Himalaya Past and Present Series

History and Culture of the Himalaya
(In 3 Volumes)

Editor K.S. Gulia
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Introduction

The coronation of Maharaja Yudhishtira was a very elaborate affair as befitted the times. The Mahabharata gives a detailed account of the gifts presented to Yudhishtira by the kings of India and neighbouring countries at the coronation ceremony. The Khasas and the Tangans with others are said to have brought in tributes of gold measured in drams, gathered from underneath the earth by ants. This is what those were called in the tribe who dug gold-bearing earth. These people endowed with great strength also brought chamars (yak’s tail) and honey extracted from the flowers that grew on the Himavat. The Khasas appeared in the army of Duryodhan and armed with swords and lances, fought with stones against Satyaki. Fighting with stones was well known in these hills. The folklore mentions such warfare. Khasas ruled in the upper reaches of the Himalayas.

This has been discussed in Historical Prospectives.

Mahabharata happened five thousand years ago in the plains of Punjab, in which innumerable races then thrived taking part in this Great War from either side. Pulinda, Sabaras, Mutib, Kirata, Kol, Kunet, Kuninda, Naga, Saka, Tangan, Tirgata, Vidyadharas, Yauyeda, all these tribes have been there in India from time immemorial. All these have a mention in Mahabharat, Upashadsh and Puranas. Not only that, kings and armies came from as far as Cambodia in the East and Central Asia in the West to fight in this War. Five thousand years is not a small period in any country’s history. Some of them had come Central Asia and settled in the north of India. Others came in their wake, some weaker, some stronger. The weaker perished, the stronger prevailed and threw out the already settled tribes. This went on till the arrival of the Sultanate when finally the followers of Islam forcibly changed the religious, cultural and social canvass of India forever.

Chapter Two deals with the History of Kangra region, now in Himachal Pradesh. Huenen Tsang, the Chinese traveler, mentions a state lying 117 miles from Jalandar. The Vishnu Purana mentions a people called Ulutun or Kuluta, who were the same traveler who have also been mentioned in Itmayana and Brihat Sanhita. Taken together, one can conclude that the modern Kulu must be only an abbreviation of the ancient name. The principality of Kulu is one of the eleven states lying between the Satlaj and the Ravi. History of this region from the days of Huenen Tsang and
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earlier to the time when Raja Ranjit Singh of Punjab ran over this region has been traced in this chapter.

Chapter Three gives a historical sketch of the Himalayas. The history of the Himalayan region of Garhwal, Kumaon and Himachal Pradesh tends to indicate a hoary antiquity. This has been established by archaeological investigations and direct and indirect literary sources. Excavations of stone implements by anthropologists and archaeologists in the Beas-Banganga valley of Kangra, Sirsatuj valley of Nalagarh and Bilaspur-Markanda valley of Sirmaur are the sure evidences of existence of prehistoric man in the Siwalik region. Human existence in prehistoric time is also testified by the discovery of stone tools, found embedded in the fashioned boulders and gravels in the Siwalik foothills. This has been discussed at length in this chapter.

Chapter Four discusses the Ranas and Thakurs of Western Himalayas. Petty chiefs, bearing the title of Rana or Thakur, exercised authority, either as independent rulers or under the suzerainty of a paramount power. The first historical notice of the political condition of the hills is to be found in the pages of the Muhammadan historian Ferishta. Certain inscriptions have been found, which throw light upon the private and public relations of these ancient barons. Apart from Ranas and Thakurs, the chapter devotes a considerable portion to the political situation prevailing in the Himalayas since earlier times and also the relations of the Himachal princes with the next-door neighbour in Ladakh and the social and racial influence they had on each other.

Chapter Five is on Central Himalayas, which comprise of the regions of Uttarakhand and Kumaon. Early travelers have recorded their impressions of this region. Sir Francis Younghusband, in an address to the Royal Geographic Society in 1921 observed, ‘it is here that the mountains make their profoundest impression on the seeker where he might find the deepest correspondence between the spirit in the mountain and the spirit in himself and see the full perfection of beauty.’

In this Mahabharata detailed descriptions have been given about the various kingdoms and places which were subjugated by Arjuna. The Garhwal region has also been referred to as Panchaldevy and many places named after the Pandavas. The great epics Ramayan and Mahabharata describe it as a kingdom of gods. Rishi Ved Vyas lived near Mana and surveyed the whole of Uttarakhand.

Over the centuries because of spread of Buddhism, Brahminism had receded in Uttarakhand. After the arrival of Shankaracharya, Brahminism again came to the fore in Uttarakhand region. The history of Uttarkhand has been discussed in Chapter Six.

The origins of the people of the Kumaon area are shrouded in ambiguity. Kols or Kunindas could have been there since the days of Mahabharat or they could have come from the West around the time of Gupta dynasty; this has not been established. From there is taken up the history of Kumaon over a period of fifteen hundred years till after India’s Independence, when the region was merged with India. This has been discussed in Chapter Seven.

Chapter Eight, Nine and Ten discuss Nepal at length. Not much is known about the history of Nepal. It is assumed that it began with Kiratas. They were Hindus and arrived in Nepal in 7th and 8th century BC from India. Buddhism also arrived the Kirati time and it is claimed that the Buddha, together with his disciple Ananda, visited the Kathmandu Valley and stayed for a time in Patan. Around the third century BC the great Indian Buddhist emperor Ashoka is said to have also visited the Kathmandu Valley; it is believed he erected four stupas (pagodas) around Patan and enlarged the great stupas of Bodhnath and Swayambhunath.

Chapter Eleven is about Sikkim. It is believed in Sikkim that the Rajas of Sikkim came of Indian origin by descent through the first king of Tibet. It was the fifth son of Kosala, Prasenjit who crossed the Himalayas and reached Tibet, where through fate he was pronounced the king. From that time long back in antiquity, this Chapter traces the history of Sikkim till its merger with the Indian Republic in 1975.

Chapter Twelve deals with Tibet. Nobody in the outside world knew anything about Tibet for millennia. Till the seventeen century when two catholic priests managed to go to Tibet, she had contact only with China and Mongolia. It was only when the Europeans had set foot in Eastern India in the late seventeen century that they sent out parties to explore the regions beyond Nepal. They had come to know something about Nepal. It was from the Nepalese living near the snowline that they came to know about Tibet. There had been a mention of Tibet in Sanskrit literature as Bhota, but nobody was sure where this land was.

The history of Bhutan is deeply wrapped in the mystery of the past because of a number of reasons. It is predominantly a pastoral-nomadic community, which practiced transhumance. Such communities tend to be very rich in oral tradition in the absence of facilities for keeping written records. But in such societies over millennia facts and fictions get inseparably inter-mixed, thereby causing damage to historical authenticity. The history, legends and religion of Bhutan have been discussed in Chapter Thirteen.

Chapter Fourteen, Fifteen and Sixteen deal with McMahon line in the Northeast of India.

The tribal lived as they always had done along the McMahon Line, an imaginative line drawn on the map of that area of Northeast contiguous to Tibet. The Tibetan tax collectors appeared at Tawang and at one or two other points on the Upper Subansiri and Sing and as far as Walong.
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But it is generally true that 90 per cent of what is now Northeast was a much terra incognita in Lhasa as it was in Delhi or Shillong, let alone in Peking which was never remotely interested in the area except during certain army campaigns concerning their own sovereignty. According to historical records of the British India Government, there was a gap of years when any Government official visited those areas. Even the tribal did not know whether they belonged to Tibet or to India. It was only when the Indian administrators visited them that they realized they were living in India. These chapters give a very comprehensive account of the history of McMahon line.

1

Distribution of Ancient Communities in the Himalaya

The indigenous communities of India, most of whom have remained unique in respect of their culture and traditions, are numerous and some of them are numerically strong. They are generally put under two classes: those who originally entered India from the northeast through Tibet (and are described as exhibiting the characteristics of the Chinese race), and those who came through the Himalayan passes and are generally regarded as of the Aryan origin.

In ancient times, these communities held possession of India, but were gradually driven from the plains into the hilly regions, forests and other inaccessible tracts, which they made their homes, and in which till the present day, they are generally found. The following pages take an overview of such communities.

Bhotiyas

Bhotiyas are actually an agglomeration of independent and mutually exclusive sub-groups like the Tolchchhas, the Marchchhas and the Jads, residing mainly in the frontline areas bordering on Tibet. They are a loosely knit indigenous community, having their permanent abode in the seven river valleys—Bhairath-Jahnavi-Ganga in Uttarkashi district; Alaknanda and Dhauliganga in Chamoli district; Gori Ganga, Darma or Eastern Dhauli; Kali and Kuti Yankti in Pithoragarh district in the inner Himalaya, which sprawl across three districts—Uttarkashi, Chamoli and Pithoragarh of the Uttarakhand division in Uttar Pradesh.

The people of the upper Kinnaur, Lahul and Spiti, locally known as the Bhot, are akin to the people of western Tibet. They are perhaps the descendants of those, who migrated under adverse political conditions from Tibet. The Spitians are Buddhist by religion, while the inhabitants of Lahul and Kinnaur are half-Buddhist and half-Hindu with a varnish of Hinduism.

A Mixed Race

The name Bodhi has been derived from the Tibetan. Tibetan themselves call their country Bod-Yul. Bod is believed to be the name of their race.
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In ancient literature, Tibet was known as the Bhot Desk. Tibetans were called Bhots and their language Bhoti. From such an origin, many communities in some of the Himalayan regions are known as Bodh or Bhot or Bhotiya or Bhutwal. The Bodhs or Bhots are found in Spiti and upper Lahul as also in the Patan valley of Lahul.

The ancestors of Bodh or Bhots came from Tibet and its surrounding countries, mainly in the 7th and 8th centuries A.D. Many of these invaders settled down in these areas and mingled with the aborigines by marriage and other mode of social intercourse. It is believed that the people called 'Bhotiya' and the areas inhabited by them as 'Bhot'. In the records of the Tartar Liaoos in the 11th century the name Tibet is written as T' u-po-te in which the latter syllable represents 'Boa'. The Chinese character for 'po' has also the sound 'fan' and with the addition of 'Si' that portion of Tibet to the north of Kumaon is called 'Si'-fan and 'Ta-pote'.

Dialects and Literature

Neither the dialects of Kumaon, Garhwal and Himachal nor the folk literature and tradition of these places, use the term 'Bhotiya' for these people. In these dialects Bhot is used for Tibet and Bhotiya for Tibetan. The goods coming from Tibet are called Bhotiya goods and Tibetan dogs are called Bhotiya dogs. These people are better known in Kumaon as shaukas. Generally, shauka dialects are included in the category of Sino-Tibetan or Tibeto Burmese language families. The elderly Shankha and Sikkim, are conversant with Tibetan, Nepal, Kumaon, Garhwal dialects.

