

INSTINCTIVE INQUIRIES INTO INDIAN ANTIQUITY AND ITS DISORIENTATED CHRONICLES (FROM POST GUPTAS AGE TILL THE ARRIVAL OF MUGHALS)

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ABSTRACT

History has always been something which has been hanging between myth and reality. Whenever one reads history there is always an ounce of doubt nagging at the back of their minds. There are layers over layers covering up the reality and creating an illusion of a story so farfetched from what actually happened that when a slapdash with no experience in the field of history tries to find what really happened. They usually end up entrapping themselves in pages and pages of information without a clear understanding of what actually happened. This paper of mine is an endeavor to understand the bare reality of events and try to unveil the actual truth behind Indian history.

KEYWORDS: *Maurya, Gupta, Hunas, Maukharis, Maitrakas, Pushyabhutis, Gaudas, Khilji, Tughlaq, Mughal*

INTRODUCTION

History has always been something which has been hanging between myth and reality. Whenever one reads history there is always an ounce of doubt nagging at the back of their minds. There are layers over layers covering up the reality and creating an illusion of a story so farfetched from what actually happened that when a slapdash with no experience in the field of history tries to find what really happened. Researchers usually end up entrapping themselves in pages and pages of information without a clear understanding of what actually happened. This paper of mine is an endeavor to understand the bare reality of events and try to unveil the actual truth behind Indian history.

It is worth noting that the events of the contemporary era influenced the body of history in every nation and in every century, even though they were not similar. The incidents are the focus of scholarly literature or historians' attention. Historians are created by history and the subject. The historian is chosen by the topics rather than the other way around. A historian may sometimes produce literature, and an occurrence may sometimes produce a historian. Before he starts to write history, the historian is a product of history.

Foreign academics have often lamented India's lack of an indigenous literary heritage. Academicians believe that the study of Indian history has amassed a vast literary legacy over the centuries. Centuries have passed, with much of it referring to historical events, but no scholar has ever compared to him, those who contributed to the study of ancient Greece and Rome, or later European scholars who contributed to the study of ancient Greece and Rome. Indifference to the western understanding of history, to the belief that man may be both subject and agent of transformation, is quoted as a defining feature of Indian civilization. Historians, Indologists, and Orientalists are divided on the historical context of the ancient and medieval Indians. The ancient Indians were said to have had no understanding of history or chronology. L.J. Trotter and W.H. Hutton have remarked that "the old Hindus produced, not one historian of even the smallest mark". Any historian understanding Indian history will not

accept such kind of absurd remark. A.S Macdonell is of opinion that "History is the one weak spot in Indian Literature. It is, in fact, non-existent" This is nothing but a total denunciation of actuality. J.W. McCrindle holds that "The Indians themselves did not write history. They produced no doubt, a literature both voluminous and varied... but within its vast range, history is conspicuous by its absence". What a ridiculous comment. History evolved as a branch of literature in ancient Greece and Rome, much as it had in ancient India. As a result, it would be irrational to emphasize the relevance of one while dismissing or depreciating the significance of the other. Radha Kumud Mookerji has correctly stated that "History is not merely political and chronological and is not to individual and datable facts and events. History is more important and interesting as a history of thought. It is social and cultural history". Our quest for a proper chronological presentation of events of Indian history begins from post Gupta age and continues till the arrival of Mughals.

Isolated from the main groups of factors that contributed to the final disappearance of the Gupta empire, an alternative school of thinking argues that, no empire after the Mauryas was a reality. Many of them were frequently complete fabrications. No empire in the full sense of the word arose in India after the Mauryan empire vanished. Few historians believe, we lacked a tradition like the Greeks', which holds that the State arises from the needs of life but continues to exist for the good of life, and that man is a political animal by birth.¹ To them, after the Mauryan age, India's thinking became more apolitical. The rise of feudalism, which can be traced back to the days of the Satavahanas, was the first force that influenced Indian attitudes. During the unenlightened age, this trend became stronger, and by the seventh century AD, it was well-established².

Another school of thought believes, the religious experience of ancient and medieval Indians was another saboteur of political consciousness as a consequence of this advancement. Before the Christian era, it was eventually established that the kingship had its own dharma, known as rajya-dharma, while the people had a few dharmas, such as varnashrama dharma and grihadharma. Both of these dharmas steered people's allegiance or perceptions away from political entities. The priestly order gives divine sanction to this way of thought. Thus, even during the Mauryan age, the state was never the architectonic force in ancient Indian life. It is because of this perception of ancient India that made the emergence and disappearance of hundreds of States, including Guptas, mere non-events.

