

**Religion and Society Reflected in the  
Inscriptions of the Śilāhāras of Koṅkaṇ and  
Kolhapur-843—1261 AD**

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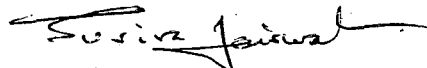
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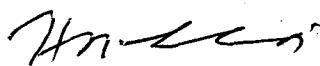
DECLARATION

Certified that the dissertation entitled  
"Religion and Society Reflected in the Inscriptions  
of <sup>the,</sup> Silāhāras of Konkan and Kolhāpur <sup>843-1261 A.D.</sup>" submitted by  
Kiran Singh is in fulfilment of eight credits out of  
the twenty six credits for the degree of Master of  
Philosophy of this University. This dissertation has  
not been previously submitted for any other degree  
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	<u>Pages</u>
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	
LIST OF MAPS	
ABBREVIATIONS	
INTRODUCTION	1 - 12
CHAPTER I SOCIETY AS REFLECTED THROUGH THE ŚILĀHĀRA INSCRIPTIONS OF KŌNKAṆ AND KOLHĀPUR	13 - 97
Section I: Brāhmaṇas	16 - 52
Section II: Kshatriyas	53 - 57
Section III: Merchants and Traders	58 - 84
Section IV: Kayasthas	85 - 86
Section V: Craftsmen and Artisans and other Professional Groups	87 - 94
Section VI: Status of Women	95 - 97
CHAPTER II RELIGION	98 - 155
Section I : Buddhism	98 - 106
Section II: Jainism	106 - 127
Section III: HINDUISM	127 - 155
CONCLUSION	156 - 159
BIBLIOGRAPHY	160 - 165

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*Kiran Singh*  
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## LIST OF MAPS

- Map I : Showing find-spots of Śilāhāra Inscriptions in North Koṅkaṇ
- Map II : Showing find-spots of Śilāhāra inscriptions in South Koṅkaṇ
- Map III : Showing find-spots of Śilāhāra inscriptions in the Kolhāpur region
- Map IV : Distribution of religious cults as reflected in the inscriptions of the Śilāhāras of Koṅkaṇ and Kolhāpur

## ABBREVIATIONS

CII	: Corpus Inscriptionum Indicarum
IA	: Indian Antiquity
EI	: Epigraphia Indica
IHR	: Indian Historical Review
JBBRAS	: Journal of Bombay Branch of Royal Asiatic Society
N.Ser.	: New Series
P.I.H.C.	: Proceedings of Indian History Congress
SII	: South Indian Inscriptions
A.S.W.I.	: Archaeological Survey of Western India
P.M.K.L.	: S.G. Tulkule, Prochin Marathi Koriva Lekha (Marathi)
H.C.I.P.	: History and Culture of the Indian People
Ancient India	: Ancient Indian History and Culture
QJMS	: Quarterly Journal of Mythic Society, Bangalore
J.A.	: Jaina Antiquity
ECSJ.	: ECONOMIC CONDITIONS IN SOUTHERN INDIA
HNUJ.	: THE HALF YEARLY MYSORE UNIVERSITY JOURNAL

## INTRODUCTION

Much has been written on the political history of the Śilāhāras, but the socio-religious and economic aspects have not been given due attention by scholars so far. Hence, it is proposed to present an account of the society and religion in the time of the Śilāhāras of Koṅkaṇ and Kolhāpur as reflected in the epigraphical evidence.

The existence of the Śilāhāra family came to light almost two centuries ago when a translation of the Thāṇā plates of Arikēsari was published in the Asiatic Researches in 1788 A.D. An account of the three branches of the Śilāhāra family was therefore given by Fleet in Bombay Gazetteer in 1896. However, quite a number of chiefs of this family not belonging to any of these three branches has, of late, come to light and a discussion about them is made by scholars like the late P.B. Desai.<sup>1</sup> In 1977 the Archaeological Survey of India brought out a volume of Corpus Inscriptionum Indicarum edited by V.V. Mirashi wherein an account of only the three major branches has been given. The CII has been of tremendous help to the researcher because it contains

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1. B.R. Gopal, Minor dynasties of South India: Karnataka, vol.I, p.136.

all the inscriptions along with translation of the three major branches of the Śilāhāras on which the dissertation is based. The CII though a comprehensive work on the political history of the three branches of the Śilāhāras has its own limitation. The social, economic and religious history has been only briefly touched upon.

Recently in 1982, B.R. Gopal has come out with a valuable work, "Minor Dynasties of South India: Karnataka" Volume I. His work is based on a study of works mentioned above and some more new records discovered in the last two decades. B.R. Gopal has added a new dimension to the political history of the Śilāhāras by giving a valuable account of their eleven branches, but other aspects have been ignored.

The intention of selecting the topic such as "The Religion and Society Reflected in the inscriptions of the Śilāhāras of Koṅkaṇ and Kolhāpur" has to be discussed here. The interest of the researcher is to study the minor dynasties particularly the Śilāhāras which has played an important role in the historical development vis-a-vis the major dynasties.

The dissertation is based only on the three major branches of the Śilāhāra family, which are (i) the Śilāhāras of North Koṅkaṇ, (ii) the Śilāhāras of South



Koṅkaṇ, and (iii) the Śilāhāras of Kolhāpur. These have been particularly chosen in order to attempt or undertake a regional study of the Koṅkaṇ region which has its own geographical and cultural identity. The coast of Koṅkaṇ stretches from Daman in the north and goes as far as Goa in the South. It comprises the three districts of Ṭhāṇā, Kolāba and Ratnagiri. The areas of the former princely states like Janjīra and Sawantwadi have been merged recently in the adjoining territory.<sup>1</sup>

From the 6th Century A.D., the name, Koṅkaṇ vishaya appears as a designation of the strip of territory between western ghats and the sea.<sup>2</sup> Alberuni writing about A.D. 1030 calls it Kunkan and mentions Tana (Ṭhāṇā) as its capital.<sup>3</sup>

The other area of study is Kolhāpur which is in close proximity to the Koṅkaṇ region and comprises of the districts of Sātārā, Sāngali and Kolhāpur of Maharashtra and the Belgaum district in Karnataka. It is bounded on the north by the district of South

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1. B.K. Apte, The History of the Maratha Navy and Merchant Ships, p.7.
  2. Yazdani (ed.), The Early History of the Deccan, Parts I-IV, volume I, p.34.
  3. Ibid., p.35.

Satara; on the west by the district of Ratnagiri; and on the south and the east by the Belgaum district of Mysore State.<sup>1</sup> The two regions Koṅkaṇ and Kolhāpur have been chosen because it is necessary to compare the socio-religious condition of the two regions in order to drive at particular conclusions.

The minor eight branches of the Śilāhāra family - (i) Śilāhāras of Akkalakot, (ii) Śilāhāras of Khēda, (iii) Śilāhāras of Tardāvadi, (iv) Śilāhāras of Pauthage, (v) Śilāhāras of Elamūla, (vi) Śilāhāras of Muttagi, (vii) Śilāhāras of Umarani and (viii) Śilāhāras of Basavura 140 have been omitted for convenience sake, to attempt at a micro-level, intensive and compact study and to avoid unwieldiness.

The Śilāhāras of both the North-Koṅkaṇ and Kolhāpur regions called themselves as the lords of Tagara - Tagarapuravādhisvara<sup>2</sup> or Tagarapura-paramēśvara.<sup>3</sup>

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1. Gazetteer of India, Maharashtra State - Kolhapur District, (Revised Edition), p.1.
  2. CII, vol.VI. This is generally noticed in the records of the Śilāhāras of Kolhāpur, Bijapur and Akkalakot. Other branches used slightly different expressions such as Tagaranagarādhisvara (in the records of the Elamēla family and Tagarapuravarēśvara (in those of the Kurnul branch), Ep. Ind., vol.XXVII, p.70, n.9.
  3. Ibid. This occurs in the records of the Śilāhāras of North Koṅkaṇ.