Thus, the term Bhotiya is a generic and includes the Shaukas of Musuniar (Pithoragarh), Ranges of Diarchula (Pithoragarh), Tolchas and Marchchhas of Niti and Mana valleys (Chamoli) and Jads of Harso (Uttarkashi).

Theory of Tibetan Origin of Bhotiya

According to some western scholars the ancestors of Bhotantiks were of Tibetan origin. Atkinson created this confusion. He points out, "That the Bhotiyas themselves are of Tibetan origin, is sufficiently shown by the language they speak, by their Mongoloid cast of countenance, and these unmistakable peculiarities that belong to the Tibetan race and which are as well marked in them as in the Haniya themselves. The Bhotiyas are, however, little inclined to admit this origin theory about them." In the same way, E.H. Hutton in his book Caste in India, presents another illusionary theory about the Bhotantiks. "A Mongoloid type of the lower Himalayas claiming origin from Bhutwal in Nepal and now transformed into a Hinduised caste."
Sherring's Theory

In the words of Sherring, "The Bhotiyas are of Tibetan origin. It is true that the Tibetan and Chinese history do speak of Rajput colonies in Tibet in the earliest times, but whether Hindus or not, there is no doubt that they are Mongoloids, for their features betray them, and they eat and drink freely with the Tibetans." Customs and tradition beliefs and myths of Bhotias bely this assumption of Sherring. This assumption of Sherring seems to be unfounded by the customs and traditions, beliefs and myths of the Bhotiyas. The Bhotiyas have among them none of the doctrines of Buddhism, or the common practices of Lamaism. They have so little of the degrading immorality and demon-worship of the Bon-faith, which must have been in vogue in Tibet before the time of their immigration. Indian like to follow others. Taking a cue from these wasturn scholars, they also mistook the Bhotantiks of the Tibetan for Mongoloid origin. M.S. Randhawa, in his book The Kumaon Himalayas also tries to consolidate this theory when he says, "the Bhotiyas, a semi-Mongoloid people belonging to the Tibetan branch of the Himalayan group of the Tibeto-Burman family, form on account of their physical and racial characteristics an interesting link between the Trans-Himalayan Tibetan descent and the Middle-Himalayan Khasia zone."

Criticism

Now, it can be noticed that had Bhotiyas been the immigrants from Tibet or had they been of Mongoloid origin, there must have been at least a little resemblance with the Bhotiyas, who migrated from Tibet and settled near Darjeeling. Sherring seems to have got confused by this superficial identity and mistaken these Bhotiya people of northern India for the Tibetan settlers. But Sherring's assertion bears no substance if seen in the light of the ethnic composition and ethnic settlements of Central Himalaya during the ancient times.

Theory of Indigenous Origin

The Bhill-Kirata tribe came into contact with the Khasas, Mundas, Tibeto-Chinese, and Mongoloid people later on and mixed with them through blood relation. When did it started happening cannot be ascertained. That sort of exposure brought a change in their facial, physical and lingual character. Thus, the Bhill-Kiratas, undergoing this process of change, had been the ancestors of present Bhotantiks. Due to the age-old contacts with Tibet, it is natural that many Tibetan words should creep into the dialect the Bhotantiks and in the same way many of the Kumaoni and Garhwali terms may find place in their dialect. But, the presence of many terms of Kinnar dialect in Bhotantik dialect consolidates the assumption that the present-day Bhotantiks have their roots in the ancient Kirata-Kinnar community. A few may be seen in the following table.
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**Conclusion**

The, about the origin and identity of the Bhotiyas of Central Himalayan regions of Kumaon and Garhwal does not owe its origin to the Tibetans. The land of the Bhotantiks had been the playground of different races, communities and cultures. It is, therefore, not something very unnatural that the Bhotiyas manifest the Mongoloid characteristics in their physical appearance. But, this superficial similitude should not distract one from the deep roots of their culture and it should not be assumed that the Bhotiyas are of Mongoloid or Sino-Tibetan origin.

**Darads**

The Puranic application of the name may not have extended as far as Ladakh. These people, who were the Mlechchhas according to Manu, lived in Dardistan, the ‘Daradai’ of Ptolemy, where the mountains were of “surpassing height.” Stein writes that their seats, “extended from Chitral and Yasin across the Indus regions of Gilgit and Bunji to the Kisanganga valley in the immediate north of Kashmir.” The Darad country of *Ain-i-Akbari* refers to the very same region. Megasthenes has described the Dardai (Darads) as an almost savage wild tribe, who dug the earth for gold by means of ants, alluding to a type of hound.

**Darads in Megasthenes Indika**

Megasthenes in his *Indika*, which has survived only in extracts, might have made that observation from hearsay. These Darads are alleged to have bartered their gold dust for the commodities of their requirement. They might have survived for centuries because, much later Kalhana
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**Distribution of Ancient Communities in the Himalaya**

The Gold Producers

Darads were connected with Ladakh from very early lines. Strabo connects the Darads with the gold-producing area, probably in Tibet. They inhabited the regions to the north and north-east of the Indus, extending from Chitralt and Gilgit to Ladakh and Tibet. The Vayu, Brahmanda, Markandeya and Yamana Puranas, mention the Darads with the Kambojas. The Padma Purana associated them with the Kshathras. The Brihatasamhita the Darads are grouped with the Abhisaras and the Tangans.

In the Vayu and the Markandeya Puranas the Darads are mentioned with the Tusaras, Barbaras, Paradas, Chinas, Khasas, Sulikas, Lampakas etc., all being the indigenous communities of Uttarapatha. The Darads, probably expelled the Kiratas, who were no match for them in bravery and cruelty. That community, along with other races of the same background, after capturing the best pastures, brought under their control the foothills of lesser Himalaya in Kashmir, Kangra in Himachal Pradesh, Uttarakhad and the western Nepal.

**Darads in Mahabharat**

This has been mentioned in Mahabharat. The country of the Darads was situated in the Himvat Pradesh. This has been onentional in Mahabharat. The Brahmanda Purana refers to the horses of Darad country. The Darads were originally the Kshatriyas but being degraded in the later times, Manu regarded them as the mlechchhas.

**Katyuris**

Katyuris were the first historical dynasty that had left some records of its achievements. They were perhaps the earliest rulers of Kumaon. What was their origin? Whether they were indigenous or immigrant? Scholars like Atkinson, Gairola, Powell Price, Pande, Goetz, Nautiyal and a few others propounded different theories regarding their origin.

Atkinson has spent his life on his research in Kumaon. He was the first to trace their origin from the Kabul valley and associated them with the Kators of that region. He says, “We may now conclude carefully and fairly make out a connection between the dynasty of Indus known as Kators and the Kumaon Katyuras. He based his views on the ancient folklore and tradition of Kumaon. “Traditions” according to him, “show that the Katyuras were a small Khasa branch, who finally dwelt at Joshimath in the north of Garhwal and later on migrated to the Katyur valley in Kumaon.” Powell Price, contended differently and said, “in any case it
would seem that they were a remnant of the Kuninda empire and thus their power presents no difficulties.” Pande traced the ancestry of Katyuras to Salivahana, the famous king of Ayodhya, who flourished...three to four thousand years ago.

First Musalmans Dynasty

After describing the political conditions of Kabul and the Kators, Atkinson says, “in 961 A.D. Alptegiin established the Musalmans dynasty of Ghazni and henceforth the Hindus were the objects of bitter persecution, so that many became Musalmans and others fled to the hills or to India.”

The Katyuras cannot be taken to have established themselves in Kumaon after 961 A.D. The accepted opinion has been to assign the Katyuras to c. 7th century A.D. or even earlier. Further, Atkinson contradicts himself when he says, “the Katyuras were, according to local tradition the ruling family in Kumaon both before and after the great religious cataclysm of the 8th century.” This statement totally discards his assumption that the Katyuras had migrated from Kabul in the 10th century A.D.

The Katyuras, though a hill community with their centres of chief activity in the Kumaon region, cannot be taken to be the remnants of Kunindas. To prove his contention Powell Price discarded the belief that the Katyuras had their homeland in the valley of Alakananda or at Joshimath. The Kuninda power started waning after they were repelled by the Kushanas from the foothills. Hence the presumption of their continuous rule for a thousand years at one place cannot be given much weightage.

The origin of the Katyuras, however, is still unsolved. This is really a complicated problem and without any definite clue. Nevertheless, the theory of Rahul Sankrityayana is fairly cogent. He says that the Katyuras and the tradition of Kumaon, which are the basis of theory, should contain some truth. Thus, we can safely assume that the Katyuras belonged to a small Khasa community which had its settlements in the valley of Alakananda.

Khasas

In the history of the Central Himalayan region Khasas remain a subject of interest. It appears that they established their settlements in the hills and valleys of Kashmir, Himachal Pradesh, Garhwal, Kumaon and Nepal, where their progress remained unabated for a considerable period. Who were they and wherefrom they migrated to this region, is a question much discussed by the scholars. It has generally been considered that the Khasas had a strong Aryan affinity.

Khasas in the Mahabharata

The Coronation are many of Yudhishtara was a very elaborate affair as befitted the times. The Mahabharata gives a detailed account of the gifts presented to Yudhishtara by the kings of India and neighbouring countries at the coronation ceremony. The Khasas, and the Tangas with others are said to have brought in tribute of gold measured in dras (jars) and gathered from underneath the earth by ants. The Khasas, ‘endowed with great strength’, also brought chasras (yak’s tail) and sweet honey extracted from the flowers that grow on the Himalay. The Khasas appeared in the army of Duryodhan and, armed with swords and lances, fought with stones against Satyaki. Fighting with stones was well-known in these hills. The folklore mentions such warfare.

Khasas in Puranic Literature

Khasas are mentioned in different Puranas. They are mentioned in Markandeya Purana, Bhagwat Purana Vaya Purana, Harivansa, and Raj Tarangini. In Markandeya Purana Khasas are mentioned in four places. They are mentioned as a mountain tribe with the Nihars and Gurganas. Pargiter suggests that the Nihars may be the Newars of Nepal and the Gurganas, the Gurungs in that country. The Khasas seem to be Khas of Nepal and Khasiyas of Garhwal and Kumaon. It is interesting to note that the ancient name of these Himalayan districts was Khas-des. In this Purana, the Khasas and Sakas, with other tribes, are said to be living in the Madhya desa the Middle Country.