The known chronicles put forward the triumph of Guptas over the Pushyamitras and Hunas during their initial advances against Guptas. According to these narratives, even during Kumar Gupta's rule, the kingdom was invaded by a tribe known as Pushyamitra, but they were defeated. Hunas made inroads shortly after Skanda Gupta's accession, but they were repelled. On the other side, new waves of Invaders came, destroying the Gupta Empire's fabric.³ While Gupta king Skanda Gupta attempted to avoid the Huna invasion of India at first, his successors were frail and unable to deal with the Huna invaders, who were skilled horsemen and may have used metal stirrups. The fact that Yasodharman of Malwa quickly deposed the Hunas, and the Malwa prince erected Pillars of Victory commemorating his conquest of almost all of northern India in AD 532, effectively questioned the Guptas' power. Yasodharman's reign was brief, but he dealt a significant blow to the Gupta dynasty. To formulate full proof history of both initial triumphs and subsequent defeats, both needs to be considered⁴.

¹Ashvini Agrawal (1989). Rise and Fall of the Imperial Guptas. Motilal Banarsidass. ISBN 978-81-208-0592-7.

² Dani, Ahmad Hasan; Litvinsky, B. A. (1996). History of Civilizations of Central Asia: The crossroads of civilizations, A.D. 250 to 750. UNESCO. p. 185. ISBN 978-92-3-103211-0.

³Tej Ram Sharma (1989). A Political History of the Imperial Guptas: From Gupta to Skandagupta. Concept. ISBN 978-81-7022-251-4

⁴Keay, John (2000). India: A history. Atlantic Monthly Press. pp. 151–52. ISBN 978-0-87113-800-2.

To be specific, the Gupta Empire, like other ancient political regimes before it, fell victim to both internal and external forces. While the late Gupta ruler Narasimhagupta was successful in driving the Huns out of northern India in 528 CE, the dynasty was ruined by the effort and cost. Vishnugupta was the last known emperor of the Gupta Dynasty, ruling from around 540CE, until the empire fell apart around 550 CE. The emergence of the feudatories further weakened the Gupta dynasty.⁵ The Gupta kings' governors in north Bengal and their feudatories in Samatata or south-east Bengal rebelled against the Guptas. The Guptas of Magadha later founded themselves in Bihar. Moreover, the Maukharis came to power in Bihar and Uttar Pradesh, with Kanauj as their capital. By AD 550, Bihar and Uttar Pradesh had most likely gone out of the hands of the Guptas. In Gujarat and Western Malwa, the rulers of Valabhi founded their authority. This of course, paves the way for the need of further probe into the fall of Gupta empire and its significances in contemporary Indian history⁶.

In proportion to one school of thought, the Gupta Empire started to fall apart at the end of the fifth century A.D. Magadha and its capital, Patliputra, lost their importance as a result of the fall of the Imperial Guptas. As a result, the Post-Gupta Period was extremely tumultuous. Following the collapse of the Guptas, five major forces dominated north India. The Hunas, Maukharis, Maitrakas, Pushyabhutis, and Gaudas were among these powers. An alternative school of thought believed, the collapse of the Gupta rulers enabled the Maukharis, and Pushyabhutis to take control of the North. While a Pushyabhuti king of Thaneswar, Harsha ruled from Kanauj, which was originally the seat of the Maukharis, with whom contracted a marriage alliance... Harsha is remembered as the last 'Hindu' king of the post Gupta dynasty in the North. Here a shift can be found in regard to the power centre of north, from Patliputra to Kanauj⁷.

Aside from internal strife, the Gupta Empire was constantly threatened from the north. The burden of repelling these invasions depleted the Gupta treasury, and the government struggled to replenish the funds. The White Huns were among the most problematic invaders, having occupied much of Gupta territories in the northwest by 500 CE.⁸ In Gupta history, a man named Toramana or Toraraya led the Huns' first raids into India; these documents indicate that his troops started to pick off feudatory states from the Gupta territories about the year 500. Toramana swooped down into central India in 510 CE and defeated his opponents at Eran on the Ganges river.⁹

According to the documents, Toramana's prestige was such that certain princes willingly submitted to his rule.¹⁰ The documents, however, are silent on why the princes submitted: whether it was because he was a brilliant military genius, a bloodthirsty emperor, a stronger king than the Gupta alternatives, or something else entirely. This branch of the Huns eventually converted to Hinduism and assimilated into Indian society.¹¹ Despite the fact that none of the invading forces were able to fully overrun the Gupta Empire, the financial distress caused by the wars hastened the dynasty's demise. Surprisingly, the Huns, or their immediate predecessors the Xiongnu, had the same influence on two other great

⁵ Agrawal, Ashvini. *Rise and Fall of the Imperial Guptas*. Motilal Banarsidass Publishers, 1989.

