

THE DYNASTY OF FIRE (82 BC – 1193 AD)

5.1 KING VIKRAMADITYA

Vikramaditya, the second son of Gandharbasena, was born in the year 102 BC. Gandharbasena was blessed with that son after rigorous penance and prayer to Lord Shiva. The Mahakaleshwara temple of Ujjain is one of the most famous centres of Shiva worship. From the age of five, for a period of twelve years, Vikramaditya was educated in a hermitage and afterwards he was crowned as the king of Ujjain.

He had inherited a strong and large army. The kingdom of Magadha was already weak and most of the neighbouring kingdoms were looking forward to the help of King Vikramaditya in their rivalry towards each other. Taking advantage of the situation king Vikramaditya persuaded the other kings to accept his suzerainty. One by one all the kingdoms of India came within the empire of Vikramaditya without any major war. However, there were savage wars fought between the armies of Vikramaditya and the invaders from the west known as the Shakas. In that war king Vikramaditya emerged victorious and acquired a lot of wealth by plundering the homeland of the invaders.

In the year 58 BC, the king of Nepal accepted the suzerainty of Vikramaditya. As a result Vikramaditya became the emperor of the whole of India. To mark the occasion he started a new era 'Samvat' from the year 58 BC.

5.2 EMPIRE OF VIKRAMADITYA

The empire of Vikramaditya ultimately extended from Indo-China in the east to Arab in the west. Apart from diplomacy and war, matrimony was used as a means of extension and consolidation of the empire. Vikramaditya had married a number of princesses from powerful royal families including a princess of China.

The city of Mecca was founded by him as an important place of Shiva worship and annual carnival. The holy stone of Kaba was the most important Shiva Linga for the whole of western Asia. Across the seas the influence of Vikramaditya had spread over Sri Lanka and the islands now known as Indonesia. However, the islands across the seas did not form a part of his empire.

The reign of Vikramaditya has been hailed as the herald of a new era of plenty and prosperity in India. It marked the peak of the sciences of medicine, astronomy, etc. The nine 'gems', Navaratna, of the court of Vikramaditya are well known.

5.3 INDIA AFTER VIKRAMADITYA

The exact circumstance of the death of King Vikramaditya is not known. It took place around 19 AD. On his death the invaders, known as Sakas, from the west attacked India. Devabhakta, the son of Vikramaditya had to leave Ujjain and flee to the south. He ruled only for 10 years from 19 AD to 29 AD.

The name of the son of Devabhakta is not available. His son Shalivahana, the great grandson of Vikramaditya attacked Ujjain and liberated it in the year 78 AD. The Shalivahana Sakabda, the official calendar of modern India, was started to commemorate the liberation of Ujjain. Bhavishya Purana states that King Shalivahana had plundered the homeland of the Shakas. From the time of Shalivahana up to Bhojraja, nine kings ruled Ujjain. However, the years of their coronation are not known.

<u>Name</u>	<u>Year of coronation</u>
1. Vikramaditya (8th king of Pramara dynasty)	82 BC
2. Devabhakta	19 AD
3. Son of Devabhakta	29 AD
4. Shalivahana	78 AD
5. Shalihotra	138 AD
6. Shalibardhana	-
7. Suhotra	-
8. Havirhotra	-
9. Indrapala	-
10. Malyavan	-
11. Shambhudutta	-
12. Bhoumraja	-
13. Vatsaraja	-
14. Bhojraja	637 AD

5.4 THE RULE OF PRAMARA DYNASTY

According to Bhavishya Purana and a number of legends still fresh in public memory, the rule of Pramara dynasty starting with Vikramaditya was a period of unprecedented plenty and prosperity all over India. In spite of repeated attacks by the invaders from the west the people were living happily and peacefully. In the wars among Indian kings the non-combatants were not affected at all. In case of the invasion from the west there was good cooperation among the kings under the nominal suzerainty of the kings of the different dynasties of fire (Agni Vansa).

Revival of the popularity of Sanskrit lead to the creation of a number of excellent literary works. The Puranas and Itihas were written in their present forms during the rule of the Pramara kings. There was also widespread revival of Hindu rites of sacrifices and worship. Bhavishya Purana states that it was a period equal to Dwapara Yuga.

There are a number of legends and fables about the kings of Pramara dynasty. Some of the most popular ones of them are Vetala stories. These stories were related by a Brahmin named Vetala to King Vikramaditya during a religious function.

Later fiction writers have described Vetala as a type of ghost. A large number of new tales have been added to the original Vetala stories and such additions are taking place even today.