This may as well mean that the members of this family hailed from Tagara identified with Ter in the Osmanabad district of Maharashtra. Mirashi has also taken the above terms to mean that they originally hailed from Tagara and were ruling there. He has pressed into service even literary evidence, the Sanskrit Brihatkatha of Harishēna of C. 10th century and the Apabhramśa work Karakandachariū of Kanakāmara of C. 11th century.<sup>1</sup>

B.R. Gopal ascribes to the view that the Śilāhāras were of Karnataka origin. They spoke Kannada. Tur, now in Maharashtra was then a part of Karnataka kingdom.<sup>2</sup> Unlike the other two branches of the Śilāhāras of North Koṅkaṇ and Kolhāpur, the Śilā<sup>a</sup>hāras of South Koṅkaṇ did not claim connection with the city of Tagara in their inscriptions though, it is not unlikely that like some other branches of the Śilāhāra family they also may have originally hailed from that ancient city referred by both Ptolemy<sup>3</sup> and the Periplus of the Erythrean Sea.<sup>4</sup>

All the three branches of the Śilāhāras under study trace their descent from the mythical Vidyādhara

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1. CII, op. cit., Intro., pp. iv-vi.
  2. B.R. Gopal, Minor Dynasties of South India: Karnataka, vol. I, p. 136.
  3. R.C. Majumdar, Classical Accounts of India, p. 365.
  4. Ibid., p. 304.

prince Jīmūtavāhana, the son of Jīmūtakētu, who offered to sacrifice himself to rescue a Naga named Śaṅkhachūḍa from the clutches of Garuḍa.<sup>1</sup> The family name Śilāhāra, "food on a slab", was supposed to have been derived from this incident. There is yet another version about the founder of the family stated in the Prince of Wales Museum Plates of Chhadvaideva. According to which, Śilāra was a great warrior who served the western ocean when it was threatened by the arrow of Jāmadagnya (Parasurāma). His descendants thereafter came to be known by his name.<sup>2</sup> However, this story does not appear in any other early work. V.V. Mirashi is quite right in pointing out that the name Śilāhāra seems to have been an attempt to Sanskritize the dynastic name<sup>3</sup> which is spelt variously as Silāra,<sup>4</sup> Śilāra,<sup>5</sup> Śiyalāra<sup>6</sup>

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1. CII, op. cit., Intro., p.iii. The story of Jīmūtavāhana occurred in the original Brihatkatha in the Paisachi dialect, which is not extant now. It occurs in two places in its Sanskrit versions, viz. the Kathāsaritsāgara of Sōmadēva (XXII, 16-257, and XV, 3-201) and the Brihatkathāmañjarī of Kshemendra. Both the authors of these Sanskrit versions flourished in the eleventh century A.D.
  2. Ibid., No.4, lines 28-29.
  3. Ibid., Intro., p.iii.
  4. Ibid., No.9, line 5.
  5. Ibid., No.7, lines 21-22.
  6. Ibid., No.43, lines 2-3.

and Śailāhāra<sup>1</sup> in the records of the Śilāhāras. This was a common tendency noticed in medieval times to trace the descent of royal families to eponymous heroes.

The three branches of the Śilāhāras under study had common organic bond as they belonged to the same family and derived power most probably, through the same suzerain. Unlike the other branches of North and South Koṅkaṇ, the Śilāhāras of Kolhāpur did not mention their allegiance to the Imperial Rāshtrakūṭas in any of their records. Saṇaphulla, the founder of the Śilāhāra branch of South Koṅkaṇ obtained his principality by the favour of Kṛishna, the Rāshtrakūṭa king who flourished from C.A.D. 758 to A.D. 773.<sup>2</sup> Kapardin the founder of the North Koṅkaṇ branch rose to power a little later during the reign of the Rāshtrakūṭa Emperor Govīnda III (A.D. 793-814).<sup>3</sup> V.V. Mirashi is of the view that the Śilāhāras of Kolhāpur also rose to power with the assistance of the Rāshtrakūṭas. But this is to be found nowhere in their inscriptions because of their rise to power late in the Rāshtrakūṭa period, and no records of the

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1. Ibid., No.45, line 2.

2. Ibid., No.41, line 24.

3. Ibid., Intro., p.vi. The Kānhērī Cave inscription of Pullasakti, the son of Kapardin I, is dated in Śaka 765 (A.D. 843-44). So Kapardin I may have been reigning towards the close of the reign of Govīnda III.

first few generations have yet been found.<sup>1</sup>

Our primary sources are the inscriptions. A rich treasure of these valuable inscriptions have been left behind by the Śilāhāras. The languages in which these are written are Kannada, Marathi and Sanskrit. The language of the people of North Konkan must have been Marathi. Though the first known Marathi inscription, viz. the Dive Āgar plate<sup>2</sup> is dated as early as Śaka 982 (A.D. 1060), Marathi words figure first in the Śilāhāra stone inscription found at Rānjali, dated Śaka 1070 (A.D. 1148).<sup>3</sup> Henceforth, though the general framework of the inscriptions continues to be in Sanskrit, Marathi sentences occasionally make their appearance.<sup>4</sup> At this stage Marathi language, does not appear to be fully developed. In the Kolhāpur region, on the other hand, Kannada seems to be the popular language and is noticed not only in the birudas of the rulers but also in small and

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1. Ibid., Intro., p:xxviii.

2. Ep. Indica., vol.xxviii, pp.121 f.

3. CII, op. cit., see Rānjlicha ārāmu No.24, line 9.

4. Ibid. see Brāhmaṇaṅgrihadene-na-gehāvenin No.26, line 7.

large stone inscriptions.<sup>1</sup> The Śilāhāra inscriptions of the South Koṅkaṇ are wholly written in Sanskrit with no Kannada birudas or expressions in them, though stray Kannada words like haḍapa<sup>2</sup> are noticed therein.

The material used for the Śilāhāra inscriptions are copper plates and stone. Most of these inscriptions are in the nature of donative records (dānaśāsanas) recording various types of grants by different categories of donors for some charitable purpose including the maintenance of temples, Brāhmaṇas, Basadis and so forth.

The inscriptions can be relied upon, because almost all of them are dated, or can be assigned to approximate dates on palaeographical grounds and mention the names and various titles of the ruling king or kings, their genealogies, the chieftains, sometimes the boundaries of their respective kingdoms, etc. in addition to recording the details of the grants, donees, purposes and occasions of gifts, etc. Of course, as the inscriptions sometimes contain literary exaggerations, myths and eulogies, all the statements they contain cannot be accepted for reconstructing history. Moreover, some other inconveniences do crop up. Sometimes the inscriptions are broken

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1. Ibid., see Nos.47, 49, 50, 52 and 57.

2. Ibid., No.40, line 57.

or mutilated or abraded for example the Bhoighar plates of Chittarāja<sup>1</sup> and Akshi stone inscriptions of Keśidēva II<sup>2</sup> respectively and contain some terms, the meaning of which cannot be ascertained satisfactorily and hence all the information contained in them cannot be put to an optimum use. But they do reflect the image of contemporary society and thus help to a great extent in knowing its social, economic and religious life.

The dissertation consists of two main chapters - Society and Religion. Society and Religion are inter-linked. Religion is the product of the society and is essentially a social phenomena. Hence, it becomes essential to discuss the society of the concerned period and regions first and then examine the prevailing religious cults.

The first chapter deals with the society as reflected through the Śilāhāra inscriptions of Koṅkaṅ and Kolhāpur. This has been sub-divided into six sections - (i) the Brāhmaṇas, (ii) the Kshatriyas, (iii) the Merchants and Traders, (iv) the Kayasthas, (v) Craftsmen and Artisans and other professional groups, and (vi) the status of women. The sub-division is based in accordance to the material available in the Śilāhāra inscriptions. The

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1. Ibid., No.61.