⁶ H.C. Raychaudhuri (1923). *Political History of Ancient India: From the Accession of Parikshit to the Extinction of the Gupta Dynasty*. University of Calcutta. ISBN 978-1-4400-5272-9.

⁷ Dilip Kumar Ganguly (1987). *The Imperial Guptas and Their Times*. Abhinav. ISBN 978-81-7017-222-2.

⁸ Bakker, Hans (2017), *Monuments of Hope, Gloom and Glory in the Age of the Hunnic Wars: 50 years that changed India (484–534)*, Royal Netherlands Academy of Arts and Sciences, Section 4, ISBN 978-90-6984-715-3.

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ Prakash, Budha. "Last Days of the Gupta Empire." *Annals of the Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute* 27.1/2, 1946, pp. 124–41.

¹¹ Upinder Singh (2017). *Political Violence in Ancient India*. Harvard University Press. ISBN 978-0-674-98128-7.

classical empires in earlier centuries: Han China in 221 CE and the Roman Empire in 476 CE¹². Carroll Quigley, a noted American historian, polymath, and theorist of the evolution of civilizations, in his book 'The Evolution of Civilizations' writes:

“One of the chief reasons for the widespread fear of the Huns rested on their ability to travel very long distances in relatively short periods. This ability may well have been based on their use of horseshoes.”

There are a series of attacks and invasions that have been linked to the Huns, especially Attila who has been named the Scourge of God or the bane of god himself. There are various accounts of history which term the Huns as Barbaric because of the language they spoke, it was believed that they were uncivilized and uncultured, but there is an underlying story of them that not many know of, a few historians do believe that that Huns were grossly misunderstood and that they were civilized masses of people. As stark as these accounts may sound which is true and which is not is something we will never know. R. A. Lafferty in his book 'The fall of Rome'¹³ states,

“Even the Huns had been called barbarians. This is a thing beyond all comprehension, and yet it is not safe to contradict the idea even today. The Huns were a race of over-civilized kings traveling with their Courts. In the ordering of military affairs and in overall organization they had no superiors in the world. They were skilled diplomats, filled with urbanity and understanding. All who came into contact with them, Persians, Armenians, Greeks, Romans, were impressed by the Huns' fairness in dealing—considering that they were armed invaders; by their restraint and adaptability; by their judgment of affairs; by their easy luxury. They brought a new elegance to the Empire peoples; and they had assimilated a half dozen cultures, including that of China. But the Huns were not barbarians; no more were any of the other violent visitors to the Empire heretofore.”

An inscription from Eran, dated year 191 of the Gupta Period, corresponding to 510 CE, mentions that Gupta king Bhanugupta fought a war, but it doesn't say with whom. This war may be waged against Huna king Toramana, either to repel his attack or to reclaim the Gupta territories he has seized. Most likely, it was a case of reclaiming lost lands, as we learn from another inscription that the Aulikara king, Prakashadharma, routed Toramana in about 515 CE¹⁴. Some historians believe, Huns were assimilated into the Gurjar clan. They ruled India's northwestern frontier as Gurjar pratihars until the 9th century. Many other kingdoms in Gurjaratra were Huna/ Gurjar, such as Solanki (chaluksya), Chawda (chaprana), Chauhans, and others. In the Gurjar tribal group, Hun, Chawda, Chaprana, and Kasana clans can still be found. According to Vincent A. Smith's 'The Early History of India,' Gujjars are “allied in blood” to the Huns who poured into the Indian subcontinent after attacking the Kishan Kingdom of Kabul.¹⁵ All these stories need to be substantiated in the light of historical researching.

