he; he hath no fear what fate may bring, and death he laughs to see.' They were dismissed with due ceremony to their lodging in the garden.

Messages Exchanged. Here was a fish-pond. So generous, says the bard, was the Delhi king that he flung away the royal pearls of his necklace to feed the fishes. Sanjogin saw this from the window, and sent the supposed runaway slave with her own pearls heaped high in a platter of gold. This established communication and understanding between the lovers.

Challenge of the Rajput. Next morning Jai Chand dismissed the bard with many presents—chains of coral and pearls and precious stones; 'shawls and kerchiefs and brodered weeds; turban and crest and ring; elephants thirty and two hundred steeds—as fitted a mighty king.' Prithi Rāj, in his supposed character as a servant, mixed a *bīra* of *pān*. This was a betel-leaf turnover, prepared ceremoniously with lime, catechu, cloves, &c. Nominally it was a return of civility for the King of Kanauj's courtesy. But it had a further symbolic meaning. He rolled five *pān* leaves and thus offered a challenge of fight, as from one Rajput to another, and to make his meaning clear, he pressed Jai Chand's hand so hard that the blood sprang from his nails. The secret was now out. War was declared. The drum of battle began to summon the Rāthor warriors. The order went forth: the men of Delhi must die, and not one should escape.

The Lovers Meet. Sanjogin got together her jewels and decked herself in royal array. She found her way to Prithi Rāj. She waved a golden censer round his head to ward off ill omen. She fanned his face with a fan of flowers, to offer her womanly fealty. And the gentler

bīra of *pān* she gave as a pledge of her love. But she warned him: 'Mighty is the host on Jai Chand's side, and thou hast not many to fight on thy side.' 'Fear not, sweet flower,' replied Prithi; 'though few be my men, this good sword of mine shall hew a way and show thee the tower of Delhi.' The princess was now ready to fly with him in her litter. But Prithi pitched his tent six miles north of Kanauj, and sent in haste to summon his bravest men to fight the Rāthor of Kanauj and escort the bride. A hundred and sixteen gallant men forthwith obeyed their king's call. As soon as they arrived, Prithi bade one of his men incite a quarrel with the Rāthors and fight for the princess's litter.

Fight for the Bride. Both sides welcomed the fray. Their minstrels sounded martial music. Swords flashed out. In the close deadly combat they knew not friend from foe. The slaughter continued all day.

They did not hold their hands that day
Till stars above them shone.

Jai Chand ordered the princess's litter to be brought in the midst as the stake of battle, to draw Prithi himself and slay him. 'Set down the litter, and go back to Kanauj', shouted the Chauhān warriors. 'Ah!' said the Rāthors, 'let us see the Rajputs that can take it to Delhi.' Two good swords did each warrior take, and both sides fought with furious glee. The litter itself was stained with red like the *henna* on the bride's feet. Lances and bows were also used, but the Chauhān prevailed, and the litter marched another five *kos*¹ towards Delhi.

Bride brought to Delhi. But the men of Kanauj were not daunted, and pursued the fight night and day. The litter swayed, now towards Delhi, now towards Kanauj. But

on the whole, it went on towards Delhi. Another fierce fight took place on the crossing of the Ganges at Soron. Champions on both sides fought single combats with shield and lance. But the Chauhāns still won, and the ranks of Kanauj were thinned. The final battle at the gates of Delhi itself disposed of the last of the Rāthor warriors, and Prithi and his bard themselves bore in the litter in triumph. Said the bard to Jai Chand: 'If thy warriors are all slain, so are Prithi's. So now go in peace.' And thus closes the story of 'how Rajput brides were won.'¹

Shaikh Burhān in Rajputana. We are so accustomed to Hindu-Muslim feuds in these degenerate days that it is refreshing to turn to the days when a Muslim saint was almost worshipped by a whole Rajput confederation and was the eponymous hero of a whole tract of ten thousand square miles in Rajputana. We know of the 'Mirza Rāja' of Jaipur (1625-67), but we are now speaking of a Rajput 'Shaikhji', the son of Mokalji, the chief of the Rajputs in what afterwards came to be known as Shaikhāwati, between Alwar and Bikanir. Mokal lived towards the end of the fourteenth century. A pious Muslim missionary named Shaikh Burhān so impressed the imagination of the Rajputs that they believed in his power to work miracles. Mokal prayed to him for a son, and when the son was born, he was named Shaikhji. The saint's shrine is still held in honour, and flies the saint's blue pennon over the yellow flag of the Shaikhāwats. In honour of the saint the Shaikhāwat Rajputs do not even hunt the wild boar.²