2. Ibid., No.35.

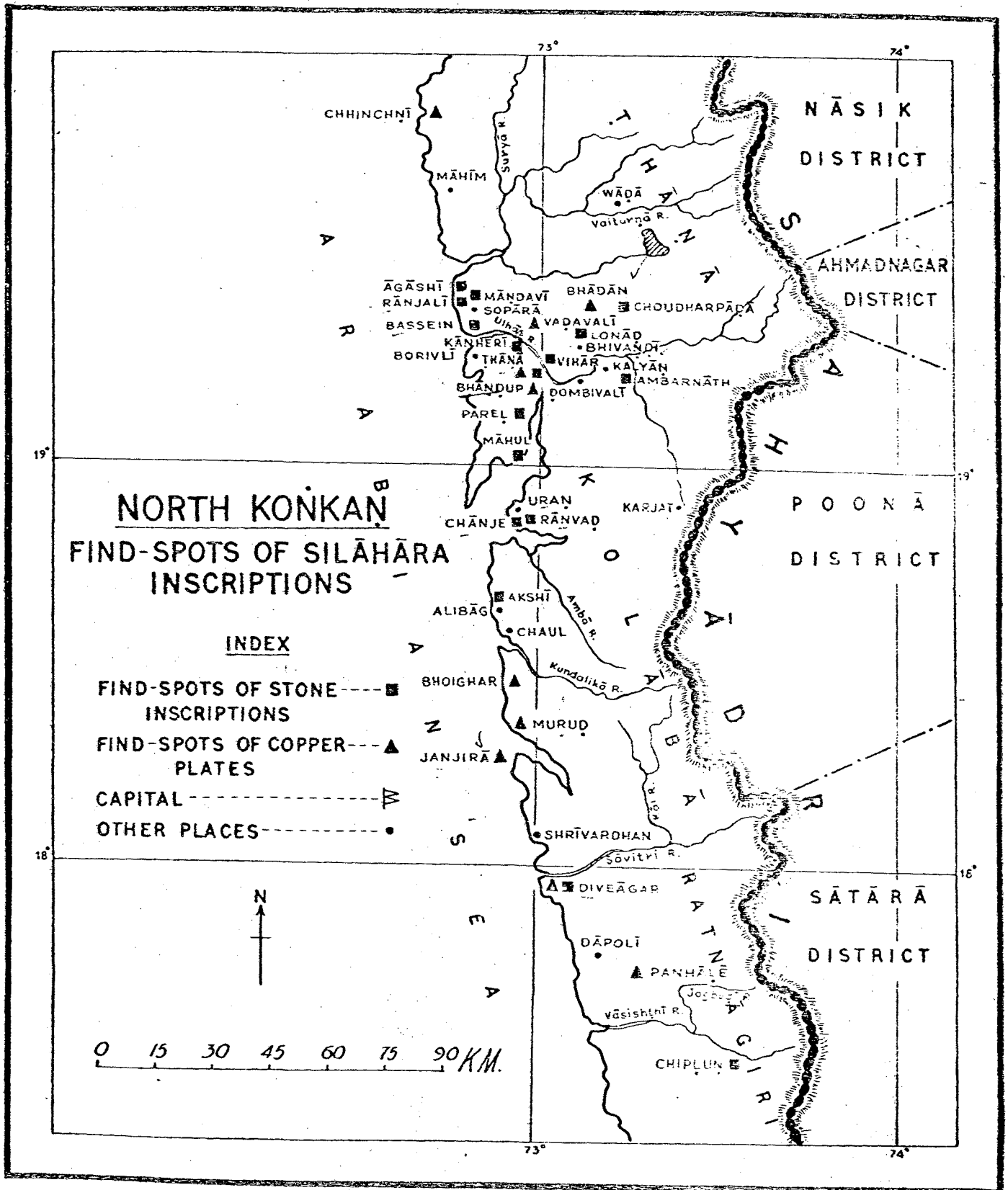


Brāhmaṇas and the Merchants have been described at great length because of the availability of adequate material on them.

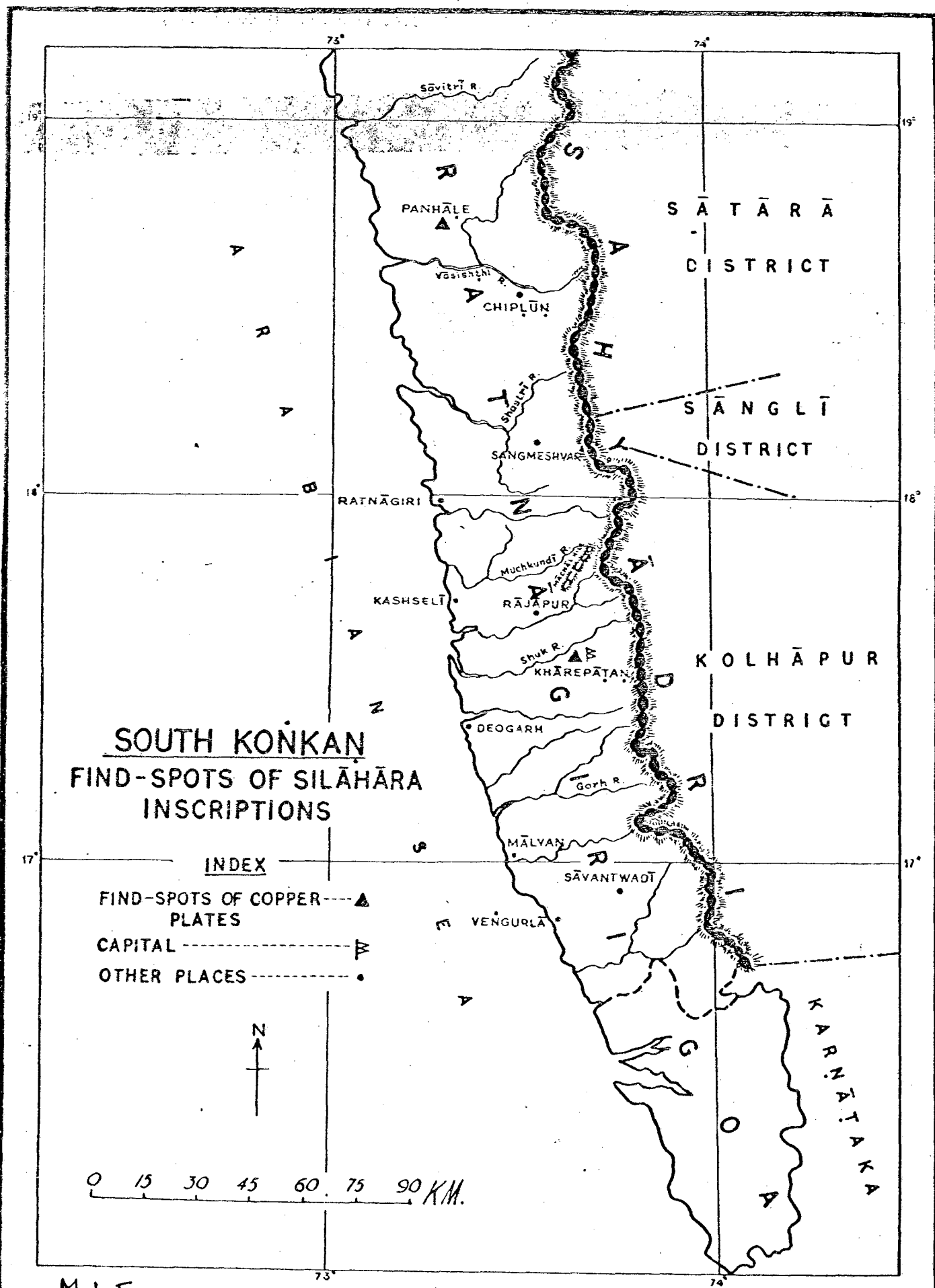
Broadly the purpose of this chapter is to investigate the continuity and change in the forms of social life and various social occupational groups which find mention in the Śilāhāra inscriptions of Koṅkaṇ and Kolhāpur. The social changes are to be viewed in the background of the political and economic developments. Here it is attempted to examine the relationships between the various social or caste groups and the rulers with particular intention of finding out how far the above Śilāhāra chiefs alienated certain political powers and privileges to the trade guilds and the Brāhmaṇas. The status and role of the various social and occupational groups have also been discussed. An attempt is also made to bring out the linkage between the religious and social institutions. Overall, the main idea is to challenge the notion of static society and project a society where both elements of stability and flexibility operate.