The agreement with the Later Guptas, however, changed over time as the Maukharis asserted their dominance and established their own independence under King Ishanavarman (c. 6th century CE), Ishvaravarman's son and successor. Ishanavarman ascended the throne in 554 CE and, unlike his predecessors, was quick to recognize the nature of the country's current political conditions and the opportunity they presented to an ambitious ruler, for "the gradual weakening

¹²Vajpeyi, Raghavendra. "A Critique of the Huna Invasion Theory." Proceedings of the Indian History Congress 39, 1978, pp. 62–66.

¹³R. A. Lafferty 'The fall of Rome'. Doubleday & Company (Garden City, NY), 1971

¹⁴Agrawal, Ashvini (1989). Rise and Fall of the Imperial Guptas. Motilal Banarsidass. New Delhi. ISBN 8120805925.

¹⁵<https://www.hindustantimes.com/india/who-are-the-gujjars/story-> accessed on 35th April, 2021.

of the Gupta power made their feudatories in the various parts of the country cherish a feeling of rivalry and hostility among themselves, through their despotic despotism.¹⁶ⁿ

Sarvavarman, Ishanavarman's son, succeeded him (c. 6th century CE). In order to avenge his father's defeat, he threatened the Later Guptas. Damodaragupta (6th century CE), Kumaragupta's son and heir, continued the war against the Maukharis but died in battle, probably against Sarvavarman, who ruled Magadha or a significant portion of it at the time. After losing Gauda to his feudatory Shashanka, who became the state's first independent ruler, Damodaragupta son Mahasenagupta (circa 6th century CE) retired to Malwa.¹⁷

Kanyakubja or Kanauj was established by the Maukharis as the empire's political and administrative centre. This was achieved to the point that Harsha considered it to be a much more practical capital. As a result, it gradually displaced Pataliputra (modern-day Patna, Bihar state) as the colonial capital of northern India. Magadha had been India's imperial heartland since the 6th century BCE, particularly for the Maurya and Gupta empires. The center of political influence in northern India moved from Magadha in north-eastern India to the northern heartland of Kanyakubja as a result of the Maukharis' attempts to defeat the heirs of the imperial Guptas.¹⁸

Thaneswar, ruled by the Pushyabhuti dynasty, was another state that emerged from the ashes of the Gupta Empire. This state was destined to play a larger role than the Kanauj Maukharis and Valabhi Maitrakas, for example. When Harshavardhana, a 16 or 17-year-old boy, was summoned to take the throne after Rajya Vardhan's death in 606 A.D., he was hesitant. The nobles, however, forced him to assume the vacant throne.

The historian's embarrassment in reconstructing the past of the second half of the sixth century is no longer felt while writing the history of the seventh century. Harshavardhan's reign's source materials are varied and various, both indigenous and foreign. As a result, our understanding of Harshavardhan's reign is more detailed than that of any other Indian king prior to Asoka. Hiuen T-Sang's invaluable description of India, written during the reign of Harshavardhana, reads like a gazetteer in terms of its depth of inquiry and richness of information. The official Chinese historical works, such as the life of Hiuen T-Sang by his friend Hwui-li, translated by Beal in his *Life of Hiuen T-Sang*, and the official Chinese historical works, are of enormous importance as sources of materials for Harshavardhan's reign.

The Harshcharita of Bana contains a wealth of historical information about Harshavardhana and his age. Bana's tale, on the other hand, ends abruptly with Rajyasri's rescue from the Vindhya forests. Harsha's determination for world conquests is known from Bana, as is his proclamation to all Indian kings to either recognize his allegiance or prepare for a war with him. We also learn how Bhaskar Varman of Kamrup forged a friendly relationship rather than a vassalage agreement. The poet mentions Harsha's resolve to make the planet Gaudaless within a certain time frame, but he makes no mention of Harsha's victory over Sasanka of Gauda. Despite the normal exaggeration of a royal panegyrist when praising his master, Bana Bhatta's work is accurate in critical bits, and it is unassailable where he is backed up by the foreign traveler Hiuen T-Sang. When the information provided by the above sources is combined with that provided by inscriptions, coins, and other sources, we have a level of expertise that surpasses that of any other time but the Mauryas in

¹⁶ Basak, R. *The History of North Eastern India 1934* [Hardcover]. Facsimile Publisher, 2019.

¹⁷ Majumdar, R.C. (ed). *The History and Culture of the Indian People Volume III the Classical Age*. Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, 2019.

¹⁸ Tripathi, R.S. *History of Kanauj*. Motilal Banarsidass, 1989.

terms of completeness and precision. Dr. Smith remarks “His personal characteristics and the details of his administration, as recorded by men who knew him intimately, enable us to realise him as a living person who achieved greatness by his capacity and energy.”