A Delhi Inscription. Among the inscriptions which throw light on the period of the Delhi Sultanate, I shall call your attention to only one, the Pālam inscription, which is in the Museum of Archaeology in Delhi Fort. It belonged to a well in a village only twelve miles from

modern Delhi. It is in Sanskrit, with the last part in a local vernacular spoken in Hariāna. It requires close critical study. It is dated 1337 of the Vikrama year, corresponding to A.D. 1280-1, when Ghiyās-ud-din Balban was on the throne of Delhi. The name of Delhi appears in the Sanskrit portion as Dhilli, and in the vernacular portion as Dhili. This has some bearing on the original form of the name of Delhi. But the real interest of the inscription is in the attitude it reveals of the learned Pandit Yogishwara and his people towards the Muslim rulers of the land. They are described as Shāka¹ Princes, and their rule is traced from Shihāb-ud-din Ghorī through Qutb-ud-din (Aibak), Shams-ud-din (Altamish), and Razia Begam to the reigning sovereign. Razia Begam is simply mentioned by her title Jalāl-ud-din. As Balban had been Wazir in the reign preceding his own, both reigns are praised lavishly. The ruler is described as 'he throughout whose whole contented realm, under his great and good government, from Gaur (in Bengal) to Ghazna (in Afghanistan), from the Dravida country and Rameshvar, everywhere, the earth bears the beauty of the sylvan springtide through the shooting gleams of the many jewels fallen from the contact of the diadems of princes coming and going in his service'. The strength and the movement of his armies is described as extending from sea to sea, from the mouth of the Ganges to the mouth of the Indus, ensuring the peace and security enjoyed by all. The cavalry is specially referred to. 'Since this king supports the world', says the panegyrist, 'Shesha (the snake who supports the world) has laid down the burden

¹ The Shākas were the Scythians, who invaded India through southern Afghanistan in the first century B.C. and played an important part on the stage of Indian history for five centuries afterwards. The term was applied generically to all foreign invaders from the north-west, including the Muslims.

of the earth, . . . and Vishnu himself' has given up the thought of guarding the world and gone to sleep on the ocean of milk. Under this king, lord of many hundreds of great towns, continues the inscription, prospers the heart-ravishing city of Dhilli. Like the earth, she is a receptacle of many jewels; like heaven she is full of joy; like the lower world (Pātāl) she contains giants (Daityas) of great strength; and like Māya she is full of fascination. Some personal details are given of the Thākur who built the well, with its abundant drinking water, to allay the thirst of weary travellers. He had three wives, seven sons, and four daughters, and he had built several extensive rest-houses, apparently on the main road.¹

Ibn Batūta's Account. The picture of India drawn by the Moorish traveller Ibn Batūta, who was in India from 1333 to 1346, is both detailed and picturesque. As I have given a full account of it elsewhere,² I shall not repeat it here, but merely mention a few points of interest before passing on to the picture drawn for us by the poet Amīr Khusrau. The flourishing horse trade formed an economic tie between the Kipchak country (near the Sea of Azov) and India. In the Kipchak country a good horse cost only about 4 rupees, while the selling price in India might be anything from Rs.100 to Rs.2000.³ The caravans, each consisting of droves of six thousand horses, came through the Gomal Pass, and found their chief frontier mart in the city of Multan. The postal organization was good and there was an efficient and quick service of news as between the outlying places and the capital.⁴ In Sindh a regular flotilla of boats was maintained on the Indus.⁵ The Sultan (Muhammad Shah Tughluq) kept great state in his city of Delhi. He lavished gifts freely,⁶ and his mother

maintained a great number of charities, and endowed alms-houses for the poor. The fiscal policy of the Sultan was to abolish trade imposts as far as possible and encourage trade.¹ There was a great deal of maritime trade through the ports at the mouth of the Indus, on the coast of Kathiawar, and farther south from the Malabar ports. Cambay was a beautiful and flourishing city, and Abyssinians were specially noted for their maritime enterprise,² as they were in later Mughal times. Chinese junks called freely at Malabar ports.³ Bengal was a land of cheapness and plenty, though its political condition was very disturbed. Plague was levying its toll in the country.⁴ In time of famine there was a good organization of famine relief. Registers were prepared by officials, and towns were parcelled out into regular relief areas. The state granaries supplied a ration of about a seer of grain per day to every person to be relieved, old or young, slave or free.⁵