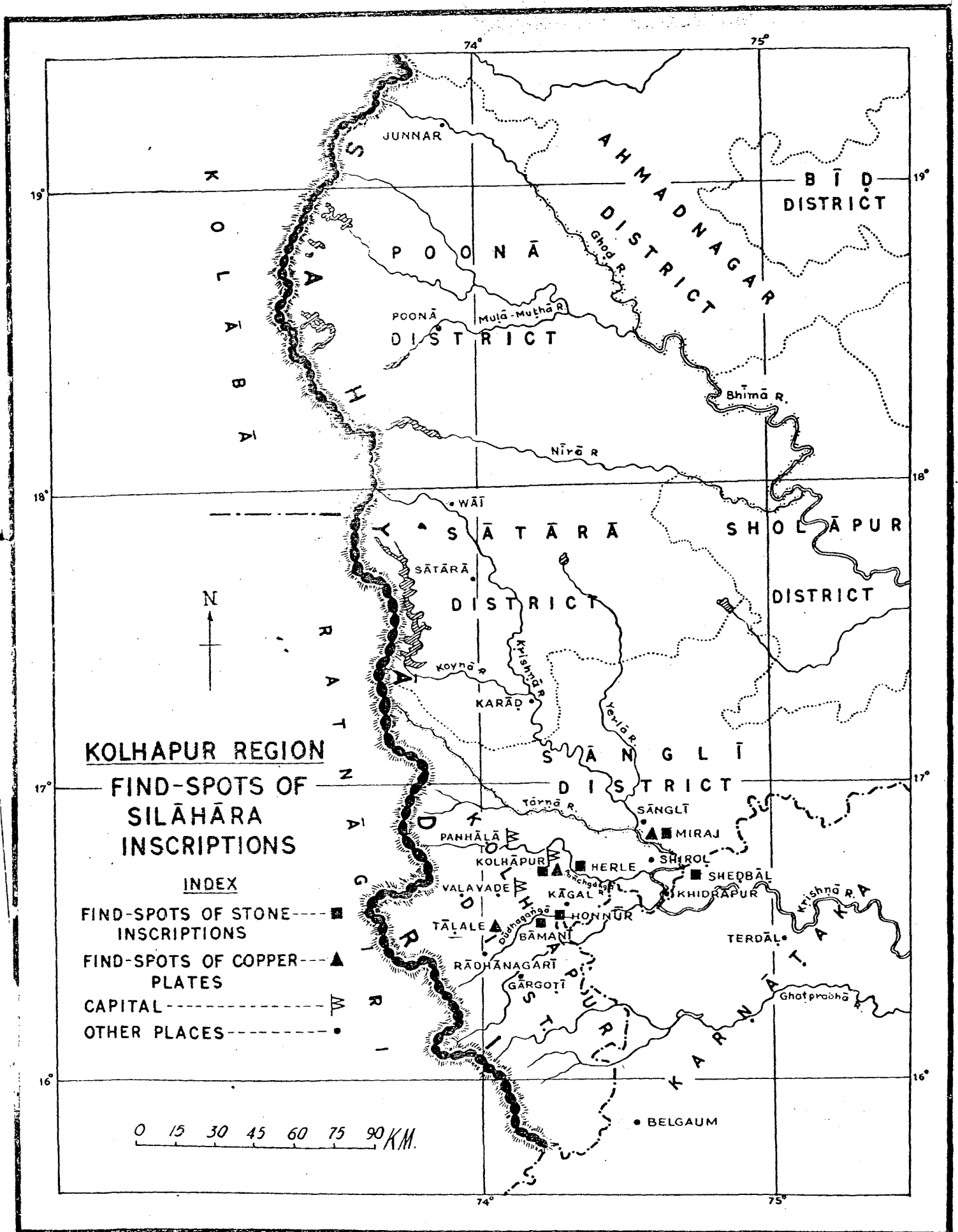
The second chapter is on the religion in the time of the Śilāhāras of Koṅkaṇ and Kolhāpur as gleaned through their inscriptions. This chapter is divided into three sub-sections: (i) Buddhism, (ii) Jainism,

and (iii) **HINDUISM** . This chapter is more of description than an analysis of the various prevalent religious cults. Here, an attempt is made to investigate the antiquity of the various religious centres and the transformations if any, which took place at these centres.



Map I: Showing find-spots of Śilāhāra Inscriptions in North Konkan





Map III : Showing find-spots of Silāhāra Inscriptions in the Kolhāpur Region

## CHAPTER I

SOCIETY AS REFLECTED THROUGH THE  
ŚILĀHĀRA INSCRIPTIONS OF  
KŌNKANĀ AND KOLHĀPUR

The imperialists' writings ascribe to the view that Indian society over the ages, represents stagnation. The continuity of caste has led to an erroneous view that society in pre-British India was basically static and monotonous. No civilized society is static and early medieval Indian society was no exception. Unlike political changes, social, religious and economic changes are not discernible in a short period or at a superficial level. Viewing a given society in terms of the centuries of its life, however, the change is clearly perceptible and it is this principle that we must bear in mind when we speak of social and economic conditions in the early medieval India.

Continuity and change in the forms of social life being the subjects of investigation, the continuity of cultural traditions and changes in those traditions are amongst the things that have to be taken into account.

The background to social changes in early medieval India is provided by certain economic developments. The most significant change in the economy of the period is the large scale transfers of land, land-revenues and

land to both secular and religious elements by princes and their vassals.<sup>1</sup> All this gave rise to new developments in early medieval south India, specially in the Konkan and Kolhāpur region which are symptomatic of a change in the character of the state, connoting the advent of the feudal age.

After the replacement of the imperial Chālukyas by the Rāshtrakūṭas of whom the early Śīlāhāras were the feudatories, new classes of temple-builders emerged. These included royal officers, feudataries, district headman, village headman, military officers, tradesmen, saints and ascetics.<sup>2</sup> Many of whom continued during the independent reign of the Śīlāhāras indicating the decentralization of their administrative and economic power.

In the background of all these political and economic developments, the social condition during the time of the Śīlāhāras of Konkan and Kolhāpur is to be investigated as gleaned through their epigraphical sources.

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1. R.S. Sharma, Social Changes in Early Medieval India, p.6.
  2. R.N. Nali, Religious Institutions and Cults in the Deccan, p.2.

In the time of the Śilāhāras, the theoretical division of the varṇas was known. The concept of four varṇas is reaffirmed and emphasized again and again in the literary sources of the period to project a stable society. But in reality, these had been subdivided into numerous castes as evidenced from epigraphical and other sources. Professor R.S. Sharma has remarked that in many ways the medieval period was an age of elaboration and proliferation.<sup>1</sup> Caste system is often seen as the most consistent form of social organization in India.<sup>2</sup> But within this consistency, flexibility is also to be witnessed by the incorporation of new castes into the system and the lowering or the enhancement of a particular caste in the social hierarchy in the historical context.

Let us examine the various social and occupational groups as found in the Śilāhāra inscriptions.

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1. R.S. Sharma, Perspective in Social and Economic History of Early India, p. 236.
  2. B.G. Gokhale, Ancient India, p.111.



Section.I: BRĀHMANAS:

The Brāhmanas were the most privileged caste. They were universally honoured for their high standard of purity, of learning and social status. The majority of the Śilāhāra inscriptions invariably refer to the gifting of land, land revenue, orchards, villages and so forth to the learned Brāhmanas individually or collectively. In the inscriptions the gōtra and śākha, which were important items in their specification and sometimes even their geneology, are distinctly mentioned. Many a times gods and Brāhmanas are clubbed together, thereby, suggesting their social status and the honour bestowed on them.