Another important set of stories are the legends of the 32 statues. King Vikramaditya had a throne decorated with 32 statues. The throne had fallen into disuse and was buried after King Vikramaditya. It is said that Bhojraja recovered the throne and wanted to use it himself. According to the story each of the 32 statues, who were cursed fairies, came to life in turn and dissuaded Bhojraja from ascending the throne narrating a legend about the greatness of King Vikramaditya. Because of the limitation of the number 32, these stories have not been added to like the Vetala stories.

There is a narration in Bhavishya Purana indicating a meeting between King Shalibahan and Lord Jesus Christ. In chapter 20 of Pratisarga Parva of Bhavishya Purana stanzas 21 to 33 read as follows.

“One day the King had gone to Himatunga. There in the hill, located in the land of the Huns, he met a thin holy man clad in white. Being very happy the king asked him, ‘Who are you?’ He replied, ‘Know me as the Son of God born to a virgin. I am the worshipper of Truth and I spread ‘Dharma’ among the heathens.’” The narration continues to describe the discussions between the king and the holy man.

Since Shalibahan became the emperor in the year 78 AD and Lord Jesus is believed to have been crucified around 30 AD this narration has been interpreted as the proof of Lord Jesus, after the resurrection, having come away and settled in Kashmir. Here it may be recalled that there is another legend about Lord Jesus having spent some twelve years of his previous life in India, particularly in Tibet.

During the rule of Pramara dynasty the influence of Hinduism became very strong all over South-east Asia including Myanmar, Malaysia, Indonesia, Thailand, Indo-China and many Pacific islands.

Hinduism replaced Buddhism as the major religion in many of these areas. However, Buddhism continued to be an important religion in Magadha area and Buddhist monasteries and centres of learning continued to flourish.

Most of the modern versions of the Puranas now available were compiled during the rule of the Pramara dynasty. There are also many important literary works authored during this period. Many important buildings and structures, now wrongly believed to be of Muslim origin, were constructed during this period.

5.5 BHOJRAJA

After Shalivahana up to the time of Batsaraja the influence of Pramara dynasty had waned. Most of the kingdoms were independent and some had accepted nominally the suzerainty of the king of Magadha. There were some attacks from the west by the invaders known as Mlechchhas.

Bhojraja, the 10th king of the dynasty after Shalivahana, was able to gather a large army and accompanied by Kalidasa, his court poet, set out to conquer the land of the Mlechchhas across the Indus. He ruled from 637 AD to 693 AD. His rule was confined mostly to western portion of north India.

There is a narration in Bhavishya Purana suggesting that Bhojraja had met Prophet Mohammed. Since the time of the reign of King Bhoj was later than the time of Prophet Mohammed, the legend of the meeting may not be true. It might have been based on the meeting of King Bhoj with a Muslim saint. The reign of Bhojraja is also known for many literary works including the story of 32 statues.

5.6 PRAMARA DYNASTY AFTER BHOJRAJA

After King Bhoj the following ten kings ruled in his dynasty from 693 to 1193 AD.

<u>Name</u>	<u>Year of Coronation</u>
1. Shambhudatta	693 AD
2. Bindupala	-
3. Rajapala	-
4. Mahinara	-
5. Somavarma	-
6. Kamavarma	-
7. Bhumipala	-
8. Angapala	-
9. Kalpasimha	-
10. Gangasimha	-

King Gangasimha took part and was killed at the age of 90 years in the battle of Thaneshwar between Prithviraj and Mohammed Ghori.

After him the kingdom of Pramara dynasty along with the other kingdoms came under Muslim rule.

5.7 CHAYAHANI DYNASTY

Pramara dynasty, described in sections 5.1 to 5.6 was one of the 4 branches of Agni Vansa which had been established around 392 BC.

Agni Vansa had 4 branches namely Pramara, Thomara, Chalukya and Pratihara. These four branches were established as the rulers in different parts of India. King Chayahani was the ruler of Ajmer. He had two sons namely Thomara and Shamala Deva. Of them Thomara won Delhi and became its ruler while Shamala Deva continued to rule at Ajmer. King Prithviraj, who is famous for his resistance to the invasion of Mohammed Ghori, was the last king of Chayahani Shamala Deva dynasty.