The Bhagavata Purana mentions the Khasas as one of the outcast races, which recovered salvation by adopting the religion of Krishna. In the Vayu Purana, the Khasas are one of the races which Sagara would have destroyed but, for Vashishtha’s intervention. In the Brihaspathsamhita of Varahamihira, the Khasas occur several times. There were many that work at the latest belongs to the 6th century A.D. The Khasas are mentioned with the Kulutas (i.e., the residents of Kulu), Tangans and the Kashmiras. The Khasas have been put by Varahamihira first in the 12th century of Geography, and then on the north-west.

The Harivansa, like the Vayu Purana, records the conquest of Khasas by king Sagara. They are said to have participated in the attack on Mathura by the Yavanas (Greeks). In Kahan’s Rajtarangini, written in the 12th century A.D., there are many references to the Khasas. Sir Aural Stein has confined them to a comparatively limited region comprising the valleys lying immediately to the south and west of the Pir-Panjal range.

The Khasas were not confined to a particular location. In the Dronaparva, the Khasas are described to be hidden in the Mohan and Sinjar hills, and when the same part is born out from the Mahabharata and other sources. In his interesting article ‘On Mount Caucausus’, Capt. Wilford has made an attempt to trace the movement of Khasas from Kashgar to Kashmir and Kumaon to the Khasiya hill in Assam.
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Antiquity of Khasas

Khasas have been during in the Himalayan districts since millenia. Sir G.R. Grierson by observed that “the great mass of the Aryan speaking population of the lower Himalaya from Kashmir to Darjeeling is inhabited by tribes descended from the ancient Khasas of the Mahabharata.

We can safely surmise that the Khasas were of the Mediterranean stock and they were probably a branch of the Aryan race. Which after coming to India had migrated to hilly regions. They preceded the Vedic Aryans in India. They established their colonies in the hills and valleys of Kashmir, Himachal Pradesh, Garhwal, Kumaon and Nepal. Thus, they engulfed the whole of the cis-Himalaya from Kashmir to Nepal and turned Kinnar, Kirat and Naga territories into the Khasaland. They spoke a language closely allied to Sanskrit.

The Khasas were a war-like tribe and were well known to the ancient as well as the classical writers. They organized themselves into class and elected a strong-man called Mavi or Mavana. They constantly fought among themselves and plundered each other. Thus, the whole region was split into small units, which later developed into indigenous republics, called the janapadas in the Sanskrit literature.

It is very difficult to know if there are any Khasas surviving in the country. Many scholars like Rahul Sankrityayan profess by it Nevertheless, the area of Jaunsar-Bawar manifestly represents that culture. Some of the inhabitants of this place are still known as the Khasas. Their physical features and build-up even now suggest that they had affinity with the Aryans.

Tombs of Dwarahat

The tombs found in Dwarahat and Bageshwar belong to the Khasas, has no authentic support. Nothing definite can be said about them unless these tombs are exposed for thorough examination. A large number of such burials have, however, been excavated by the History and Archaeology Department of Garhwal University, which if associated with the Khasas will turn out to be of great importance for the historians and archaeologists equally.

A.H. Francke has put forth a few examinations after examining some of the graves at Leh in Tibet. He says, “the empire was a Tibetan one, according to our Chinese authorities, and it, therefore, appears strange that the skulls of the Leh grave are not those of Tibetans, but of Aryans. The value of the grave finds lies in this that they afford us a glimpse of the general state of civilization which prevailed in this empire.”

Kinnars

With the sole exception of the Rigveda, The Kinnars they are referred in all the ancient literature in some form or the other, though there is no unanimity on the question of their origin.

Kinnars in Mahabharat

They are considered a distinct race somewhere between human beings and gods. The Mahabharata mentions the Kinnars along with the Gandharvas, Yakshas, Siddhas, and Kimpurushas. In the Mahabharata, Kinnars and Kimpurusha are the two different people. In the Ramayana, the Kinnars are mentioned along with the Devas, Gandharvas, Charanas, Siddhas, and Apsaras. The Kinnars were an effeminate race, always represented as indulging in the amorous sports. Manu, the great lawgiver mentioned that the sons of Atri are said to be the fathers of Daityas, Danavas, Yakshas, Gandharvas, Uragas, Rakshasas, Suparanas and Kinnars.

In the Ramayana, Devas, Gandharvas, Charanas, Siddhas, and Apsaras are mentioned with the Kinnars. In the Matsya Purana, the Kinnars are asssociated with the Yakshas and Gandharvas. In the Vayu Purana, they are associated with the Gandharvas, Yakshas, Rakshasas, Daityas, and Danavas as the inhabitants of the mountains and as the singers, dancers and merrymaking people. The Shiva Purana mentions that the Yakshas, Rakshasas, Gandharvas, Charanas, Siddhas, Daityas, Danavas, Seseas and other serpents, Garuda and other birds, all the Manu Prajapatis, Kinnars, men etc. have worshipped the wish-yielding phallic image with great devotion and have achieved their desire surging in their hearts.

Kinnars in Raj Rajarangini

The Kinnars were born from the shadow of Brahma. The Amarkosha mentions the Vidyadhara, Apsara, Siddha and Bhuta having the same origin as the Devas. Except the Rakshasas, Pisachas and Bharus, all the remaining races are supposed to be well disposed towards the good. A tradition says that out of the eight Rishi-progenitors, the last three Pulatsys, Pulaha and Kratu produced no true Brahmans. It is said that thecffspring of Pulatsysa were the Rakshasas, Vanaras, Kinnars, and Yakshas and the offspring of Pulahas were the Kimpurushas and Fishachas. The Vishnu Purana says that one Priyavarta raja had seven sons. He divided his kingdom among them, and Jambudwipa went to Agnidhara. Agnidhara had nine sons, one of them was Kimpurusha. When Agnidhara divided his kingdom Jambudwipa, Kimpurusha got Hemkut region.

Kinnars in Bud and Jain Scriptures

It is Gautam Buddha had preached the doctrine to the Yakshas, Gandharvas, Asuras, Garudas, Kinnars. There is reputed mention of Kinnars in Buddhist and Jain literatures. In order to emphasize the concept of celibacy, Buddhist moral-code stressed on the bhikshus that if they had intercourse with Kinnaries, they will be held guilty of the highest offence, i.e., the parajika. They were apparently a semi-mythical race, as is indicated by a passage of the Uttaradhyayana Sutra. The
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Kinnars in Mahabharat

They are considered a distinct race somewhere between human beings and gods. The Mahabharata mentions the Kinnars along with the Gandharvas, Yakshas, Siddhas, and Kimpurushas. In the Mahabharata, Kinnars and Kimpurusha are the two different people. In the Ramayana, the Kinnars are mentioned along with the Devas, Gandharvas, Charanas, Siddhas, and Apsaras. The Kinnars were an effiminate race, always represented as indulging in the amorous sports. Manu, the great law-giver mentioned that the sons of Atri are said to be the fathers of Daityas, Danavas, Yakshas, Gandharvas, Uragas, Rakshasas, Suparanas and Kinnars.

In the Ramayana, Devas, Gandharvas, Charanas, Siddhas, and Apsaras are mentioned with the Kinnars. In the Matsya Purana, the Kinnars are associated with the Yakshas and Gandharvas. In the Vayu Purana, they are associated with the Gandharvas, Yakshas, Rakshasas, Daityas, and Danavas as the inhabitants of the mountains and as the singers, dancers and merry-making people. The Shiva Purana mentions that Yakshas, Rakshasas, Gandharvas, Charanas, Siddhas, Daityas, Danavas, Sesas and other serpents, Garuda and other birds, all the Manu Prapajati, Kinnars, men etc. have worshipped the wish-yielding phallic image with great devotion and have achieved their desire surging in their heart of hearts.

Kinnars in Raj Rajtarangini

The Kinnars were born from the shadow of Brahma. The Amarkosha mentions the Vidyaadhara, Apsara, Siddha and Bhuta having the same origin as the Devas. Except the Rakshasas, Pisachas and Bhutas, all the remaining races are supposed to be well disposed towards the good. A tradition says that out of the eight Rishi-progenitors, the last three, Pulatssya, Pulaha and Kratu produced no true Brahmins. It is said that the offsprings of Pulatssya were the Rakshasas, Vanaras, Kinnars, and Yakshas and the offsprings of Pulahas were the Kimpurushas and Pisachas. The Vishnu Purana says that one Priyavarta raja had seven sons. He divided his kingdom among them, and Jambudwipa went to Agnidhara. Agnidhara had nine sons, one of them was Kimpurusha. When Agnidhara divided his kingdom Jambudwipa, Kimpurusha got Hemkut region.

Kinnars in Budh and Jain Scriptures

It is Gautam Buddha who preached the doctrine to the Yakshas, Gandharvas, Asuras, Garudas, Kinnars. There is reputed mention of Kinnars in Buddhist and Jain literatures. In order to emphasize the concept of celibacy, Buddhist moral-code stressed on the bhikshus that if they had intercourse with Kinnaries, they will be held guilty of the highest offence, i.e., the parajika. They were apparently a semi-mythical race, as is indicated by a passage of the Uttaradhyayana Sutra. They lived on
the mountain Kailasha. The Kinnars were born of Arista and Kashyapa Kailasha and they lived in the Himalaya. They were the sons of Ashvamukhas, had a number of ganas, horse-faced and human-faced. The Vayu Purana refers to the hundred cities of Kinnars, situated near Kailasha. They also lived in the Mahanilla hill.

S.M. Ali, writes that the inhabitants of the Himalaya are Kinnars (of Kinnaradesha) and Mahadeva appeared there in the garb of a Kirata. He gives a narration from a Purana, where it is mentioned that the great grandson of Swayambhu Manu was named Kimpurusha, whom his father Agnidhara, while apportioning, Jambudwipa into nine parts, assigned the kingdom of Hemkuta. The Bhuvanaksa section of the Matsya Purana gives a description of Kimpurushavarsha along with Bharatavarasha, Harivarsha-varsha and Havartavarsha.

Kinnars in Scriptures and art

Thus, the Kinnars have been shown in sculptures in India, Burma and Ceylon. Judged by the sculptural and inscriptional indications, Gandharvas, Kinnars and other godlings were to attend on the principal deity, dancing, waving fly-whisks, offering garlands of flowers etc. Those legendary, mythological and literary descriptions of the Kinnars may be the facts. But, if they are not, they most probably indicate a very highly creative and inventive genius of the authors of these works.

Countless sculptures have immortalized them the Kinnars. They have found a prominent place in the India and Central Asian art. The whole ceiling of a cave at Ajanta has done them a great honour. Stories of the Jatakas have perhaps contributed in the depiction of several physical forms of the Kinnars, such as the horse-headed and half-human figures. The Kinnar and Yakshi motifs have also found place in the central Asian art. Central Asians have also depicted the Kinnars and Kinnaries in their works.