ADHYĀPANA (teaching), PRATIGRAHA (acceptance of gifts) and YAJÑĀ (conducting of sacrifices) were the duties specially reserved for the Brāhmanas.<sup>1</sup> Numerous Śilāhāra inscriptions refer to the donations made to the learned Brāhmanas for the performance of the six religious duties such as sacrificing for oneself and for others, the studying and teaching of the sacred texts and for the performance of the pañcha-mahā yajñas that is BALI (offering to living creatures), CHARU

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1. Atri Smriti, 13 (SS, p.5), cited in B.N. Sharma, Social Life in Northern India, p.37.

(offering to Gods), VAISVADEVA (worship of deities), AGNIHOTRA (maintenance of the sacred fire) and ATITHI-PUJANA (reception of guests).<sup>1</sup> Thus one gets the impression that the Brāhmaṇas of the discussed period and region were well performing the duties specially reserved for them.

The Brāhmaṇas were allowed to study different other branches of learning apart from the Vēdas, chief amongst these being the Vēdāṅga with its six limbs viz. (1) ŚIKSHĀ (phoetics), (2) KALPA (rituals of solemn vedic and domestic sacrifices), (3) VYĀKARAṆA (grammar), (4) NIRUKTA (etymology), (5) CHHANDA (metrics) and JYŌTIṢHA (astronomy).<sup>2</sup> In the inscriptions the Brāhmaṇas are often referred to in a general way, as experts in the Vēdas and Vēdāṅgas. But specific references to Brāhmaṇas, specialized in the Shadāṅga-vēda and other branches of learning are not lacking. In the Śilāhāra inscriptions Shadāṅgavids<sup>3</sup> are found. In course of time this stereotyped into a family name like the

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1. V.V. Mirashi (ed.), Corpus Inscriptionum Indicarum, vol.VI, No.8, No.4, No.5, No.6, No.23 etc.
  2. Chitralekha Gupta, The Brahmanas of India - A Study Based on Inscriptions, p.22.
  3. CII, vol.VI, No.14 (out of the 14 brāhmaṇas who were gifted collectively, Janardana's father was Vevala Shadāṅgavid.

Chaturvēdins and Dvivedins. The brahmanical cognom shadaṅgī has evolved from shadaṅgavid.

During the early medieval period in the discussed regions and elsewhere, we find the Brāhmaṇas specializing in some branches of the Vēdāṅga, not being the master of all the six. Such Brāhmaṇas came to be addressed as Pandita as pointed out by Chitrlekha Gupta.<sup>1</sup> Numerous references to Panditas are made in the Śilāhāra inscriptions of Konkaṇ and Kolhāpur. Ṭhāṇā plates of Śilāhāra king Nāgarjuna<sup>2</sup> of 1039 A.D. (11th century) records the grant of land to the Brāhmaṇa Mādhava Pandita, son of Gokaṇa Pandita. The Ṭhāṇā plates of Mummunirāja of 1048<sup>3</sup> records the grant of stated number of drammas from the revenue of certain villages to 14 Brāhmaṇas, out of which five of them were Panditas. The Mahāsāndhivigrahika of the Śilāhāra king Kēsīdēva was Rājadēva Pandita.<sup>4</sup> References to Panditas are very common in the inscriptions of the discussed period as well as late medieval period, but not in those of early period when the Brāhmaṇa scholars devoted their

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1. Chitrlekha Gupta, op. cit., p.23.

2. CII, vol.VI, No.13.

3. Ibid., No.14.

4. Ibid., No.36.

efforts to the study of the Vēdas. Degeneration of the Brāhmanas is to be noticed in their learning and intellectual capacity. <sup>We find</sup> The Brāhmanas <sup>of our period</sup> specializing only in some branches of Vēdāngas and not mastering all. The answer to this has to be found in the socio-economic changes that had taken place in the early medieval period with the proliferation of land grants to the Brāhmanas, and the spread of agrarian economy in the Koṅkaṇ and Kolhāpur regions. Thus Brāhmanas devoting more time to other avenues of possessing wealth and earning subsistence which had become socially and economically more relevant.

Chitralkha Gupta has pointed out that in southern India logic became a prestigious subject of specialization from about 8-9th centuries A.D., for we find such terms as Ghatikāsāhasa, Ghaṭasāsīn, Ghaṭasāsulu, Gahiyasahasa, Ghaisāsa added to the names of several Brāhmanas who are said to have been expert logicians.<sup>1</sup> The Ghaisāsa surname is found in the Śīlāhāra inscriptions of Kolhāpur (which was part of Karnataka earlier). The Kolhāpur stone inscription of Bhōja II mentions two Karhātaka Brāhmanas that is, Prabhākara Ghaisāsa and Vasiyaṇa Ghaisāsa.<sup>2</sup> These Brāhmanas must have specialized

1. Chitralkha Gupta, op. cit., p.30.

2. CII, op. cit., No.58, p.259.

in logic and must have been regarded highly in the society. The Brāhmaṇas mentioned above were found both in eastern and western part of southern India, but Ghaisāsa has been stereotyped as family name only in western India. This cognom is found among the Desalt, Chitpāvan and Karhaḍe Brāhmaṇas.<sup>1</sup>

There was no dearth of astrologers in the discussed period and region. Astrology as a profession continued to be important. The Chānje stone inscription of Aparāditya made donations to certain astrologers of the place Vāḍu, at the holy place of Muru.<sup>2</sup> Moreover, this was the time when donations were made on auspicious occasions as determined or predicted by Brāhmaṇas themselves based on mathematical calculations.

The solar and lunar eclipses, the Samkrāntis were regarded as very sacred and most of the grants were made on such sacred occasions. Gifts were also made on some sacred tithis. The Śilāhāras of North Koṅkaṇ were ardent devotees of Śiva. They regarded the tithi Māgha very sacred. It is noteworthy that while eclipses and Samkrāntis were regarded as sacred

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1. Chitralkha Gupta, op. cit., p.30.
  2. CII, vol.VI, No.22.

occasions for the making of gifts, the ekādaśī tithi, which in the earlier Gupta-Vākāṭaka age was regarded as the most important tithi for making gifts, declined in importance. This is not surprising because the tithi is sacred to Vishnu, while the Śilāhāras of both North and South Koṅkaṇ were devotees of Śiva.



The epithets Kramavidā<sup>1</sup>, Chaturvēdin<sup>2</sup> and Dvivēdin<sup>3</sup> noticed in the Śilāhāra records indicate the learning of the recipients of the gifts and not the surnames during this period. It is not unlikely that their descendants formed themselves into communities which later came to be regarded as their sub-castes. Thus one gets an idea about the formation, or development of quite a few surnames which had already by this period, stereotyped into proper surnames of the Brāhmaṇas, whereas, others were still in the process of formation.

TH-2537

Vedic sacrifices were performed only occasionally and for ceremonial purposes. The cult of Vedic sacrifices had ceased to be a 'popular religion' long ago. Gupta sovereigns had deliberately encouraged the revival of the v̄edic rites and the performance of sacrifices,

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1. CII, vol.VI, No.5, lines 72-73; No.48, line 40.
  2. Ibid., No.48, line 39.
  3. Ibid., No.23, line 69.

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such as the Asvamedha, Vajapeya & Agnishtoma in the North. In the Deccan during the Sātavāhana period Asvamedha, Rājasūya and other sacrifices were performed as evidenced from the Nānāghat inscription of Nāganika.<sup>1</sup> Even under the Rāshtrakūṭas who were the suzerains of the Śilāhāras of North Koṅkaṇ, two inscriptions, 'Sanjan plates of Amoghavarṣha<sup>2</sup> and the Cambay Plates of Govinda IV<sup>3</sup> clearly state that the grants were made to the Brāhmaṇas to perform the vedic sacrifices like Rājasūya, Vajapeya and Agnishtoma. None of the Śilāhāra inscriptions record the performance of Vedic sacrifices. Owing to the propaganda set on foot by Jainism and Buddhism Vedic sacrifices had become extremely unpopular and irrelevant in the society.