In the dynasty of Thomara ub Delhi there were 28 kings till 1193 AD. Their names are as follows:

1. Thomara
2. Maha Deva
3. Ajoya
4. Bhirasimha
5. Bindusara
6. Vikrama
7. Manikya
8. Mahasimha
9. Chandragupta
10. Pratapa
11. Mohana
12. Sveta Raya
13. Nagavaha
14. Lohadhara
15. Virasimha
16. Vibudha
17. Chandraraja
18. Harihara
19. Vasanta
20. Balanga
21. Pramadha
22. Anga Raya
23. Visala
24. Saranga Deva
25. Mantra Deva
26. Jayasingha
27. Ananda Deva
28. Someswara

The mother of Prithviraj was from the family of Someswara who had no son. Accordingly Prithviraj became the ruler of Delhi as well as Ajmer. King Jayasimha, the 26th King of Thomara dynasty, had a large army and had established his suzerainty over many neighbouring kingdoms.

5.8 CHALUKYA DYNASTY

The kings of Chalukya dynasty were the rulers of Dwarka, originally established by Lord Krishna. There were 27 kings in this dynasty.

1. Sukla
2. Vishvaksena
3. Jayasena
4. Visena
5. Madasimha
6. Sindhu Varma
7. Sindhu Dvipa
8. Sri Pati
9. Bhouja Varma
10. Rana Varma
11. Chitra Varma
12. Dharma Varma
13. Krishna Varma
14. Udaya
15. Vyiapyakarma
16. Guhila
17. Kala Bhoja
18. Rashtrapala
19. Jayapala
20. Venuka
21. Yasovigraha
22. Mahichandra
23. Chandra Deva
24. Mandapala
25. Kumbhapala
26. Devapala
27. Jayachandra

King Jayachandra had invited Mohammed Ghori to fight with Prithviraj.

5.9 PARIHARA DYNASTY

Parihara dynasty ruled over Bengal and the adjoining area with their capital on Chitrakuta hill from 392 BC. Till 1193 there had been 35 kings in this dynasty.

1. Parihara
2. Goura Varma
3. Ghora Varma
4. Suparna
5. Rupana
6. Kaura Varma

7. Bhoga Varma
8. Kali Varma
9. Kausika
10. Katyana
11. Hemabata
12. Shiva Varma
13. Vaba Varma
14. Rudra Varma
15. Bhoja Varma
16. Gaba Varma
17. Vindhya Varma
18. Sukhasena
19. Balaka
20. Lakshmana
21. Madhava
22. Keshava
23. Surasena
24. Narayana
25. Santi Varma
26. Nadi Varma
27. Sarangadeva
28. Gangadeva
29. Ananga Bhupati
30. Mahipati
31. Rajeswara
32. Nrisimha
33. Kali Varma II
34. Dhriti Varma
35. Mahipati II

King Parihara and his descendants were the worshippers of Goddess Durga. Kali Varma, the 8th king of dynasty had established the Kali temple from which modern Kolkata later got its name. However, later the kings of this dynasty became the devotees of Lord Vishnu.

The 17th king Vindhya Varma gave most of his kingdom to his younger brother and himself retained only the Bengal area. The 26th King Nadi Varma established the city Puri in Goudadesha. The 35th king Mahipati II had taken part and was killed at the battle of Thaneswar in the year 1193 AD.

5.10 CONTEMPORARY KINGS OF KASHMIR

Matrigupta, sent by King Vikramaditya of Ujjain, became the king of Kashmir in the year 14 AD. He ruled for a period of 5 years till 19 AD. He was succeeded by Prabarasena II, the son of Toramana. From Matrigupta 7 kings ruled in Gonanda dynasty from the year 14 AD to 252 AD. Thereafter,

Kashmir was ruled by Karkotoka dynasty for a period of 600 years from 252 AD to 852 AD. There were 17 kings in this dynasty after that 8 kings of Utpala dynasty ruled for a period of 84 years from 852 AD to 936 AD. Then 10 kings of Gupta dynasty ruled for 76 years from 936 AD to 1012 AD. Thereafter 6 kings of Sata Vahana dynasty and 4 kings of the dynasty of fire (Agni Vansha) ruled Kashmir for a period of 136 years from 1012 AD to 1148 AD. The names of the kings are as follows:

<u>Name</u>	<u>Year of coronation</u>
1. Matrigupta	14 AD
2. Prabarasena II	19 AD
3. Yudhithira II	79 AD
4. Narendraditya	118 AD
5. Tunjina	131 AD
6. Vikramaditya	173 AD
7. Baladitya (last king of Gonanda dynasty)	215 AD
8. Durlabha Vardhana (son-in-law of Baladitya and founder of Karkatoka dynasty)	252 AD
9. Pratapaditya	288 AD
10. Varnaditya	388 AD
11. Udayaditya	397 AD
12. Lalitaditya	431 AD
13. Kuvalayaditya	467 AD
14. Vajraditya	468 AD
15. Prithivyapida	525 AD
16. Sangramapida (7 days only)	569 AD
17. Jayapida	569 AD
18. Lalitapida	620 AD
19. Sangramapida II	672 AD
20. Jayapida	729 AD
21. Ajitapida	781 AD
22. Anangapida	837 AD
23. Utpalapida	837 AD
24. Sukha Varma	845 AD
25. Avanti Varma (Utpala dynasty)	852 AD
26. Shankara Varma	880 AD
27. Gopala Varma	900 AD
28. Sankata	902 AD
29. Sugandha	902 AD
30. Sura Varma	903 AD
31. Partha	904 AD
32. Nirjita Varma	918 AD
33. Chakra Varma	920 AD

34. Unmatavanti	934 AD
35. Yasaskara (Gupta Brahmin dynasty)	936 AD
36. Vannata (1 month only)	945 AD
37. Sangramadeva (5 months only)	945 AD
38. Parbagupta	946 AD
39. Kshemagupta	948 AD
40. Abhimanyugupta	957 AD
41. Nandigupta	971 AD
42. Tribhubanagupta	972 AD
43. Bhimagupta	974 AD
44. Didda (mother of the 4 kings named in number 40 to 30 who were minors and died before their mother)	979 AD
45. Sangramaraja (Lohar dynasty)	1012 AD
46. Hariraja (22 days only)	1027 AD
47. Anantadeva	1027 AD
48. Kalasa	1078 AD
49. Utkarsha	1088 AD
50. Harsha	-
51. Uchchala (Agni Vansha)	1110 AD
52. Shankharaja	-
53. Sussala	1120 AD
54. Jayasimha	1128 AD

During the reign of Jayasimha, Kalhana wrote the historic treatise Rajatarangini. The history of Kashmir after Jayasimha, i.e. from 1148 AD to 1295 AD is not available. In the year 1295 AD Rajasimhadeva became the king of Kashmir. In 1322 AD Kashmir was attacked by Zulfi Kadir Khan, a descendant of Chengiz Khan. Thereafter, Muslim rule was established in Kashmir.

5.11 CONTEMPORARY KINGS OF NEPAL

After the Suryavansi Kings (see Section 4.11) Thakuri dynasty ruled Nepal for a period of 898 years from 100 BC to 798 AD. Twenty-one kings reigned in this dynasty.

<u>Name</u>	<u>Year of coronation</u>
1. Ansuvarman	100 BC
2. Kritavarman	33 AD
3. Bhimaryuna	54 AD
4. Nandadeva	147 AD
5. -	172 AD
6. -	232 AD

7. Viradeva	299 AD
8. Chandraketudeva	394 AD
9. Narendradeva	460 AD
10. Varadeva	516 AD
11. Naramudi	570 AD
12. Shankaradeva	615 AD
13. Vardhamandeva	627 AD
14. Balideva	640 AD
15. Jayadeva	653 AD
16. Balaryunadeva	668 AD
17. Vikramadeva	685 AD
18. Gunakarmadeva	697 AD
19. Bhojadeva	748 AD
20. Lakshmikamadeva	756 AD
21. Jayakamadeva	778 AD

After Thakuri dynasty there was no sovereign ruler for the whole of Nepal till 1760 AD, when the dynasty presently ruling from Kathmandu established its supremacy over the whole of Nepal. Till then there were different dynasties ruling over different parts of Nepal and some adjoining parts of India and Tibet. Some important dynasties are as follows:

<u>Name of the dynasty</u>	<u>Period</u>
Second Thakuri dynasty	720 AD - 945 AD
Karnataka dynasty	890 AD - 1110 AD
Suryavansi dynasti of Bhatgam	1324 AD - 1410 AD
Third Thakuri dynasti	1410 AD - 1538 AD
Jayarayamalla dynasty	1470 AD - 1720 AD
Ratnamalla dynasty	1472 AD - 1768 AD
Hariharasimha dynasty	1594 AD - 1768 AD

In the year 1768 AD the whole of Nepal was under the rule of the present dynasty with their capital at Kathmandu.

5.12 CONTEMPORARY SOUTH ASIA

The influence of the Pramara kings over the Middle Eastern region including Arab has been referred to in Section 5.2. However, those regions remained predominantly Buddhist. The older religions namely Zoroastrianism, Judaism, Mithraism and the other forms of Paganism remained strong. Shortly after first century AD under the influence of the Roman Empire, Christianity became a dominant religion.

In contrast, South Eastern Asia though free from political domination of the Indian kings was strongly influenced by Hindu culture