Delhi of Amir Khusrau. The social life described by Amir Khusrau (1253-1325) in court and literary circles among the ruling classes has some attractive features, but it also shows symptoms of disruption and decay. Among the attractive features may be noted the free-handed hospitality, the love of elegance and the arts, and the respect in which learning was held. The other side of the picture is shown by the internal jealousies, the severe punishments, the uncertainty in the succession of the Sultans, and the luxury, hard drinking, and dissipation, and the decadence of morals. The Mongol incursions from the north-west did much to unsettle both social and political life. Khusrau had been their prisoner and

describes them in no complimentary terms. Their bodies were hard as steel and clothed in wool (*paulād tan wa pamba posh*). Their small blue eyes, flat noses, wide nostrils, square faces, scanty beards, and long moustaches were mere outward signs of their fierce wolf natures.¹ The city of Delhi which he describes extended from the river on the east to the hills on the west, and from the old Lāl-Kot in the south (near the Qutb) to the site of Firozābād, which was built subsequently (where the Gaol stands now). The three chief features of the city were the Jāma Mosque, the Muazzin's tower, and the great Royal Reservoir for supplying pure water to the town. The Mosque had nine domes and a number of pillars in the cloistered portion, besides the large open courtyard. The Tower described was probably the Qutb Minār, and not the Ālāi Minār, which was never completed. Amīr Khusrau's Muazzin's Tower was built of red stone in the lower storeys. It had a marble storey on the top, with a dome and a pinnacle of gold. The top was injured by lightning subsequently (in the reign of Firoz Tughluq, who, however, had it repaired). The Royal Reservoir was about two miles or more to the north of the Qutb. It used the hilly ground as its sides, with a bund in the lower portion to hold up the pure rain water. In the centre was a *chabūtra* (raised platform) with a pleasure pavilion, which was the resort of Delhi citizens, who also encamped on the hill-side when they wanted to get away from the city for a holiday.² Amīr Khusrau himself was the son of a Turkish father and a Rajput (Rāwal) mother, and was born in Patiala. He lost his father early, and his mother's influence made him a good Indian, who was proud of his country. Though he wrote in Persian, he

was at home in Hindi and Turkish. He uses many Hindi words in his Persian writings.

Marco Polo in South India. Life in southern India seems to have been, in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, very different from that in the north. The people wore hardly any clothes, but much jewellery—gold, silver, pearls, and gems.¹ The long sea-coast, east and west, was frequented by the shipping of many nations, mainly Chinese and Muslims from Arabia and Persia. The tract round Tanjore contained flourishing ports. A Pagoda near Negapatam, showing a Chinese style of architecture, bears witness to Chinese influences.² The horse trade in southern India was by sea, and mostly with the ports of Arabia and the Persian Gulf. As many as 2,000 horses were annually imported by sea into one of the southern kingdoms.³ We saw how flourishing the horse trade was by land in northern India. The Kipchak horses were mostly heavy horses. The Arab and Gulf horses were lighter and faster. In the island of Ceylon the soldiers were nearly all Muslims from abroad—‘Saracens’, as Marco Polo calls them. The Jogis, or orders of religious ascetics, were very much in evidence. They were very abstemious, but what they ate was good—chiefly rice and milk. Twice every month they drank a strong drink, which was supposed to prolong their lives. Marco Polo thought it was compounded of sulphur and mercury,⁴ but it may have been merely a preparation of Bhang. They went about stark naked, daubed with ashes of cow-dung. They claimed to be very long-lived, and we know from Ibn Batūta that they were believed to perform marvellous miracles.⁵ They ate from leaves and not from bowls or plates. Marco Polo assigns them a cruel and perfidious

character in contrast with the merchants of the west coast, whom he considered most truthful.¹

Attempted Abolition of Social Inequalities. A period which included three such masterful monarchs as Ala-ud-din Khalji (1295-1316), Muhammad Shah Tughluq (1325-51), and Firoz Shah Tughluq (1351-88) was fruitful in economic experiments. Ala-ud-din attempted a kind of socialistic measure. He tried to abolish pride and wealth by confiscating grants and reducing the rich to the level of the poor; he tried to cheapen the cost of food-grains by fixing prices; and he even tried to regulate or socialize the transport service. He provided drastic punishments for breach of his decrees. Though Zia-ud-din Barni is enthusiastic over these decrees, it is doubtful whether they did not cause more misery than they were intended to allay, and they certainly came to an end with his death. He abolished not poverty but production and wealth. His decree for the total prohibition of drink was never very effective.²