The Land of Kinnars

The land of Kinnars at one time was supposed to lie between the sources of the Ganga in the east and the Chandrabhaga river in the west. To the north of it was the southern part of Kashmir, probably Zaskar range, which was forming the northern boundary, and the southern boundary was the Dhauладhar. Its northern portion was Hemkut mountain, which represents the modern Ladakh-Kailash tran-Himalayan chain. It is mentioned alongwith Gandharvan mountain in the Amarkosha. According to a tradition, Hemkuta mountain was the dwelling place of the Kinnars, Gandharvas and Siddhas. That land was also called ‘Kimpurusha-Khand’ in the Puranas. In that sacred khand was a stream of honey that flowed from the palasha tree, and the residents, whose complexion was like that of a heated gold, used to drink and enjoy it.
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of the 6th century B.C., with the addition of Gujjara-Pratiharas, Guhilotis and Chapas.

The Kinnars, fond of singing and dancing and leading a frank and unhesitant life. Since they had been the dwellers of the holy land of Himalaya, they were revered and accorded the position of semi-divine creatures in the Puranas and other ancient literature. Bhattacharaya identifies the present-day Kinnars with the descendants of the ancient Kinnars. They have been associated with the Gandharvas, Yakshas and Kiratas, and were paid handsome tributes for their music and dancing described as harinanartyakah (one who dances like a deer). They have been described as gitamodinah (delightful in songs), devagayakah or svargagayakh (celestial singers). Kalidasa, in the Raghuvamsha, described them as singing the adventures and heroic deeds of Raghu. Bana has described them in the Kadambari as good musicians, singing songs. Thus, on the basis of above-mentioned sources, we can safely infer that the Kinnars of ancient times were singers and musicians of good quality.

Kiratas

Where did the Kiratas come from or they were the original inhabitants of India? The origin of Kiratas is still shrouded in mystery. The rationale of classification and explanation of the races of ancient India, based mainly on ethnological and philological considerations, have not yet been strictly and critically examined by the historians.

‘India’ As Pittard observed, was never an uninhabited land, over which a flood of comparatively later civilization were to flow to become the first ones to occupy it. From the Quaternary onwards, the soil of India has been trodden by the foot of man. There was no migration of the tribal population to India from outside at least during the pre-Christian era. In the ancient Indian literary texts, there is no indication of the foreign origin of the Kiratas or any other tribe. But, later in the 19th and 20th centuries different Indian and British anthropologists and linguists, their followers and other scholars placed all ancient Indian tribes of indigenous origin under different racial groups and tried to prove them of foreign origin.

Racial and Cultural Identities

The indigenous origin of Kiratas, in general as well as in particular, can be proved mainly by the evidences furnished by the ancient Sanskrit literature, which can be further supplemented and confirmed by other sources.

Vedic Literature

That the Kiratas were basically the cave dwellers and mountaineers is the impression given by the Vedic literature. The position assigned to
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Epic Literature

That the Kiratas were originally the cave dwellers and mountaineers is the impression from Sanskrit literature. The position assigned to them in the Yajurveda is indicative of the fact that they were the tribes of a low status. The allusions to a separate family of the Kiratas (Kirata Kula) in some of the Brahmanas also indicate that they were the original inhabitants of India. Relying on the information supplied in the Vedic Samhitas and Brahmanas, the name ‘Kirata’ was applied to the aboriginal hill folk. They were the class of people, who inhabited the woods and caves of mountains and supported themselves by hunting. They were barbarous non-Aryan tribes representing a degraded race.

Sons of Vishvamitra

The Pulindas, Sabaras and Mutibas (the cognates of the Kiratas, living together in the extensive forest tracts of the Vindhy region, who later merged with each other) are said to be the offsprings of the cursed elder sons of Vedic seer Vishvamitra. They were outside the Brahmanic community. That may appear as legendary, but its importance in ancient Indian context cannot be dismissed. After being subjugated by their counterparts, they fled away from the plains towards the hills and forests where they took up their abode. Because of being the forest-dwellers, many of them were included in the category of the non-Aryan races. That was the general trend.

Sutra Literature

Very early in time, in the Sutra period the Indo-Aryan communities were divided into two groups, the inner, or Vedic group and the outer or non-Vedic group. The racial and cultural admixture had mostly taken place among the latter group because of the mutual contacts. The inhabitants of the outer countries, i.e., those beyond the western and eastern frontiers were of mixed origin (Sankirna-Jati). The admixture of Aryans with the earlier non-Aryan ethnic strata represented by the aborigines became a regular phenomenon. The Kiratas of Vedic age were very much akin to the people of the outer countries.

Epic Literature

The Kiratas too were of mixed origin. They were both of Aryan and non-Aryan extraction. They, along with the Mechchhas and Haritas, are said to have originated from ‘Romakupa’, which has not been identified as yet. However from another literary record, which deals with the people of different parts of India, we find that one section of the Kiratas of the eastern region were of golden complexion and extraordinarily strong and nomadic, cannibals and fair looking, with sharp pointed hair-knots or conical heads.

The other section was of the island-dwellers, who were raw fish eaters and fierce by nature. From the details provided in the text, it appears that they were no other than the tribes of ancient Assam, who
Indigenous Origin of the Kiratas

Along with the Yavanas, Gandharvas, Cinas, Sabaras, Barbaras, Sakas, Tursaras, Pahlavas, Madrakas, Odras, Pulindas, Ramathas, Mlecchhas, etc. The Kiratas are described on one hand as the descendants of the Brahmins and Kahatriyas, and of the Vaishyas and Sudras on the other; in the context, the Mekalas, Dravidas, Pundras, Saundikas, Daradas, Cauras, Sabaras, Barbaras, Kiratas, Yavanas and other tribes are mentioned as the Kshatriyas, who were degraded to the status of Vrisalas to the wrath of the Brahmins.

Ethnology of Ancient India

Mahabarata says a lot about the Kiratas. The ethnology of ancient India, as illustrated in the Smritis is of considerable historical value. The Some interpolations are, of course, inserted in their works. The ancient view of ethnology was not exclusively based on the race theory but it was based partly on the theory of birth and partly on the theory of karma. The many writers lacked the modern concept of ethnology. We get more clear picture of their Kshatriya origin in the Manava, Dharmasastra. The Pundrakas, Odras, Dravidas, Kambojas, Yavanas, Paradas, Pahlavas, Cinas, Kiratas, Daradas and Khasas are said to have been degenerated to the rank of the Sudras from their original position as the Kshatriyas because of the omission of the performance of the sacred rites.

Kshatriya Origin of Kiratas

Fusion of races is always a contentious issue. This also happened with the fusion of non-Aryan elements in the Aryan population. It presented a formidable problem during the Epic age as well as in the times of Manu. The Kiratas have also been mixed with such races into all Kshatriya origin is questionable. But, after having deeper insights into the details their Kshatriya origin may be established. In the times of Manu from the Brahmana period to the age of Puranas, there had been an established tradition among the "Aryans of expelling a person who was not a person of Varan. Such society on the charge of violating the established norms and laws. Such person was called the Vrata. No fewer than twelve castes, as stated by Manu, owed their origin to persons ejected from the Kshatriya tribe for the above reason.

Initially, the outcasts were known only as the Vrata. But that practice continued further and later such outcastes were also known as the Dasyus.  The Dasyus, Mlecchhas, Sudras, etc. Actually, the Kiratas, Kambojas, Paradas, Pahlavas, Yavanas, Cinas, Daradas and Sakas were well-organized in the north-western region, were originally part of the Kshatriya stock. But, after having lost their contacts with Brahmins, sank to the ranks of Vrisalas or Sudras and Mlecchhas.
were originally living in the forests, caves of the mountains and in the marshy region near the sea-coast, which extended up to eastern Bengal.

In the east, they are included among the aborigines of the Ramayana age. In the twilight of the early literary description, it can be affirmed that there were two classes of the Kiratas, one of them lived in the mountain caves and were charming in appearance, while the other lived on the marshy sandy banks or on the island and depended on the aquatic source for livelihood. They had different appearance, character, manners, customs and modes of living under different circumstances.

A Degraded Race

In the Mahabharata, the Kiratas evidently appear as a degraded race, as the descendants of Brahmanas and Kshatriyas and as the Dasyus, Paundras, Dravidas, Simhalas, Barbaras, -Darads, Mlechchhas, Pahlavas, races.

Any race the Aryan conquered, they branded them Dasyus. It might have happened with Kiratas also. V.S. Agrawal, while giving the kinds of Dasyus, comprising both the indigenous and foreign races, i.e., had settled in different parts of India before the dawn of the Gupta age, and they were leading the life of Dasyus. Therefore a considerable section of them was Aryanised.

What was a Dasyus?

Dasyu was any race which was not Aryan. They stood outside the expression continued to be used disdainfully even by one group of the and rituals and spoke Mlechcha or non-Aryan languages were also Mlechcha, which were different from Aryavarta. The people of the eastern Himalayas, north-west and south were called Dasyus and Mlechchhas.

Kirata, which were dark-skinned, forest-dwelling and mountain-dwelling people, hostile to law and order, dressed in their counterparts as Dasyus. In fact, the tribal laws that the tribals had undergone some changes between the Rigvedic age. In the age of the Mahabharata the aboriginal Kiratas, their living outside the Aryan fold, have figured as the Dasyus.

Distribution of Ancient Communities in the Himalaya

Indigenous Origin of the Kiratas

Along with the Yavanas, Gandharvas, Cinas, Sabaras, Barbaras, Sakas, Tusaras, Pahlavas, Madrakas, Odras, Polindas, Ramathas, Mlechchhas, etc. The Kiratas are described on one hand as the descendants of Brahmins and Kshatriyas, and of the Vaishyas and Sudras on the other. In another context, the Mekalas, Dravidas, Paundras, Saundikas, Darads, Darvas, Cauras, Sabaras, Barbaras, Kiratas, Yavanas and other tribes are mentioned as the Kshatriyas, who were degraded to the status of Vrisalas owing to the wrath of the Brahmins.

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Initially, the outcastes were known only as the Vratas, but that practice continued further and later such outcastes were also known as the Dasyus, Mlechchhas, Sudras, etc. Actually, the Kiratas, Khasas, Kambojas, Paradas, Pahlavas, Yavanas, Cinas, Darads and Sakas, who were well-organized in the north-western region, were originally of the Kshatriya stock. But, after having lost their contacts with Brahmins, they sank to the ranks of Vrisalas or Sudras and Mlechchhas.
Degraded Members of Aryan Community

There might have been some other tribes of indigenous and foreign origins who were originally of the Kshatriya varna, but later became the degraded members of the Aryan community because of the reasons already stated and were designated as the Shudras exactly like those Aryanised groups, who became the Dasyus and Mlechchhas for the same reason. Most of the Kiratas of north-west were known as the Shudras.