Dr. Majumdar, however, concedes that “we cannot altogether exclude the possibility that Harsha was- suzerain of Bengal for a short time and it was not till after his death that Bhaskar Varman gained the same position”¹⁹. K. M. Panikkar²⁰ is of opinion that “Nepal and Kashmir were also within this ‘Harsha’s empire. While his authority in north of Vindhya was complete, Harsha’s arms met with a definite set back when he advanced towards the south”.

In the 5th century A.D., one of the later Gupta Kings established the Nalanda monastery. During Harshavardhan's reign, Nalanda was the epicentre of learning and culture, and it remained so long after Harsha's death. Following Hiuen T-Sang’s visit to India, I-Tsing compared Nalanda to the best Chinese universities.

The Gauda Kingdom arose in eastern India in the late sixth century CE as a result of the Gupta Empire's military disintegration (3rd-6th century CE). Its main areas were in what is now the Indian state of Bengal and the northern parts of Bangladesh, with Karnasuvarna serving as the capital (near modern-day Murshidabad city). It became a dominant kingdom for a brief time under King Shashanka (late 6th century CE - 637 CE), competing with other regional forces for political dominance in India. But its rise was short-lived, and it went down in history as the foundation kingdom for later empires, most famously the Palas (8th-12th century CE).²¹

Between AD 750 and 1000, a number of strong empires flourished in northern India and the Deccan. The Pala Empire, the Pratihara Empire, and the Rashtrakuta Empire were among them. Both of these empires competed with one another for domination. Gopala founded the Pala Empire around 750 AD. He was not a hereditary king; however, he was chosen by the area's prominent men to prevent chaos. His son Dharmapala succeeded him in 770 and ruled until 810. Devapala, Dharmapala’s uncle, succeeded him in 810 and ruled for 40 years. Pragjyotishpur (Assam) and parts of Orissa were added to his jurisdiction. The Pala rulers were ardent supporters of Buddhist education and worship.²² They established Vikramsila University and resurrected Nalanda University (near present-day Patna, Bihar) (in present day Bhagalpur, Bihar). Dharmapala founded Vikramsila University. The rulers of Pala had strong cultural links to Tibet. They also had strong trading relations with Southeast Asia, which contributed significantly to the Pala Empire's success. After Devapala's assassination; the Pala Empire began to fall apart. Rampala was the last powerful king²³.

The Gurjara-Pratiharas, or simply the Pratiharas, ruled western and northern India from the eighth to the eleventh centuries CE. The fortunes of this dynasty improved under Nagabhata I (730–760 CE), who conquered Arab invaders. The most well-known king of this dynasty was Bhoja or Mihira Bhoja (836-885 CE). The Pratiharas were renowned for their patronage of architecture, sculpture, and temple construction, as well as their constant warfare with contemporary forces such as the Palas of eastern India (8th century CE - 12th century CE) and the Rashtrakuta Dynasty of southern India (8th

¹⁹Majumdar, R.C. (ed). The History and Culture of the Indian People Volume III the Classical Age. Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, 2019.

²⁰K. M. Panikkar, ‘The founding of the Kashmir State A Biography of Maharajah Gulab Singh 1792-1858’, life ,1 January 2019.

²¹Majumdar, R. C. The History of Bengal Hindu Period. B.R. Publishing Corporation, 2019.

²²Susan L. Huntington (1984). The "Pāala-Sena" Schools of Sculpture. Brill Archive. pp. 32–39. ISBN 90-04-06856-2.

²³Dinesh Chandra Sircar (1975–76). "Indological Notes - R.C. Majumdar's Chronology of the Pala Kings". Journal of Ancient Indian History. IX: 209–10.

century CE - 10th century CE)²⁴. The actions of Nagabhata I were critical in halting the Arab invasion of India. The Pratiharas remained formidable foes of the Arabs. They also made significant contributions to sculpture, music, and trade. The sculptural forms that emerged during this period were distinctive and had a lasting impact on subsequent trends. During their reign, the nagara style of Hindu temple architecture flourished.²⁵ The Pratiharas were the most powerful dynasty in mediaeval northern India, and their demise marked a turning point in the country's political collapse after the Muslim invasion.