The Smṛtis, which were held in authority during this period and their commentaries, also do not preach the performance of costly Vedic sacrifices. They emphasize instead the importance of the pañcha-mahā-yajñas. Numerous endowments made to the Brāhmaṇas by the Śilāhāra chiefs, officers and feudataries were

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1. G. Yazdani (ed.), The Early History of the Deccan, vol.I, pp.132, 141.
  2. I.A., XVIII, p.235; cited in A.S. Altekar, Rāshtrakūṭa and their times, p.278.
  3. E.I., VII, p.41.

intended to encourage and enable the donees to perform these religious rites regularly, and to look after their family. The general belief must have been, that the regular performance of these rites conducted to the welfare and prosperity of the state. These were also taken to be conducive to the promotion of religion, welfare, prosperity, family, lineage, fame, good fortune and enjoyment. Thus a direct relation between the religion and social structure is to be discovered in the belief, that held that due performance of religious rites contributed to the well-being of a group or to the maintenance of a certain order. The social function of rites was to reaffirm, renew and strengthen these sentiments on which the social solidarity depends.

At this juncture, it will be better to write a little on the temple because few of the professions were intimately connected with temple activity. This is the period which witnessed the mushrooming of temples in different parts of India with the growth of Purāṇic Hinduism and, Koṅkaṇ and Kolhāpur were no exception. Many Brāhmanas adopted the profession of temple-priests for their livelihood. The temples had now become centres of radiation of brāhmanical culture.



They had transformed into mathas with colleges and sātrras attached to it, and had become centres of some other social activities. There is one interesting Śilāhāra inscription through which the process can be noticed. The Kolhāpur inscription of Bhōja II<sup>1</sup> refers to one Brāhmaṇa, Lokāṇa Nāyaka who founded a maṭha. The king Bhōja on the occasion of Uttarāyana granted lands to four Brāhmaṇas who settled in the maṭha of Lokāṇa-Nayaka, for performing the worship of the deities and for keeping the maṭha in good repairs. Two years later Lokāṇa's son Kallīyaṇa granted to these Brahmanas some property for the purpose of feeding the Brāhmaṇas at the sātra established by his mother. Some months later, Kallīyaṇa again granted some land to the same Brāhmaṇas for the purpose of the pupil at the school established for the study of the vēdas.

The Samhitas other than the Rgvēda and Brāhmaṇa works show that the three classes of Brāhmaṇas, Kshatriyas and vaiśyas had become differentiated and their privileges, duties and liabilities had become more or less fixed in those times.<sup>2</sup> But the caste system was not a permanent

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1. CII, op. cit., No.59.

2. P.V. Kone, History of Dharmasastra, vol.II, Part I, p.36.

institution, transmitted unchanged from the dawn of Hindu history and myth, and far from being eternal and changeless, was constantly subject to modification. Thus a Brāhmana who could not work according to the specific vocations consistent with his class was permitted a ksatriya's profession by the Baudhayana Dharma Sūtra.<sup>1</sup> The Brāhmanas could also take up the occupation of the vaiśyas. They could cultivate land received as gifts. Barring certain restrictions by ancient Smṛtis, they could also trade. They were forbidden from selling salt, flesh, milk, honey, intoxicating liquor etc.<sup>2</sup> Though authors of the Smṛtis allow the Brāhmanas to follow other professions in times of adversity, there were several restrictions imposed upon Brāhmanas following the occupation of money-lending, agriculture, trade and the rearing of cattle.<sup>3</sup>

There were Brāhmanas during the discussed period who broke with traditionalism and accepted all sorts

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1. II, 2, 69-70; Manu (VIII), 348-349; cited in B.N. Sharma, Social and Cultural History of Northern India, p.12.
  2. Atri, 21 (SS, p.10); Vasistha Smṛti, II, 31 (SS, p.190); Parasara, II, 7; cited in B.N. Sharma, Social and Cultural History of Northern India, p.13.
  3. P.V. Kane, History of Dharamsastra, vol.II, Part I, p.123.

of professions which would lead them to wealth. Thus one finds certain amount of professional mobility among the Brāhmanas. As more and more land was being granted to the Brāhmanas, many of them must have taken to agriculture as occupation as they even do now in Koṅkan. While stating the boundaries of the donated fields mention is often made of the fields of the Brāhmanas (Bhattas).<sup>1</sup> Vāpis or water reservoirs were also granted, sometimes streams or rivers formed the boundary of the land donated to the Brāhmanas, naturally to facilitate agricultural growth.<sup>2</sup> This is the period which witnesses the Brāhmanas and the temples emerging as large-landed magnates. Some of these lands must have been tilled by hired agriculturists no doubt, but sometimes the Brāhmanas themselves must have ploughed the field. Professor R.S. Sharma credits the Brāhmanas with the dissemination of the knowledge of 'plough cultivation among the aboriginal tribal peoples'.<sup>3</sup>

Besides agriculture some Brāhmanas had entered the administrative service. Unfortunately, the caste

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1. CII, vol.VI, No.9, line 42.
  2. Ibid., No.4, No.5 (together with wood, grass and water).
  3. R.S. Sharma; IHR, II.i., July 1975, p.11.

affiliation of royal officers named in the inscriptions is rarely mentioned. The Khārēpāṭa plates of Anantadēva I mentions Rishibhaṭṭa as the king's mahā-Sāndhivigrahika.<sup>1</sup> There is no doubt that he belonged to the Brāhmaṇa caste. The Mahāsāndhivigrahika of the Śīlāhāra king Kēśideva was Rājadēva Paṇḍita.<sup>2</sup> V.V. Mirashi holds that many of the mahā-pradhānas, mahāmātyas, Bhāṇḍāgara-sīnas and other high officials whose names end in aiya, which is Kannada suffix corresponding to Sanskrit arya must have been Brāhmaṇas.<sup>3</sup>

The Brāhmaṇas are also found as the engravers of the record. For instance, the Brāhmaṇa Vāmiyena<sup>4</sup> and Lakshmiḍhara Paṇḍita<sup>5</sup> were the engravers of the Kaśeli Grant of Bhōja II and of the Panhāle Plates of Vikramāditya respectively. The Brāhmaṇa engravers must have been envious of the rise of the Kāyasthas as a professional literate caste as they must have undermined the monopoly of the Brāhmaṇas as writers and scribes.

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1. CII, op. cit., No.19, line 66.

2. Ibid., No.36.

3. Ibid., Intro. I viii.

4. Ibid., No.60, line 44.

5. Ibid., No.23.

The most interesting development of the period was that a few Brāhmaṇas had also become merchants - a profession which was considered degrading for them. The Brāhmaṇa Gōvanaiya was a member of the nagara (guild) of Guṇapura.<sup>1</sup> It seems the relationship between the merchants and the Brāhmaṇas was cordial. The guilds of the discussed period and region had started recruiting Brāhmaṇas as the members of the nagara.

What could be the reason behind this professional mobility among the Brāhmaṇas? Economic factors seem to be the apparent cause for the deviation of the higher varṇas from the ideal path so systematically and carefully defined in the orthodox Brāhmaṇa literature.<sup>2</sup>

Thus the Brāhmaṇas on the one hand continued with their age-old, tradition-bound functions of teaching and studying the Vēdas, conducting sacrifices and rites and so forth. They were still, socially and ritually at the apex of the social ladder, showing consistency in the social organisation right from the Vēdic days onwards. But on the other hand, a break from tradition is also to be noticed. Some Brāhmaṇas started adopting other professions with the spread of agrarian economy

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1. Ibid., No.7.