The view expressed by Manu regarding the indigenous origin of the Kiratas in particular, has sparked off great controversy among the Indian and foreign scholars. One group of scholars has strongly supported Manu's view. The second group comprises of those whose statements are by and large paradoxical, these can be amicably resolved. The third group consists of those who are not inclined to give their assents to Manu's view.

Foreign Origin of the Kiratas

The Cinas and Kiratas, mentioned by Manu as degraded Kshatriyas, must not be regarded. This interpretation of James Taylor is not correct, as the ancestors of aboriginal tribes, but as the foreigners of the Hindu descent to whom the names of the tribes they conquered were given by the nation, from 'whose society they had been exiled. The Kiratas in this particular context are not described as the foreigners, but as indigenous tribe. Manu's theory of the Kshatriya origin of Kiratas, and their affinity with so-called Indo-Aryan race and Indo-Mongoloids have also been advocated together by Pargiter, without drawing any plausible conclusion. His argument, in favour of the Mongoloid extraction of the Kiratas, and that the view of Manu is of comparatively late age and the term 'debased Kshatriya' betrays the sentiment of the races of later age, is not valid.

Conclusion

The Kiratas originally lived in north-western India as a class of warriors and followed the Vedic rites and Brahminical code, but after coming under the foreign influence during the settlement of Graeco-Bactrians, Parthians, Pahlavas and the Sakas before the time of Manu (between 200 B.C. and c. 200 A.D.), they lost contacts with the Brahmins and abandoned Vedism, that resulted change in their social status. And consequently the Aryans, out of their contempt for them, reduced them to the status of Sudra, which was sometimes used for the degraded people too.

 Those Kiratas residing in the Central Himalayan region, extending from the Kali on the east to the Tons rivers on the west, comprising Garhwal and Kumaon region or Kurmanchal (present Almora, Nainital and Pithoragarh) were of the indigenous origin. This part of India was
one of the noted centres of human habitation in ancient times. The Kirata tribes had been living in different forest tracts since prehistoric age. In the Ramayan age Uttarakhand formed the part of north Kosala. Inspite of being surrounded by the Khasa, Saka, Gujara, Bhotiya and allied races of the north and by the speakers of Aryan language on all sides, they maintained their racial and cultural identities for a considerable period of time. But subsequently, because of the inroads of Tibetans in their territories, the racial fusion had started with them.

Kirata Settlements

As known from Rajatarangini of Kalhana. They like other non-Aryan races, were widely scattered over the hilly areas of Kashmir. In the Central Himalayan region, their expansion on large scale in the hilly tracts of Uttarakhand, i.e., Garhwal and Kumaon in the protohistoric period is a proven fact. The Pandukeshwar (in Garhwal region of the Central Himalaya) inscription as well as other epigraphic evidences of the 9th and 10th centuries A.D. also confirm Kirata settlements in Garhwal and Kumaon regions in the ancient times. They were pushed to the eastern regions by the Khasas.

Kols

Atkins mentioned Dums as the slaves of the Khasas. He assumed them to be the remnants of the aborigins of this region. The earliest inhabitants of the Central Himalayan region of Garhwal, Kumaon and Himachal, were the Kols. Raturi also assumed that the Dums are the aborigines of Garhwal. Who were these Dums? Przylusky in this regard says that originally this word 'dom' is the domba of the Kol-Munda linguistic family. D.N. Majumdar accredited this race with the development of neolithic culture in India. According to Majumdar, the inhabitants of Dehradun in Garhwal and Rawain in Himachal Pradesh are the progeny of three ethnic groups.

On the higher mountain slopes were living the people of Tibetan and Mongolid origin while, in the middle plateau fair-complexioned, tall and sharp featured people lived. They are represented by the Khasa Brahmins, Khasa Rajputs, Kunets and Bhattas. Along with those people live the indigenous Dums, including carpenters, artisans, Koli, Kolta etc. These people are comparatively dark-complexioned.

Descendants of Neolithic Man

Scholars as is their wont do not agree regarding the existence of these people in hilly regions during ancient times. According to Mian Goverdhan Singh, Kols were the descendants of the neolithic man in Himachal Pradesh. In Vedic literature they have been known as the Dasas, Dasyus, and Nishadas etc. According to M.S. Ahluwalia, it is believed
that when the inhabitants of the Indus valley spread through the Saraswati and Gangetic plains, they pushed forward the Munda speaking Kolarian people who used to inhabit this part earlier.

The Kolarian people were forced to migrate to the forests and difficult valleys of the Himalaya. With the passage of time that race spread over the whole of the western and central Himalaya. They lived in groups and had their own language along with their indigenous beliefs.

Those people might hare migrated to the hill regions from the Indian plains after their defeat at the hands of the more powerful Dravidian people. They had to abandon their hearths and take resort to the remote areas and thick forests of the Central Himalaya. No doubt, when the Indus valley civilization faced grave challenge from the invaders, and its inhabitants were compelled to leave their settlements, they in turn invaded the Kols, who then had no option but to seek shelter in the hilly regions of Garhwal and Himachal. Thus, the Kols came to this no-man’s land and became the aboriginals of the area.

**Kunets**

They are divided into numerous septs (khels, over a thousand in number). The khel is quite different from gotra.

The derivation of the word ‘Kanet’ or Kanait is from Kunit, meaning indifference or hostility to the Shastras. The Rajputs or Kshatriyas, who did not strictly observe the social rules, particularly in regard to wedding and funeral rites and in widowhood were called the Kunets. According to one belief, the Kania-hef (love for daughters) signifies that the Kanets did not kill, like the early Rajputs, their newly-born girl-child. Another theory is that ‘ait’ means ‘son’. King Kansa of the Puranas is known as ‘Kan’ in Pahari, so his sons would be called Kanait.

The Kunets or Kanets are the yeoman peasants of Himachal Pradesh. They are found in the Kullu valley, Mandi, Suket, Shimla and Sirmaur.

The Kanets have three groups Kash, Rahu and Niru. Kullu valley According to Sir James Lyall, however, there are only two divisions, the Kassiya and Rao. In the Shimla hills the groups are Kunet, Khasha, Rahu and Kuthara. The Kunet ranks above the Khasha, while both rank above the Rahu, who are votaries of Rahu and the Kuthara, devotees of Ketu.

In Kullu proper the Khasha ranks higher than the Rahu. In Saraj the Kunets are polyandrous, yet they profess to look down upon the Kunets of Kullu, and in Shimla hill the Kash are inferior to the Kunets. In Bushahar, the Kunets are called Jabs or Zads and form a separate sub-caste, with which the Kunets of the lower ranges do not usually marry, though they eat and smoke together.

Gustav oppenhuber writing about the people of Kunawar district (Kinnaur), remarks that the people of this country are generally known as Kunets or Kunait, but call themselves Mon. Sir Alexander Cunningham remarks “with-respect to the name of-Mon, which is given to the Kunets
that when the inhabitants of the Indus valley spread through the Saraswati and Gangetic plains, they pushed forward the Munda speaking Kolarian people who used to inhabit this part earlier.

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The Kunets have three groups Kashi, Rahu and Niru. Kullu valley Kassiya and Rao. In the Shimla hills the groups are Kunet, Kasha, Rahu the Kasha, who are vatoaries of Rahu and the Kathara, devotees of Ketu. the Kunets are polyandrous, yet they profess to look down upon the Bushahar, the Kunets are called Zabs or Zads and form a separate sub-though they eat and smoke together.

Gustav oppenheimer writing about the people of Kunawar district remarks that the people of this country are generally known Kunais, but call themselves Mon. Sir Alexander Cunningham in respect to the name of-Mon, which is given to the Kunets or Khasas by the Tibetans, it does not appear to be a Tibetan word, as it is used by the Kunets themselves to designate the ancient possessors of the hills, whom they acknowledge to have been their own ancestors. Another scholar, however, takes these Kunawari Mons together with the Kulindas, as a branch of the Gaudian tribe of the Gauda-Dravidian race, and even Sir Alexander Cunningham cannot deny the possibility of a ‘Gondish’ affinity of the Kunets.

Inhabitants of Hindukush

Rahul Sankrittyayan relates Kunets with the Khasas. According to Dr. Grierson, the Khasa tribe inhabited in the northwest of India on the Hindukush and its southern hills and the western Punjab. Those people were outcasted by the Aryans due to laxity in morals and violation of the Aryan social rules and for that reason they were called the Mlechchhas.

Dr. Bansi Ram Sharma conjectures, “it seems that the section of Khasa which was involved in digging and ploughing the land, later on used to be called ‘Khanait’ and it were those ‘Khanait’ who came to be known as Kanait”.

Kulindas

The history of Kulindas is unrecorded. Alongwith other tribal dynasties of India, Kulindas are supposed to have played a significant role in the political field in about the 2nd century B.C. Their history, is supplemented by the discovery of coins in many parts of India. Whatever might have been their role in the history of India, it is fairly certain that at least they had a powerful domination in the hilly regions of Central Himalaya for a reasonably sufficient time. There are references to them in the Epics and Puranas, and Varahamira (587 A.D.) also places them somewhere in the Himalayan region.

Pulindas, were scattered over different parts of the Himalaya and the Vindhaya. There is a mention about them in the Matsya Purana. Most of the texts mentioned them as the Kulindas and were the same as the Kunidases. The Kulindas were the inhabitants of the Himalayan region. The country of the Kulindas was known to Ptolemy in its Greek form Kullindra. The term Kuluna, mentioned in the Ganapatha seems to Dr. V.S. Agrawal to be the same as the Kulinda and the later Kuninda. In a passage of the Mahabharata, the Kulindas alongwith the Khasas, Ekanasas, Pradasas, Dirghavanavas, Tangans and Parantangas are located on the river Sailoda, flowing through the Meru and Mandar mountains.

Kunidas in Mahabharat

The Mahabharata as well as the Ramayana refers to the kichaka bamboos growing on the banks of this river. This river is identified by S. Levi with the river Khotan and it has been endorsed by Buddhaprakash.
The Matsya Purana states that the place where the river Iravati takes its rise is covered with kichaka-bamboos. This identification seems to be plausible for most of the tribes mentioned in the Mahabharata were living on its banks and were located near about the tract through which the river flowed. Those people are said to have presented to Yudhishthira the gold which was dug by the ants.

Many coins belonging to Kunindas have been found in the Ravi basin. On the basis of the find-places of the coins, the Kunindas are said to have occupied the narrow strip of land at the foothills of the Siwalik, between the Jamuna and the Sutluj, and the territory between the upper course of the Beas and the Sutluj. A passage of the Vishnu Dharmottara Mahapurana shows further extension of the Kunindas towards the west, between the Vipasa and the Ravi.