From the eighth to the tenth centuries CE, the Rashtrakuta Dynasty ruled parts of South India. Their monarchy encompassed the entire present state of Karnataka as well as portions of the new Indian states of Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, Maharashtra, and Gujarat at its peak. Many Islamic travelers and scholars, especially Al-Masudi and Ibn Khordadbeh (10th century CE), wrote that all other kings of India at the time prayed to the Rashtrakutas as a higher power and prostrated themselves in worship before them, such was their influence and impression.²⁶

The downfall of the Rashtrakutas began with the defeat and assassination of Khottiga Amoghavarsha by a Paramara dynasty king in 972 CE, with the capital Manyakheta plundered and burned, severely denting the dynasty's prestige. Indra IV, the kingdom's last emperor, committed suicide in 982 CE by executing a Jaina ritual known as Sallekhana, which involves fasting until death.²⁷ The Rashtrakuta Dynasty ended, but their influence endured. Parts of their realm were annexed by later Chola and other dynasties, but their governance structure and a number of other cultural traditions were adopted by subsequent empires. The temples at Pattadakal or the Ellora buildings, as well as various mediaeval literary works, attest to the Rashtrakutas' fine taste and patronage.²⁸

In 1175 A.D., Muhammad Ghori conquered India. He marched towards Delhi after conquering Multan and Punjab. In the First Battle of Terrain in 1191 A.D., the valiant Rajput chiefs of northern India led by Prithvi Raj Chauhan defeated him. The poem Prithviraj Raso, translated by British officer and Oriental scholar James Tod, follows the life of Prithviraj Chauhan, who is best known for his fight with invader Muhammad Ghori in the Second Battle of Tarain (1192)²⁹. The defeat of Chauhan enabled the Ghurid forces to advance through the Ganga-Yamuna Doab, laying the groundwork for Muslim rule in the Indian subcontinent for centuries³⁰. Muhammad Ghori returned after a year to avenge his defeat. In 1192 A.D., the Rajputs were defeated in another fierce battle in Terrain, and Prithvi Raj Chauhan was captured and executed. The Second Battle of Terrain, on the other hand, was a decisive battle that established Muslim rule in northern India³¹.

Muhammad Ghori (1173-1206 CE), also known as Shihab al-Din (also Muizz al-Din Muhammad ibn Sam), was the Muslim emperor who laid the basis for the subsequent Islamic ruling dynasties in India, which reached their apex later

²⁴ Singh, U. History of Ancient and Early Medieval India. Pearson Education, 2009.

²⁵ Tripathi, R. S. History of Ancient India. Motilal Banarsidass, 2006.

²⁶ Singh, U. History of Ancient and Early Medieval India. Pearson Education, 2009.

²⁷ Nilakanta Shastri, K. A. A History of South India. OUP India, 1971.

²⁸ Thapar, R. A History of India. Penguin Books, 1990.

²⁹ Freitag, Jason (2009). Serving empire, serving nation: James Tod and the Rajputs of Rajasthan. BRILL. pp. 3–5. ISBN 978-90-04-17594-5.

³⁰ D. C. Ganguly (1981). R. S. Sharma (ed.). A Comprehensive History of India (A. D. 300-985). 3, Part 1. Indian History Congress / Orient Longmans. p. 704.

³¹ Ahmed, Farooqui Salma (2011). A Comprehensive History of Medieval India: From Twelfth to the Mid-Eighteenth Century. Dorling Kindersley Pvt.

in the Mughal Empire (1526-1857 CE). Together with his elder brother Ghiyath al-Din Muhammad (1139-1202 CE), he ruled the Ghurid or Ghorid Empire, which included parts of modern-day Afghanistan, Pakistan, India, Iran, Bangladesh, Turkmenistan, and Tajikistan³².

Muhammad Ghori's campaigns in India and elsewhere have left an indelible mark on history. He had no children and was replaced by his slave generals, whom he raised as his own sons, providing them with superior martial training and schooling to prepare them to be capable administrators in the future. Qutb al-Din Aibak rose to become the Sultan of Delhi and Hindustan's most powerful figure. He was well-versed in state and military affairs, having accompanied Muhammad on his numerous campaigns³³. When Aibak ascended to the Delhi throne, he conquered a vast swath of the Indian plains, much more than Muhammad had intended. He was also a capable dictator who solidified his kingdom by being fair and compassionate to his people. Unfortunately, he died soon after while playing polo in 1210 CE. Even today, Aibak's presence can be seen in the numerous monuments that dot Delhi. His dynasty is also known as the Mamluk or Slave Dynasty³⁴.