2. D.C. Sircar (ed.), Social Life in Ancient India, p.25.

and proliferation of land grants made to them. By the tenth century A.D. onwards <sup>there was</sup> growth of trade and commerce within the Koṅkaṇ and Kolhāpur region, as well as external trade with the Arabs and the Chinese world as evidenced from the accounts of foreign travellers and chroniclers.

Generous endowment of land grants, orchards, revenues and villages were made to the Brāhmaṇas individually or collectively for the sake of the royal donor and his parents. The Janjira Plates of Aparajita: Śaka year 915<sup>1</sup> record the grant by the Śilāhāra king Aparajitadeva of the pallika (village) called Palachchhauhchhika to the Brāhmaṇa Kolama. In the same year, the above Brāhmaṇa received the grant of an orchard in the vishaya of Pāṇāda by the above-mentioned chief.<sup>2</sup> There are numerous examples of Brāhmaṇas receiving the gifts of land, villages etc. individually as well as collectively around and outside the nuclear area of the Śilāhāra chiefs. The Thāṇā Plates of Mummunirāja: Śaka year 970 record the grant of villages to fourteen Brāhmaṇas who had hailed from Korahāta.<sup>3</sup> Prince of

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1. CII, op. cit., No.5.
  2. Ibid., No.6.
  3. Ibid., No.14.

Wales Museum Plates of Mummuniṛāja: Saka year 971 record the grant of the village Ki-ichchhita to twelve Brāhmaṇas residing in the agrahāra of Brahmapuri.<sup>1</sup>

The generous land grants to the Brāhmaṇas and their settlement in the Koṅkaṇ and Kolhāpur region by the Śīlāhāra chiefs were a means of establishing and consolidating the royal power and extending it into the outer areas which had not yet come fully under their control. The main function of the Brāhmaṇas were the "propagation of the new ideal of a Hindu kingship and the hierarchically structured caste society with the new Hindu rulers and priests at its top."<sup>2</sup> The Brāhmaṇas of the court circle, together with those Brāhmaṇas who had settled in the outer areas, had a tremendous influence upon the "inner colonization" of the nuclear areas and the maintenance of Hindu law and royal order.<sup>3</sup>

The Brāhmaṇas had also assumed privileges of tax collection, administration of law and order, right

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1. CII, op. cit., No.15.
  2. V.H. Kulke, Jagannatha-kult Und Gajapati-Konigtum, p.224.
  3. V.H. Kulke, "Royal Temple Policy and the Structure of Medieval Hindu Kingdoms" in A. Eschmann, H. Kulke and G.C. Tripathi (eds.), The Cult of Jagannath and the Regional Tradition of Orissa, p.127.

over minerals which normally has been the prerogative and the monopoly of the state. The Ṭhānā Plates of Nāgārjuna<sup>1</sup> records the grant of a plot of land to Mādhava Paṇḍita in the village Muñjavalī which was not to be entered by the Chāṭas and bhaṭas (royal troops). Janjirā Plates of Aparājita both (set I<sup>2</sup> and set II<sup>3</sup>) record the grant of a pallikā and orchard to the Brāhmana Kolama of the Rgveda Śākha who hailed from Kara hāṭa respectively, together with bhōga and bhāga, together with cluster of trees, wood, grass and water, and also the right to levy fines for the ten offences. It also records the grant of all produce excluding the previously made grants to gods and Brāhmanas. The grant was to be enjoyed by a succession of sons and son's sons etc. It granted all rights to deposits, the fines levied for crimes against unmarried girls and the right to the property of sonless persons and so forth, free from the entrance of the Chāṭas and bhaṭas and free from all taxes.

Thus the Brāhmanas came to arrogate large number of extraordinary privileges. They assumed the right

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1. CII, op. cit., No.13.

2. Ibid., No.5.

3. Ibid., No.6.



to levy fines for ten offences, <sup>even</sup> for crimes against unmarried girls and the right to the property of sonless persons <sup>1</sup> a very unusual privilege. All this meant enormous privileges because in due course of time the Brāhmaṇas could have manipulated the administrative and judicial privileges in their favour and more so because the villages and orchards were donated permanently for a succession of sons and son's sons etc. Moreover, the royal troops were also prohibited in these areas and thus the administration of law and order was to be carried by the Brāhmaṇas who in due course of time must have turned into feudal lords.

A little may be said on the concept of "feudalism". As R.S. Sharma has expounded, feudalism appears in a predominantly agrarian economy which is characterised by a class of land-lords and a class of servile peasantry. In this system the landlords extract surplus through social, religious or political methods, which are called extra-economic.<sup>2</sup> During the Śilāhara period, the overwhelming majority of the people subsisted on agriculture and there is no denial that India

1. CII, op. cit., No.5 and No.6.

Putrabautrādyanvyo-pabhojya (gya)  
nidhānālīyak - kumārī - śahasā - putrādi - samasta-  
dañdadōṣa-yukta - - - .

2. R.S. Sharma, "How Feudal was Indian Feudalism?" in T.J. Byres and Harbans Mukhia, Feudalism and Non-European Societies, p.20; The Journal of  
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developed an economic system chiefly based on land. The essence of feudalism lay in the organization of the entire social structure on the basis of land.

Besides the Thākuras, Prabhus and Sāmantas, the Brāhmanas and religious institutions emerge as large landed-magnates to whom land and sometimes, whole villages were donated in perpetuity along with judicial and administrative rights, free from the entrance of the chāṭas and bhaṭas and free from all taxes.<sup>1</sup> All this amounted to unlimited right over the endowed land or villages which were made in perpetuity and must have led to the subjection of the peasantry. These landlords must have extracted surplus from the servile peasantry, not only through political methods but also through social as well as religious means.

The temples and the Brāhmanas must have needed a large number of people to work in their land, in cases where whole villages were donated to them. Thus, it would not be unreasonable to hold that land and village endowments to religious institutions and the Brāhmanas gave rise to feudal agrarian relations.

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Peasant Studies, vol.12, nos.2&3, Jan/April, 1985, p.20; For detailed information on Indian Feudalism refer R.S. Sharma, Indian Feudalism.

1. 'A-chāṭa-bhaṭa-pravēṣā-akara-ṣmabhi.'

This term occurs in various śilāhāra inscriptions.

leading in turn to the depression of the peasantry.<sup>1</sup>

The Divē Āgar Plate of Mummunirāja<sup>2</sup> records a Vyavasthā (arrangement) whereby no member of the royal family, neither queens nor princes, nor the Sāmantas, Nāvakas and Thākuras were to lay any claim to the village Dipakāgāra and the three neighbouring hamlets. The Brāhmanas should pay the annual revenue according to the prevailing custom. The fines for offences should be levied as settled in the assembly (Smarika) by its 16 members. None were required to pay any cess (dēnaka) or to arrange for the accommodation (padanaka) of royal servants touring in the territory so far as the residents of Dipakāgāra were concerned. Not only were the Brāhmanas exempted from the cess (dēnaka) but there is a transfer of administrative and judicial function to the Brāhmanas. The Śilāhāra chief also delineated the age old right of accommodation of royal servants touring in that territory.

The Prince of Wales Museum Plates<sup>3</sup> of Mummunirāja records the donation of village Ki-ichchhita together

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1. D.N. Jha, "Temples as Landed Magnates in Early Medieval South India (C.A.D. 700-1300)" in R.S. Sharma (ed.) in collaboration with V. Jha, Indian Society: Historical Probings, New Delhi, p.212.
  2. CII, op. cit., No.16.
  3. Ibid., No.15.

with minerals which had been traditionally the property of the State exclusively.

The Brāhmanas finally came to arrogate a large number of extraordinary privileges. The alienation by the state of its own accord, of the privileges of tax collection, administration of law and order and right over minerals may be taken as an important development in the history of Koṅkaṇ and Kolhāpur. Moreover, with the confirmation of hereditary rights over the villages and pieces of land donated to the Brāhmanas which was to be enjoyed as long as sun and moon endures must have led to decentralizing tendencies and growth of new feudal lords.