Aborigines of Hilly Region

Cunningham connects them with the present day Kunets of Kangra and the Trans-Satluj area, adding further that they are "the original inhabitants of the whole of lower slopes of the Himalaya from the banks of the Indus to the Brahmaputra. They were supposed to be the original aborigines of north India. And then he goes to associate them with the Khasas.

The Kunet population in Kangra and cis-Satluj area may be considerable but, nothing can be said about Garhwal and Kumaon region. Their identification with Kunindas is not without objections. Though Cunningham states that the census returns include all the lands in the Doon valley populated by the Kunet population, the present population, however, indicates that the majority of inhabitants comprise the Khasia and some other inferior castes. Hence, the contention of Cunningham about their identification with the Kunets of Kangra cannot also be taken to be very convincing. It was Ptolemy's who asserted that Kunindas were the upper Ganga valley. One can surmise that they were the aboriginals in the Himalayan region, who in the course of time, migrated to various hilly regions of north India.

Non-Aryan Inheritance

Gunningham most probably was correct. The Kunindas were probably valorous people but without having least political ambition in the beginning. In such a state of affairs, they might have led a nomadic life. They seemed to have gained experience gradually in the company of more civilized people—the Khasas. They progressed and even outbeat the Khasas in their advancements. We do not know, exactly when the actual rise of these people started. But on the basis of numismatic evidences, it may be said that they had established themselves politically by the beginning of 3rd-2nd century B.C. Powell Price stated that during the times of Ashoka, Nepal or Kumaon and Garhwal might have been under the kingdom of Kunindas.

Distribution of Ancient Communities in the Himalaya

After the death of Ashok the Mauryan empire started disintegrating. The emergence of tribal dynasties in the Indian political arena took place with full enthusiasm. Their successors, the Shungas, were not powerful enough to maintain the empire as before. Therefore, in about the 2nd century B.C. many known tribal dynasties had established themselves as the rulers. The Kunindas were one of those dynasties. Their is very well corroborated by the numismatic evidences.

Numismatic Evidences

Numismatic evidences support the fact that they occupied parts of Garhwal, Kumaon, Kullu, Kangra and other adjoining regions. They issued Garhwal, Kumaon, Kullu, Kangra and other adjoining regions. They issued coins from different regions and yet had some sort of homogeneity in coins from different regions and yet had some sort of coin-legends and other symbols. We do not have a complete series of coins from different regions and yet had some sort of coin-legends and other symbols. His date of death has been fixed by Cunningham about 150 B.C., since the coins were found alongwith about thirty coins of the Greek kings of Apollodotus in a field near Jwalamukhi. From Kumaon, the find of three silver coins bearing the names Sivadatta, Sivapalita and Haradatta, is also attributed to the Kunindas.

Known as the Almora coins, they are attributed to the 2nd century B.C. Palaeographically, the coins have been assigned to the Kunindas. Kuninda coins have also been discovered from Tehri Garhwal at Thapli, Garhwal University and as a result of an excavation conducted by the Department of Archaeology of Garhwal University.

It seems that the Kushanas were responsible at one stage in driving the Kunindas out from the foothills. The Kunindas, who were the downfall of the Indo-Greeks, moved forward towards the plains probably had nothing to do with the Kunindas, though he might have subdued the other tribal dynasties like the Audumbaras, Verakis and a few other ruling families of north India.

It is quite possible the Kunindas became powerful in northern India sometime before 350 A.D., they already had about 500-700 great republics, which saw their rise in the Himalayan region comprising Himachal Pradesh, after the downfall of the Kushanas.

The Kuninda probably disappeared from the political map of northern India sometime before 350 A.D. for, they are not mentioned in the pillar inscription of Samudragupta. But starting when they were for 4 anturier inscription of Samudragupta. But starting when there was no more evidence of the continuation of their rule. It may, thus, be safely assumed that the Kuninda state did not survive for a longer period and was over-powered by the Yaudheyas. Thus, we say that probably the aboriginals of the hilly regions of Central Himalaya, M.K.
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It seems that the Kushanas were responsible at one stage in driving the Kunindas out from the foothills. The Kunindas, who were the mountain-dwellers, moved forward towards the plains probably after the downfall of the Indo-Greeks. It seems, therefore, that Kanishka-I had nothing to do with the Kunindas, though he might have subdued the other tribal dynasties like the Audumbaras, Vemikis and a few other ruling families of north India.

It is quite possible the Kunindas became powerful and started snipping the Kushana terrilong and many have finally defeated them. The Kunindas, along with the Yaudheyas, probably constituted the two great republics, which saw their rise in the Himalayan region comprising Garhwal, Kumaon and Himachal Pradesh, after the downfall of the Kushanas.

The Kunindas probably disappeared from the political map of northern India sometime before 350 A.D. for, they are not mentioned in the Allahabad pillar inscription of Samudragupta. But starting where they were for 4 anturier would have been really an effort. There is also no other evidence of the continuation of their rule. It may, thus, be safely assumed that the Kuninda state did not survive for a longer period and was probably over-powered by the Yaudheyas. Thus, we see that the Kunindas were probably the aboriginals of the hilly regions of Central Himalaya. M.K.
Sharan is of the view that it is in any case more likely that the Katyuris were a remnant of the Kunindas.

**Nagas**

Nagas tribes are the worshippers of snakes-serpents. They established forceful settlements under different leaders seem to have inhabited the Himalayan region at one time. The Naga cult, much prevalent in these hills owes its origin to the same tribe. We find them flourishing in the plains even during the 3rd century A.D. under their king Bhaha Naga. This non-Aryan tribe of ancient times has been considered one of the ancient human tribes and the descendant of Kashyap and Kadru. The prominent among the Naga sons of Kashyap are Anant, Vasuki, Takshak, Karkotak, Paddam, Mahapaddam, Shankh and Kalik. The Nagas are mentioned as a powerful community in the Puranas and the attempt to destroy them was made through the ‘Snake Yajna’ of Janmejay. We find in Paddma Purana that due to the anti-people activities of the Nagas, they were cursed by Brahma to be finished through the sacrifice of the serpents by Janmejay and Garuda (eagle). The list of Nilamat Purana mentions thirteen tribes, including Pishacha, Darads, Gandharas, Sakas, Khasas, Tangans, Mandavas, Madras and the Nagas. This proves that the Nagas were the human beings.

**Nagas in Puranas**

There is description of two Naga-cities in the Puranas. Those were Mathura and Champavati. According to that description, nine Naga kings ruled over Champavati and seven ruled over Mathura. Atharvaveda, Taittiriya Samhita, Chhandogyanpanishad and Griha Sutras mention about the serpent worshippers, who are described as a tribe. Cunningham treats Nagas as the serpent worshippers. Furguson, in his work, *Tree and Serpent Worship*, considers the Nagas to be Turani people. Col. Tod in *Annals and Antiquities of Rajasthan* describes Nagas as the inhabitants of the Sakadvipa.

Nagas were the backbone and power of the Ausa community and after the downfall of the Nagas, the degradation of the Asuras took place in India. This has been mentioned by Banerji and Shastri. It seems that there was no difference between the Asuras and the Nagas and they were one and the same race. According to Grierson, the Nagas were the non-Aryan people and they were native of Huna region in Kashmir. They used to speak various languages and their main language was Krushaski.

**Naga Domination**

In Valmiki Ramayan. There is Bhagvati city. It was under Naga dominance. Ravana conquered that city. There are several evidences in the Mahabharata and Puranas to show that Taxila was the capital of the Naga chief Takshak. During the Mahabharata period there were many Naga settlements at Gangadvara and Arjun married Ulupi the daughter of Naga chief of that region. But it is difficult to tell anything about the relation of that most ancient Naga tribe with the Nagas of Kartripur.

The administration of Ganga-Jamuna region was under the charge of Sarvanaga, who was the Vishayapatra (provincial governor) of this region during the reign of Samudraraja. This is according to Indore grant of Gupta era 146-522 A.D. (Vikrama era 465). We can presume that his tenure was from 465 A.D. to 485 A.D.

The script of the Gopeshvara and Barahat inscriptions have an astonishing similarity with that of the Harana inscription. On the basis of similarity in scripts of both inscriptions, it appears that the Naga rule over Garhwal and Kumaon, preceded the rule of Maukhari king Sarvarman.

The following names of the Naga rulers are given in Gopeshvara and Barahat Trishul inscriptions.

**Gopeshvara Trishul Inscription:**

1. Skandanaga
2. Vibhunaga
3. Anshunaga
4. Ganapatinaga
5. Ganeshvar
6. Guha

**Barahat Trishul Inscription:**

In the absence of comprehensive analysis of those inscriptions, it is difficult to say in what way the above Naga chiefs were related to Vishayapatra Sarvanaga.

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Naga dominated in the Central Asian and Himalayan region. There is ample evidence to that. Particularly in Garhwal, several place names are known after that word. For instance we have Nagpur and Urgam in Garhwal, and the universal tradition associates the Nagas with the valley of Alaknanda. At present Seshnag is honoured at Parvati, Kushkeshwar, Bhekal Nag at Ratgaon, Sangal Nag at Talor, Bapna Nag at Kumaon; and Pushkara Nag at Nagnath in Nagpur. In the Doon valley also the Nagsidhi or Nagachaur hill is sacred to Baman Nag and in Kumaon we have the great Nag at Bastir in Mahar, Kedar Kalinag in
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Pungaraun, Karakotnag at Pandegaon in Chhhakhta, Vasuki Nag in Danpur and many others in Kumaon and Himachal Pradesh. Kalsi Rock Edict stood as a boundary between the Naga-Scythians of the hills and Hindustan. The Sakas are named with the Nagas and were considered of the Scythian lineage. Nagas were of non-Aryan origin.

Non-Aryan Origin of Nagas

The Nagas were of non-Aryan origin. They were serpent worshippers and valiant people. They ruled over the Central Himalayan region of Garhwal, Kumaon and Himachal Pradesh. Although their domination of these areas was partial only, they might have been subjugated by Gupta emperors to accept their suzerainty. In token of that, they were given high positions under the Gupta empire.

What however is beyond doubt is that the Nagas were inhabiting the hilly regions of Central Himalaya in ancient times. They might have been the rulers of the Himalayas.

Rajya-Kiratas

In ancient times, the whole Kumaon region of Central Himalaya was inhabited by Kiratas. They had a large indigenous population but, due to the arrival of other tribes, the Rajis had to confine themselves to the forests only and thus their population went on decreasing.