Shams-ud-din Iltutmush, a slave of Qutub-ud-din Aibak, was the next powerful king of the Slave dynasty. Iltutmush ruled for about 26 years, from 1211 to 1236, and is credited with laying the foundations for the Sultanate of Delhi. Razia Begum, Iltutmish's competent daughter, was the first and only Muslim woman to sit on the throne of Delhi.³⁵ She fought against rebels bravely but was eventually defeated and killed. In 1245, Nasir-ud-din Mahmud, Iltutmish's youngest son, became Sultan. Despite the fact that Mahmud ruled India for nearly two decades, the majority of power remained in the hands of Balban, his Prime Minister. Balban took over the throne after Mahmud died. Balban centralized the empire's administrative structure and finished the work begun by Iltutmush during his reign, which lasted from 1266 to 1287³⁶.

The Sultanate became weak after Balban's death, and there were a series of revolts. The nobles installed Jalal-ud-din Khilji on the throne during this period. This was the start of the Khilji dynasty. This dynasty came to power in 1290 A.D. Jalal-ud-din Khilji's nephew Ala-ud-din Khilji in 1296 devised a plot to assassinate Sultan Jalal-ud-din and declared himself Sultan. Ala-ud-din Khilji was the first Muslim emperor to have an empire that stretched almost the entire length of India, from north to south³⁷. He captured Gujarat, Ranthambhor, Chittor, Malwa, and Deccan after several wars. Several times during his 20-year rule, Mongols attempted but failed to invade the region. Ala-ud-din Khilji learned the importance of fortifying and preparing his military forces as a result of these invasions. The Khilji dynasty came to an end with the death of Ala-ud-din in 1316 A. D.³⁸.

Ghyasuddin Tughlaq, the Governor of Punjab during Ala-ud-din Khilji's rule, ascended to the throne in 1320 A.D. and founded the Tughlaq dynasty. He captured Warrangal and suppressed a Bengal rebellion. Muhammad-Bin-Tughlaq

³²Chandra, Satish (2006). *Medieval India: From Sultanat to the Mughals (1206–1526)*. Part One. Har-Anand Publications.

³³K. A. Nizami (1992). "The Early Turkish Sultans of Delhi". In Mohammad Habib; Khaliq Ahmad Nizami (eds.). *A Comprehensive History of India: The Delhi Sultanat (A.D. 1206-1526)*. 5 (Second ed.). The Indian History Congress / People's Publishing House. OCLC 31870180.

³⁴Peter Jackson (2003). *The Delhi Sultanate: A Political and Military History*. Cambridge University Press. ISBN 978-0-521-54329-3.

³⁵Kumar, Sunil (2007). *The Emergence of the Delhi Sultanate*. Ranikhet: Permanent Black. ISBN 978-81-7824-306-1.

³⁶ Satish Chandra (2004). *Medieval India: From Sultanat to the Mughals-Delhi Sultanat (1206-1526)*. 1. Har-Anand Publications. ISBN 978-81-241-1064-5.

³⁷ Sen, Sailendra (2013). *A Textbook of Medieval Indian History*. Primus Books. pp. 80–89. ISBN 978-9-38060-734-4.

³⁸ Mohammad Aziz Ahmad (1939). "The Foundation of Muslim Rule in India. (1206-1290 A.d.)". *Proceedings of the Indian History Congress*. Indian History Congress. 3: 832–841. JSTOR 44252438.

succeeded his father and expanded the empire to include Central Asia in addition to India. During Tughlaq's reign, the Mongols conquered India and were defeated once more³⁹.

Muhammad-Bin-Tughlaq moved his capital from Delhi to Devagiri in Deccan for the first time. Within two years, though, it had to be moved back. He inherited a vast empire, but many of its provinces, especially Deccan and Bengal, were lost to him. In 1351 A.D., he died and was succeeded by his nephew, Feroz Tughlaq.⁴⁰ Feroz Tughlaq did not make much of an effort to extend the kingdom that he inherited. He dedicated a lot of his time and effort to improving the lives of others. The Tughlaq dynasty was effectively ended after his death in 1388. While the Tughlaqs ruled until 1412, Timur's invasion of Delhi in 1398 can be considered the end of the Tughlaq empire⁴¹.