Currency Reforms. We saw how Muhammad Shah tried to encourage trade by abolishing various imposts and transit duties. His attention to coinage and currency deserves a word of praise. His coins are distinguished by careful attention to their design and the artistic skill of their construction. His circular gold *dinārs* of 199 grains have the edges carefully defined by lines, to prevent filing. His silver *Tankah* (of 64 *Jitals*) with subordinate denominations was brought up to the standard of 175 grains of pure silver, which is not far from our modern rupee with its gross weight of 180 grains. He had heard of contemporary attempts at token currency in China and Persia. He attempted to attain similar results by employing alloys of various standards, but he gave up the system

as soon as he found that there was a depreciation in the market. The prevailing ratio of gold to silver in those days was probably 8 to 1 or 7 to 1, as compared with the modern 22 or 23 to 1. There was a glut of gold in the Treasury on account of the vast treasures received from the Deccan.¹

State's Attempt to Deal with Unemployment. Firoz Tughluq was responsible for a scheme of unemployment relief for his subjects, of which we should like to have further particulars. All unemployed workmen in the city were to be brought before him, and were given employment according to their capacity. Men of the pen were employed as government clerks, and men who showed intelligence in business were placed under the Khān-i-Jahān, presumably the officer in charge of the departments of supply and manufacture. These had to do with the stables, the kitchens, the dog kennels, the candle department, and the water-cooling department, of which the aggregate budget amounted to an equivalent of three lakhs and twenty thousand rupees. The purchasing power of the rupee was then many times greater than it is now. In addition there were the wardrobe department and the carpet department. If any one wished to serve any particular nobleman, he was placed in employment under him.²

Charitable Relief and Public Works. There was also a charity department (*Diwān i Khairāt*). The hospital (*Shafa-khāna* or *Sihhat-khāna*) not only supplied medical relief for the sick and afflicted of all classes but also maintained them at the expense of the Treasury.³ But Firoz Shah's greatest title to fame rests on his Public Works. He not only built great works himself, but what is rarer in India, he looked upon it as a pious duty to repair the works of his predecessors. He built cities, forts,

palaces, irrigation *bunds*, mosques, tombs, colleges, inns, gardens, canals, and bridges in great numbers.¹ He constructed the double system of canals by which he brought water from the Satlaj and the Jamna for his new city of Hisār Firoza (now Hisār, head-quarters of the district of that name in the Punjab). The canals greatly increased cultivation, and gave a great impetus to fruit growing. They can still be traced, and have partly been utilized for the British canals. Firoz Shah, after much debate among the learned, originated the system of water-rates for irrigation.² The debate was because he felt qualms of conscience about imposing new taxation for which precedents were difficult to find in Islamic law.

CONCLUSION

We have now reviewed some features of social and economic life in medieval India. Limitations of time and space have only permitted of our casting an occasional glance here and there. But I hope I have succeeded in some degree in rousing your interest in the subject, and in convincing you that there is more abundant material for the study of our medieval social life than is usually imagined. We have to study it in a humble and catholic spirit, without any preoccupations of race, community, or religion. By doing so, and by placing the results, however modest, at the disposal of our Hindustani reading public, we shall further the work of nation building, in which the past must be used as a firm foundation for the future.