These people have thick lips tilting to outside, and curly hair. They are short statured, of flat face and heavy built. They were compelled by the Khasas and other Aryan communities to live in the forests in the ancient times. Atkinson finds “the Kiratas of somewhat Tibetan physique and the Khasas of equally pronounced Aryan form and habits, and contend that the Rajis of Askot in Kumaon may probably represent the intermixture of these two tribes. In the Brihatsamhita, the Rajya-Kiratas are placed in the region between Damaravana and China. This Damaravana (or Amravana) has been identified by Atkinson easily with the present Jageshwar. However, the above identification cannot be accepted. The region of Jageshwar is known in the Puranas as Damaravana and not as Amravana.

What Scholars Think.

Traill, the first Commissioner of Kumaon, stated long back that these Rajis “represent themselves as descendants of one of the aboriginal prince of Kumaon, who with his family fled to the jungles to escape the destruction, threatened by an usurper. He further identified them with the present day black-complexioned curly-haired Dums or Harijans of Kumaon. Ritter supported that contention and further stated that a “Hegro race may have been among the aboriginal inhabitants of the Himalaya. Pritchard conjectured “that the Rajis would be found to resemble the other numerous aboriginal tribes found along the Himalayan border, all
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The contention of Traill that the Rajis had an affinity with the Dums of Kumaon, is wholly baseless. The investigation of Atkinson in this direction is more important. He states that the present Raj is of Kumaon do not allow the Dums to enter their dwellings. They profess Hinduism like the other caste Hindus. This fact shows that they were not untouchables. They had independent entity from the Khasas and the Kiratas. He further opines that the Rajis, who were known as the Rajya-Kiratas in the Puranic testimony, were the aboriginals of Kumaon and its borderland. Although Nautilis’s assumption is near to reality yet, it cannot be accepted that the Rajis of present-day were the descendants of Rajya-Kiratas of the Puranic times. It seems that the Rajis were an ultimate intermixture of the Kiratas and the Khasas in the later course of times. It can be surmised that the Rajis are remnants of the Rajya-Kiratas. The Rajya-Kiratas were mainly the inhabitants of Kumaon region, but they might have had isolated settlements extending from the east of Ganga to the mid-Nepal region. The Rajya-Kiratas were probably flourishing in the aforesaid region when the migration of the Khasas, Kiratas and other tribes took place in the Central Himalaya.

Sakas

The Sakas are believed to have originally inhabited the land of Central Asia. Indians probably knew them first as the fellow citizens of the Achaemenid empire. When the Yueh-Chi’s were forced to migrate from their native land in China, they splinted into two hordes, the little Yueh-Chi settled in the northern Tibet and the great Yueh-Chi wandered off further west to the shores of the Aral sea, where they stopped for a while, displacing the inhabitants of the region, the Scythians or the Sakas, as they were known in India. The Sakas poured into Bactria and Parthia.

The Parthians failed to hold back the Sakas, except for a brief period during the reign of Mithridates. On his death in 88 B.C. Parthia was overrun by the Sakas, who however did not pause there, but crossing over the Bolan pass (near Quetta), swept down into the Indus valley, and settled in the western India, having eventually reached as far as Mathura and Gandhara in the north. The importance of Sakas in the political life of the country is borne out by numerous references in the Epics and the Puranas. The Katuris, the royal dynasty of Uttarakhand accepted Saka Shalivahana as their ancestor. Most of the scholars assume an existence of the Saka kingdom in Uttarakhand. Patanjali puts this tribe on the northern frontier region beyond the Aryavarta anterior to the second century of Vikram era and calls them Saka-Yavana. He puts the Saka-Yavana and Gandika (the native land of Gaddi tribe—the Gaderan in Chamba, Shaurya-Saughat of Kumaon
and Kraunch Managhat, mentioned in Mahabharata, 48/84) beyond the Aryavarta. The chief deity of the Sakas was Sun. His drapery in the ancient images is a long overcoat made of hide and long-shoes. We find such icons in Kashmir, Himachal Pradesh and in many parts of Uttarakhand.

Remnants of Saka Civilization

The graves discovered in Ladakh, Lahul, Chamba and Kinnaur, Lifa, Syun and Malari, are pointed out by Rahul as the remnants of the Saka civilization. A few scholars are of the view that there was similarity in colour, appearance and profession between the Khasas and the Sakas. Therefore, the Sakas seem to have mixed up with the Khasas because, Uttarakhand had already become the land of the Khasas and, the Sakas had also adopted the customs and traditions of the Khasas. The Sakas were a war-loving community. We have historical evidences about the establishment of their domination in western India. They swept the area of Mathura as well. Whatever may be the reason behind the advent of the Sakas in the Himalayan land, it is almost certain that they migrated to the region and left their marks on the local people and culture.

Sulikas

Chulikas, Sulikas, Pidikas, Sainikas, Bhusikas and Chudikas are the names which have been to Sulikas in ancient Indian literature. The janapada of the Sulikas was watered by the river Chaksu as we learn the Matsya Purana. The Bhatsamhita places the Sulikas in the north-western division. In another verse of the same text, the Sulikas are mentioned with the Vakkanas. They are also mentioned with the Gandharvas.

Taranath places Sulikas in the vicinity of Tukhara; Tukhara, Sulika and Vokkana were thus probably a contiguous group of tribal settlements. The Vokkanas were the people of Wakhan in the little Pamir plateau, which is watered by various tributaries of the upper reaches of the Oxus.

Other Central Asian Migrants

Gujjaras, Hunas and Sulikas were the other Central Asian migrants, who widely spread into India. This is the view of PC Bagchi. Sulikas probably arrived in India in the wake of Huna invasion from Sogdiana. In the Indian literature, they are generality mentioned in association with the foreigners like Bahlikas, Pahlavas, Cinas, Yavanas and Sakas. Matsya Parana alludes to their Central Asian origin while stating that the Chaksu flowed through the land of Sulikas.

To what extent the Sulikas were related to the hilly regions of Central Himalaya makes an interesting. S.P. Naithani, assumes that the group of Hunas, which migrated to Uttarakhand in the 6th century A.D. were the Sulikas. That group left their earlier identity—the Huna, and they are now spread upto Orissa. R.C. Mazumdar writes that the word Sulika has
two pronunciations—in the east, it was Sulika, while in the west, it was Sudika. Originally this was Sogda of the Pahalava language, which originated from Sogdian. Those Sogdians were the Heftalian people, who were tall, heavy built, having elongated nose. They entered Persia in 484 A.D., and, after uprooting the Sassanian dynasty there, they entered the Uttarapath. They were known as Hunas here. It is notable that the Chalukyas of Deccan, who are related to Chulikas, were the Sulikas or Sogdians.

Sulikas of Brahmpur

The Sulikas, after their defeat at the hands of Maukharis, were compelled to retreat to the Himalayan region of Kumaon, Garhwal and Himachal Pradesh. This is the finding of Gooj. There, they founded a vast empire with capital at Brahmapur (Taleshvar) which was destroyed by a Tibetan invader. The second branch of Sulikas founded a new state at Chamba-Bharmour in Himachal Pradesh. In order to establish his assumption, Gooj quotes that the Sulikas (Kusali) established their domination is Uttarakhand, and their power lasted till the advent of Katyuris.

It may be possible that the Sulikas migrated to the hilly regions of Central Himalaya during the Huna invasion of India. But it may be rather objectionable to put Sulikas on the throne of a reputed kingdom of Brahmapur in the absence of any contemporary evidence. It is further pointed out that had such an important event taken place, it should have figured in the contemporary writings. Finally, they were adopted and adjusted in the Indian social stream, wherein they occupied a place among the valiant Rajputs. Thus, their identity as the Sulikas lost its roots sometimes in the 8th century A.D.

Tangans and Partangans

The Mahabharata mentions the Khasas and the Tangans along with the Tirgarta. This indicates that the Tangans inhabited the western boundary of Garhwal, along with the above mentioned races. M.C. Joshi, referring to the views of Dr. Moti Chandra, writes that the Tangans, immigrants from Kashgar, used to deal in gold, precious stones and other such commodities in Srinagar, Kashmir. Tangan in the Sanskrit means borax (suhaga). It was one of the most important items of trade between India and Tibet apart from gold and salt. The people, who were engaged in the borax trade that flourished along the Indo-Tibet border, later on came to be known as the Tangans.

The Vayu Purana and the Brahmanda Purana locate the Tangans in Udichya and Parvatay divisions. The Tankans mentioned in the janapada list of the Garuda Purana, were the same people. In the Markandeya Purana, the Tangans are mentioned with the Darads and the Kulutas. The Padma Purana refers to the Tangans and Partangans, probably to
indicate two divisions of the same people. As to the location of these people, the river Chaksu, i.e., Oxus is mentioned as passing through their territory. It is also mentioned that the horses were found in the Tangan country.

**Abode of Tangans**

In the Mahabharata the Tangans have been grouped with the people of the Himalayan region viz., the Pulindas and the Kiratas. The Tangans, along with the Pulindas and the Kunindas, are said to be the subject of the Kirataraja, Subahu. The Tangans, along with the Paradas, Kulindas and Khasas, are stated to have presented to Yudhishthira the gold dug by the ants. At one place, the Mahabharata seems to suggest that the Tangans were the neighbours of the Sritrajas, identified with Kumaon-Garhwal. The horse of ashvamedha sacrifice of the Pandavas reached the dominion of the Tangans just after crossing the territory of the Kiratas.

The most famous settlement of the Kiratas lay to the north of the Kuru-Panchala dominion. The location of Tangans must be traced along the slopes of the Himalaya, somewhere between the Ganga and the Jamuna. According to a Jain canonical text, the Tangans lived in the hilly regions. Mlechchha Tangans are said to have lived in the northern regions in Avasyaka Churni. They exchanged gold, ivory and other commodities for the commodities of Dakshinapatha. As they did not understand the language of each other, they arranged their goods in a heap and covered it with their hand which they did not remove till their demand was fulfilled.”

Ptolemy mentions the Ganganai (Tanganai) as the inhabitants of the area lying along the eastern bank of the northernmost reach of the Ganga, and speaks of the Sarbos (Sarayu) flowing through their dominion. According to Atkinson, Tangais held the entire hilly region from the Jamuna to the Sharda. A city named Tanganpur, mentioned in an inscription (Pandukeshwara copper-plate inscription of Lalitasuradewa), is said to have existed in the upper course of Ganga near Joshimath in the Garhwal district of Uttar Pradesh.

**People of Mixed Origin**

After having examined the literary evidences pertaining to the Tangans and Partangans, one can assume that these people were of mixed origin. Mixed in the sense that they had in their veins the blood of the Kirata and Khasa races. They did not harbour any great ambitions of establishing colonies or their own dominions. Rather, they lived under the Kirata or the Khasa dominion as the law-abiding citizens. They were perfectly a trading and enterprising community, which had wider trade links, expanding up to the Dakshinapatha. They had their settlements probably within the present-day Garhwal and Kumaon region.