After the death of the last Tughlaq, Nasir-ud-Din Mahmud Shah Tughlaq, there was a lot of confusion in India. Khizr Khan, Timur's deputy in India and Governor of Multan, marched to Delhi at this time and defeated Daulat Khan, the military chief, to take the throne. As a result, the Delhi Sultanate's fourth dynasty rose to dominance⁴². The dynasty declared themselves to be Muhammad's descendants (Sayyids). After the rulers Muhammad Shah and Alam Shah ascended the throne, the dynasty originated by Khizr Khan and led onward by Mubarak Shah began to crumble, and the sultanate was voluntarily abdicated to Bahlol Khan Lodi due to their incompetence⁴³.

Sikandar Lodi (born Nizam Khan and died 1517), Bahlul's second son, was chosen to succeed him. In 1517, Sikandar's uncle, Ibrahim Lodi, ascended to the throne. Nobles called his brother, Jalal Khan, ruler of Jaunpur in an effort to split his empire, and his reign was troubled from the outset. In order to consolidate power, Ibrahim had his brother assassinated⁴⁴. The brothers were competitors for influence and wealth, according to Guru Nanak (1465–1539), and they lost any genuine concern for good governance; Ibrahim never really received the affection of his subjects. He instilled distrust in his subjects and even his nobles. In a military effort, Ibrahim attempted to retake Gwalior, but his luck ran out against Rana Sangha, the ruler of Mewar, who defeated his armies twice and drove him down⁴⁵. The Afghan nobles were dissatisfied with Ibrahim's rule and brutality, and sent for Babur, Kabul's emperor, to overthrow the Lodi dynasty. The rule of Ibrahim has been branded as tyrannical.

CONCLUSIONS

Daulat Khan Lodi, a governor in Lahore, and Alam Khan, Sultan Ibrahim's uncle, invited Babur to invade India. With the aid of this invitation, Babur was able to depose the Lodi rulers at the Battle of Panipat in 1526⁴⁶. Despite their internal difficulties, the Lodis were able to field a force of 100,000 men and 1,000 elephants against Babur's meagre force of

³⁹W. Haig (1958), *The Cambridge History of India: Turks and Afghans*, Volume 3, Cambridge University Press, pp 153-163

⁴⁰Banarsi Prasad Saksena. *A comprehensive history of India VOL.5*. Indian History Congress. p. 460, 461.

⁴¹Wolsey Haig (July 1922). "Five Questions in the History of the Tughluq Dynasty of Delhi". *The Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain and Ireland* (3): 320. JSTOR 25209907

⁴²Kumar, Sunil (2020). "The Delhi Sultanate as Empire". In Bang, Peter Fibiger; Bayly, C. A.; Scheidel, Walter (eds.). *The Oxford World History of Empire. Volume Two: The History of Empires*. Oxford University Press.

⁴³Jackson, Peter (2003). *The Delhi Sultanate: A Political and Military History*. Cambridge University Press.

⁴⁴Mahajan, V.D. (1991, reprint 2007). *History of Medieval India, Part I*, New Delhi: S. Chand, ISBN 81-219-0364-5, p.244

⁴⁵Srivastava, A.L (1966). *The Sultanate of Delhi (711 - 1526 A.D)*, Agra: Shiva Lal Agarwala and Company, p. 245.

⁴⁶Babur, Emperor of Hindustan (2002). *The Baburnama: Memoirs of Babur, Prince and Emperor*. translated, edited and annotated by W. M. Thackston. Modern Library. ISBN 0-375-76137-3.

12,000⁴⁷. Against all odds, Babur defeated the Lodi Sultan and seized control of Delhi. While being outmanned, his army won thanks to the use of cannons and the desertion of many nobles and soldiers from Ibrahim Lodi's troops. Babur, the first emperor of the Moghul Empire in India, was to transform the course of Indian history. Nanak chastises the Lodis for attempting to defeat Babur by magic and for failing to properly defend their domain. "When Mir Babur's invasion was announced, tens of thousands of Pirs attempted to stop him (using magic). However, no Mughal was blinded, and none of the spells worked "he penned⁴⁸. To conclude, India has been born and resurrected many times, and it will continue to do so. India is eternal, and India is still being developed. Consequently, the tales of Indian kingdoms, valor of the warrior, shifting dynasties is a saga which needs to be probed with care and concern.

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⁴⁸Cunningham, Joseph Davey (1853). *A History of the Sikhs.* London: John Murray. pp. 37–38.