INDEX

- Abbreviations, xi, xxii.
 Ajanta, 11, 14, 19.
 Al-Birūni, 23, 32, 33, 34.
 Amīr Khusrau, 40, 47, 48-50.
 Arabs, 32, 37, 38.
 Armies, 46.
 Art, 24.
 Aryans, 3, 27.
 Ascetics, 16-17, 25, 50.
 Authorities, 9, 11, 23-4, 39-40.
 Bāgh, 11, 14, 20.
 Bāna, 10, 12, 13-16, 20.
 Bengal, 48.
 Betel, 26, 33, 35, 36, 43.
 Birth ceremonies, 17-18, 34.
 Boats, 47.
 Books, 33.
 Brahmans and Brahmanism, 2, 12, 13, 18, 26, 27, 30, 32, 33, 34, 35, 36.
 British, 2, 5-6.
 Buddha and Buddhism, 2, 3, 13, 19, 22, 25.
 Buildings, 36.
 Canals, 53.
 Castes, 21, 22, 26, 27.
 Chandālas, 16, 32.
 Charities, 48, 52.
 Chess, 34.
 Chinese Pilgrim, 11, 12, 19, 22.
 Complexions, 20, 27.
 Cosmetics, 28-9.
 Country scenes, 15.
 Crime, 22.
 Currency, 51-2.
 Death ceremonies, 21.
 Delhi, 45-7, 48-9.
 Delhi Sultanate, 5, 38, 45.
 Drama, 9-10, 14, 25, 28, 30.
 Dress, 19, 20, 34, 50.
 Drinks, 18, 21, 50, 51.
 Durga, 28.
 Economic conditions, 9, 19, 20-1, 32, 34-7, 50, 51.
 Elephants, 15, 35.
 Endowments, 32.
 Eunuchs, 12 (note).
 Famine relief, 48.
 Firōz Shah Tughluq, 40, 47, 49, 51, 52.
 Food, 21, 50.
 Forests, 15, 35.
 Gambling, 15.
 Greek influence, 19.
 Guptas, 3, 4.
 Hallam quoted, 1.
 Harsha, 3, 4, 5, 8, 9, 10, 12, 14, 25.
 Hearnshaw, Prof., v, viii.
 Hermitages, 15.
 Hindus and Hinduism, 4, 7, 26, 37, 38, 45.
 Historical perspective, 6-8.
 History, ancient, medieval, and modern, 2-3; continuity of, 7.
 Holi, 14.
 Horse trade, 47, 50.
 Household, king's, 12.
 Ibn Batūta, 40, 47, 50.
 Illness, 21, 52.
 Inscriptions, 11, 23, 34-5, 40, 45.
 Invasions, 3-4, 13.
 Islam in India, 39, 40.
 Jai Chand, 41-5.
 Jains, 26.
 Jester, 13.
 Jhūla festival, 29-30.
 Jogis, 50.

- Kabir, 39.
 King, the, in romance, 12, 13, 16,
 birth ceremonies of his son, 17-
 18; grants to his ministers, 34-5;
 in a Delhi inscription, 46-7.
 Kshatriya, 13, 26.
 Land grants, 34-5, tenures, 20, 35.
 Languages, Prakrits and Vernacu-
 lars, 24-5.
 Love, 13, 14, 28, 41, 42.
 Magic, 28, 50.
 Manners and customs, 21, 33, 41.
 Marco Polo, 40, 50.
 Maritime trade, 48, 50.
 Middle Ages, defined, 1; in Europe,
 1; in India, 2-5, 9, 23.
 Minister, king's, 12.
 Mongols, 48-9.
 Mosque, 49.
 Mughals, 5, 6.
 Music and musicians, 13, 20.
 Muslims, 2, 4, 5, 7, 23, 37, 38, 45,
 46.
 Nānak, Guru, 39.
 North and south, 25, 26.
 Outcastes, 32.
 Ornaments, 28-9.
 Paintings, 13, 14, 19-20.
 Palace, 13.
 People, life of, 15.
 Persian influence, 19.
 Plague, 48.
 Plassey, 5.
 Postal organization, 47.
 Prakrits, 24, 25.
 Prithi Rāj, 4, 41-5.
 Public works, 52-3.
 Races, 19, 20, 26, 27.
 Rāja-Shekhara, 8, 23, 25, 26, 27, 28.
 Rajputs, 4, 8, 24, 26, 27, 30, 31, 35,
 41-5, 49.
 Religion, 25, 38-9.
 Roads, 15.
 Sanjogin, 41-5.
 Scents, 29.
 Seals, 34.
 Shākas, 46.
 Shaikh Burhān, 45.
 Shankara, 25.
 Shiva, 14, 16, 17, 25, 26, 36, 38, 39.
 Shudras, 26, 32.
 Social life, 9, 26, 31, 38-9, 41, 48,
 51.
 Soma Deva, 24, 30.
 Stables, 52.
 Stories, 24, 30.
 Sūfis, 38, 40.
 Taxes, 21, 35, 48, 53.
 Temples, 32-3, 36-7, 50.
 Tribes, 27.
 Ujjain, 14-15.
 Unemployment relief, 52.
 Untouchables, 26, 32.
 Vaishnavism, 38.
 Vaishyas, 21, 26.
 Vedas, 33.
 Vernaculars, 24.
 Vidushak, 13.
 Villages, 18-19, 20, 37.
 Vindhya, 18, 26.
 Women, 12, 18, 19, 26.
 Writing, 33.
 Yuan Chwang, 11, 21.
 Zamindars, 13.