**Distribution of Ancient Communities in the Himalaya**

It seems that they had two settlements, one near the Oxus and the other in the hilly region of Garhwal and Kumaon districts. The former was probably known as Paratangan and the latter as Tangan. Because of their limited area of inhabitation in ancient times, it is difficult to trace out the remnants of the Tangans and Paratangans among the present population of the Himalaya. The only remnants of the Tangans is a Tangania subcaste among the Rajputs of Garhwal and Kumaon, and a place named Tangan exists between Chamoli and Joshimath in Garhwal district.

**Vidyadharas**

In ancient times there were many semi-mythical tribes in the Himalaya. The Vidyadharas appear to be one such tribe inhabiting the Himalaya near the source of Ganga. The Brahma Purana states that the SUVAS, who worshipped Narasimha got freedom from all pains and obtaine the status of gods, Gandharvas, Yakshas and Vidyadharas. The Vidyadharas were a handsome people. We find a very brief description of Vidyadharas in the Vishnudharmottara Purana. Vidyadharas are shown with their female partners, taking garlands in their hands, adorned with jewellery and ornaments. Besides, they are depicted in the sky or on the earth, holding swords in their hands.

That community was specially fond of flowers and garlands. They used to bestow flowers on the success of anyone or on the auspicious occasions. The Vishnudharmottara Purana mentions that once since Durbasha saw a beautiful Vidyadhari holding a garland of santanak flowers, which was making the whole forest fragrant. That Vidyadvhari was extremely beautiful. She gave the garland to the sage on his request. Chitakuta was the king of Vidyadhars, who visited all the places on a devratha.

**Yaudheyas**

The earliest reference about Yaudheyas existence occur in Panini’s Ashtadhyayi and Ganapatha. They occupy a very prominent position in the galaxy of ancient Indian republican races. Earliest reference about their existence occur in Panini’s Ashtadhyayi and Ganapatha. The latter work mentions them as an ayudha-jivi sangha i.e., a community living by the profession of arms. Cunningham identified the Sambracoe of Sabagrae of Orosius and Adraisto of Arrian with the Yaudheyas. But, on the evidence of find-spots of the Yaudheya coins, Jayaswal was inclined to identify the Yaudheya republic with the great republican territory beyond the river Beas, described by Alexander’s historians as “exceedingly fertile”, whose inhabitants were good agriculturists, brave in war and living under an excellent system of internal government. For, their military was governed by the aristocracy, which exercised authority with justice and moderation. Jayaswal had rightly pointed out that this description of Arrian tallies with that of Kautilya’s account of some ‘Varttasastropajivinda’. Altekar endorses the suggestion of Jayaswal.
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According to the Mahabharata, the Yaudheyas may safely be related to Yudhishthira. Cunningham believed that the Yaudheyas were the descendants of Yaudhya, a son of Yudhishthira by his wife Devika, daughter of Govasana of the Saibya community, as mentioned in the Mahabharata.

The Harivamsa, however, traces the descent of Yaudheyas from Nriga, a son of Usina (the younger brother of Sibi). That tradition is also recorded in some Puranas like the Vayu Purana (Ch. 99), Brahmanda Purana (III, 74), Brahma Purana, Matsya Purana (Ch. 48) etc.

**Descendants of Nriga**

On the basis of the Puranic evidences, A.C. Banerji holds the view that the Yaudheyas were the descendants of Nriga, who was a king of the Aila race. Pargiter is of the opinion that the Puranas connect the Yaudheyas with Usina, who dominated eastern Punjab during the post-Vedic period, and king Usina was the founder of the kingdom of the Yaudheyas, Ambasthas, Navarastras and Krmilas, and his sons colonized the town of Sivapura.

There is a similar sounding name of a tribe—the ‘Yautiyas’, whom Buddhaprakash identifies with the Yaudheyas. In his opinion the Yautiyas were none else but the Yaudheyas themselves. Buddhaprakash himself accepts that the association of Yaudheyas with Yudhishthira is based not only on the linguistic considerations but also on the historical traditions. He concludes that the Yaudheyas were stated to be the sons of Yudhishthira.

Later, they got bifurcated into two wings—one of them penetrated into Punjab in the late 8th century B.C. through the north-western passes, while the other went towards Iran and trans-Caucasia. The Yautiyas in Iran and India were connected with the expansion of Kus. The association of Yudhishthira with the Yaudheyas recalls the advent of these people in India during the age of Kurus.

**Yudhishthira’s Descendants**

M.K. Sharan takes the Yaudheyas as the descendants of Yudhishthira. He gives the following reasons in support of the view. Linguistic support, according to him, is the most convincing one. It must have sprung from the word Yudhishthira. Yaudhya is a clear derivative from the original proper noun and means a dynasty, but not a singular person.

Yaudheyas’ appearance in the court of Yudhishthira with presents after their defeat by Nakula, can in no way be considered otherwise as it has been customary on the part of the defeated (kings or tribal heads) to bow down before their superior counterparts, especially after a defeat in the battle, no matter what social or family relation (here father and son) they may have.

The Yaudheyas not only survived the Mauryan and the Shunga empire, but also the Kshatrapas and Kushanas. When the Indo-Greek power started declining, the Yaudheyas started gaining momentum and become powerful. They were, however, submissive with the Sakas and the Kushans. The appearance of word ‘dvī’ and ‘tri’ on the later coins of the Yaudheyas, confirm that besides the Yaudheyas, there might have been two other neighbouring tribes constituting the union, and it might have been the Kunindas and the Arjunayans, with whom they might have federated.

**Yaudheyas Conquer Punjab**

In the beginning of the 3rd century A.D., the Kushanas were gradually ousted from Uttar Pradesh and the eastern Punjab, where the Yaudheyas re-established themselves. It appears that the coins bearing the legend—‘Yaudheya Ganasa Jayah’, were meant primarily to commemorate their great victory. A 3rd century inscription of Bijayagarh (near Bhatinda, district Bharatpur, Rajasthan) refers to a Maharaja, Mahasenapati, erected by the Yaudheya people; ‘Yaudheya-gana puraskrataya, Maharaja Mahasenapati’.

A Mahasenapati of Viradvrā is referred to in a clay sealing from Rohtak.

The Yaudheyas, seemed to have also conquered the region of Garhwal, Kumaon and a part of Himachal during the course of their campaigns. That view has a corroborative evidence of coins. Several coin-hoards are said to have been recovered from the area. Since the first discovery of Yaudheya coins (classes 1, 2 and 3 of allan) in 1834 by Capt. Cautley from Behat near Saharanpur in Uttar Pradesh, numerous hoards and stray pieces have been reported from an area extending from Himachal Pradesh to the erstwhile northern Rajasthan and from western Uttar Pradesh to Bahawalpur state, now in Pakistan. Cunningham found Yaudheya coins plentifully in the country westward of the Jamuna, Kangra and many other places.

**Coins Found**

In 1956, a hoard of Yaudheya coins was discovered from Lohgarh in district Garhwal (Uttar Pradesh). Those coins are assigned to a later period, about 3rd century A.D. The Yaudheyas find mention in the Pillar Inscription of Samudragupta amongst the indigenous groups, which were defeated and subjugated by the Samudragupta Gupta empire. Thus the Yaudheya territory become a part of the Gupta empire. Thus with the end of different janapadas and sanghas, a new chapter in the history of hilly regions of the Central and Western Himalayas was opened.

The Brihatasamhita refers not only to the Yaudheyas but also to other groups of people called Yaudheyakas and their king. The Markandeya Purana also refers to the Yaudheyas among the peoples of north India. The Chandrayakarakas and the kasika too, contain references to the Yaudheyas.
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The Brihatsamhita refers not only to the Yaudheyas, located in the northern division at various places, but also to another people called Yaudheyaks and their king. The Markandeya Purana also refers to Yaudheyas among the peoples of north India. The Chandravyakarana of Chandragomin, and the kasika too, contain references to the Yaudheyas. The Yasastilaka
Champu of Somadevasuri (10th century A.D.) contains a vivid description of the Yaudheyas.

From the above sources, it can be claimed that the Yaudheyas were warrior community with political ambition. They had a large territory under their control. But after the 4th century A.D., their political power was subjugated by the Guptas and, we do not find them as a ruling class after that. They had been in the control of Central Himalayan belt of Himachal, Garhwal and Kumaon. This fact has been corroborated by the literary as well as numismatic evidences. Their political power, however, seems to have suffered a fatal blow at the hands of the barbarian Hunas in the 5th century A.D., where after we find their remnants only in literature. Whatever was left of them, perhaps got amalgamated into other clans.

References
2. Ibid.
7. Sherring, C.A., Western Tibet and the British Borderland, p. 69.
8. Ibid.

2

History: Kangra

General Cunningham, recognises the modern Kulu in Kiu-lu-to, mentioned by Huen Tsang as a state lying 700 li or 117 miles to the north-east of Jalandhar. "The Vishnu Purana," he adds, "mentions a people called Ulula, or Kuliota, who are most probably the same as of the Itamayana and the Brihat Sanhita. As this form of the word agrees precisely with the Chinese Kiu-lu-to, I conclude that the modern Kulu must be only an abbreviation of the ancient name." The little princepality of Kulu is one of the eleven states lying between the Satluj and the Ravi.

There are a number of princes who ruled Kulu over the centuries. The progenitor of the family is stated to have been one Behangamani, a brother of a Kulu prince called Paras Ram, who was succeeded by his descendants for 87 generations, the last reigning prince being Ajit Singh, who was deposed by the Sikhs in 1840. It is impossible to place much reliance upon the legendary accounts, for, allowing an average of fifteen years to each reign, the date of Behangamani would fall not earlier than the first half of the 6th century A.D., and even if twenty years were allowed for each reign, the date cannot be placed before A.D. 80, whereas Paras Ram figures in the very earliest scenes of Hindu mythology.

1st Sign of Historical Evidence

History does not reveal much about who ruled the State earlier. There is some records dating back to 15th century. Raja Sudh Singh, whom tradition, as recorded by Captain Harcourt, places 74th in descent from Behangamani ruled the state then. More probably, however, Sudh Singh was the founder of a new dynasty. His predecessors in Captain Harcourt's list all bore the Rajput suffix of Pal, and it is certainly strange that this suffix should have been dropped by Sudh Singh if he were really of the ancient stock. The legend accounting for this change of name from Pal to Singh runs as follows: Sudh Pal was out walking one day when a leopard attacked a cow. Filled with religious fury he fell upon the leopard, and with his fist that the Leopard fell dead on the spot. This story, recorded by Mr. Lyall in his Settlement Report, is at variance with the supposition of an unbroken line of descent.