In selecting recipients for their grants the Śilāhāras took care to see that they were renowned for learning as well as for pious life. Several recipients of gifts are described as Mahā-Brāhmanas<sup>1</sup> or even Parama Brāhmanas<sup>2</sup> (learned Brāhmanas), some of them being called Kramavids<sup>3</sup> (those who had mastered the Krama-patha of the Vēdas), Dvivedins<sup>4</sup> (mastered 2

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1. CII, op. cit., No.9, line 38; No.10, line 27; No.13, line 60.

2. Ibid., No.23, line 67.

3. Ibid., No.6, lines 72-73; No.48, line 40.

4. Ibid., No.23, line 69.

vēdas) and Chaturvedins<sup>1</sup> (mastered 4 vēdas). They are described as always engaged in the 6 duties laid down for Brāhmanas and as proficient in the performance of religious rites. The names of such Brāhmanas are mentioned in the honorific plural in some records to show them due reverence. Thus the Brāhmanas could not exploit their ritual superiority without being well-equipped with the knowledge of scriptures. Hence, D.D. Kosambi has remarked, "Ascetism, knowledge of the scriptures, and birth - this is the making of a Brāhmanas. One without ascetism and scriptures is merely Brāhmana born."<sup>2</sup>

Of the sixty-five inscriptions included in the corpus Inscriptionum Indicarum, volume six, three are concerned with Buddhism, six with Jainism; of the remaining as many as thirteen relate to secular matters; while the rest deal with the donations made mostly to the Brāhmanas; thereby suggesting the importance of dāna-rites to the Brāhmanas. The importance of making dānas and observing vrātas is emphasized in the Smrtis too. The theory of charity being most effective means

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1. CII, op. cit., No.48, line 39.

2. D.D. Kosambi, "Early Brahmins and Brahminism", J.B.B.R.A.S. (N.Ser.), vol.23, 1947, p.38.

of securing religious merit was no doubt in the ascendancy. Quite a few epigraphical records of the Śilāhārās record that "neither knowledge nor penance is as fruitful as charity".<sup>1</sup> One of the accepted means of livelihood for a Brāhmana was to receive gifts from proper persons. This is known as pratigraha. Medhatithi while commenting on Manu writes that when a gift is made with Vēdic mantra and when it is accepted with the idea that this would secure for the donor some religious merit should be taken as pratigraha.<sup>2</sup> Hazra is of the opinion that when power and prestige of the Vedic priests declined the Smārta Brāhmana sectaries tried to improve their economic condition through lawful means viz. the acceptance of gifts, priesthood, teachership, etc. The first of these means being considered the best and more effective, the Brāhmanas strained every nerve to urge the people to make gifts to themselves on any and every occasion.<sup>3</sup>

The study of the epigraphic records dealing with gifts gives a good picture of the society and economy

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1. CII, op. cit., No.8, line 20.
  2. P.V. Kane, History of Dharmasastras, II, Pt.II, p.842.
  3. H.C. Hazra, Puranic Records on Hindu Rites and Customs, p.246; cited in Chitralkha Gupta, The Brahmanas of India, p.73.

of the period. In the Śilāhāra inscriptions the importance of land is emphasized. Thus the inscriptions record that "a gift of land made to a worthy person at a sacred place and on a holy occasion would take one across the unfathomable ocean of worldly existence."<sup>1</sup> Thus the gifting of land was regarded as the most meritorious because all wealth was really produced from land. The gifting of land reflects an increased interest in agriculture and the fact that land was more lucrative than heads of cattle.<sup>2</sup> During the Vedic period the gifts generally consisted of cows and its products indicating the prevalence of pastoral economy. But when we come down to our period the gifts consist of land, revenues, orchards, gardens, drammas and by the 10th century A.D. additional gifts of levies, tolls, imposts specially in the Kolhāpur region suggesting an economy where the overwhelming majority of people subsisted on agriculture and agricultural surplus formed the bulk of income of the state. But towards the 10-11th centuries A.D. specially in Kolhāpur a development towards urban life and commercial activity is to be noticed.

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1. CII, op. cit., No.8, line 24 etc.

2. Romila Thapar, Ancient Indian Social History - Some Interpretations, p.118.

The early medieval period was an age of elaboration and proliferation. The process of proliferation appears to be quite striking among the Brāhmanas. The two sub-castes of Mahārashtrīya Brāhmanas appear to be in the process of formation. The Karhāde Brāhmanas who migrated from Karahāṭa and settled down in North-Koṅkaṇ formed a sub-caste of Karhāde Brāhmanas. The Thāṇā plates of Mummunirāja<sup>1</sup> in the first part of the grant mention 14 Brāhmanas, 13 of these donees were living in the Kannada speaking Karahāṭa. They are referred to as Karahāṭaka Brāhmanas in two late records of the Kolhāpur Śilāhāras in order to distinguish them from the Sahavāsi Brāhmanas.<sup>2</sup> The Brāhmanas of Karahāṭa correspond to the modern sub-caste of the Karhāde Brāhmanas in Mahārāshtra and Koṅkaṇ.

The Vāvailaka Brāhmanas are mentioned in the Thāṇā Plates of Mummunirāja.<sup>3</sup> They appear to have formed a separate group by this time. All of them had not come from Karahāṭa but had migrated from different places as stated below:

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1. CII, op. cit., No.14.
  2. Ibid., No.58, line 24; No.59, line 11.
  3. Ibid., No.14.



Name of <u>Brāhmana</u>	Father's Name	place of origin leading to the formation of a sub-caste	<u>Gōtra</u>	<u>Śākha</u>
1. Daddapaiya	Brahmanāyaka	Madhyad-ēsa	Gārgya	Rigveda
2. Vāpyaiya	Dhālana Shadāngarā	Karahāṭa	Vāsis-tha	"
3. Dāmupaiya	Risiyapaiya	"	Kāśyapa	"
4. Nāgādēvaiya	"	"	"	"
5. Gōvindaiya	Mahādharaia	"	Jāmada-ganya	"
6. Nannapaiya	Madhusalaiya	Purī	Bhārad-vāja	Gobhila (Sama-veda)
7. Lōkapaiya	Vāvanaiya	Karahāṭa	Kāśyapa	Rigveda

The Vāvailaka Brāhmanas mentioned above were a separate group of Brāhmanas at this time. But their modern representatives are not known.

Sēnavai Brāhmana is mentioned in the Balipattana Plates of Rattarāja.<sup>1</sup> He represents perhaps a group of Brāhmanas who, in course of time, came to be known as the Sēnavi Brāhmanas. They are noticed in large numbers in Konkan. Many persons of this sub-caste are mentioned in an inscription at Pandharpur.<sup>2</sup>

1. CII, op. cit., No.42, line 44.

2. Ibid., p.194; P.M.K.L., pp.178 & 18.

The Sahavāsi Brāhmaṇas were also in the process of formation. They appear in two grants of the reigns of the Kolhāpur Śīlāhāras.<sup>1</sup> They were probably the predecessors of the modern Savāsi Brāhmaṇas who are noticed in fairly large numbers in the Kolhāpur, Karhād, Miraj, Sāngli, Alhani and Kāgal taluks of Maharashtra and in the Hāvērī, Mysore, Hubālī and Adhvaṇī subdivisions of Karnataka. They are said to have immigrated into Maharashtra from Karnataka and all of them were Vaishnavas.<sup>2</sup>

V.V. Mirashi has shown how the Brāhmaṇas of the different Vēdic Śākhās were geographically located. Let us examine the various Śākhās of the Brāhmaṇas and the area from where the Brāhmaṇas of various Śākhās came.

Most of the donees of the grants of the Śīlāhāras were Brāhmaṇas of the Rīgvēda Śākhā who had come to Koṅkaṇ from Karahāṭa, modern Karhād in the Sātāra district.<sup>3</sup> Some of them had settled down in North Koṅkaṇ.<sup>4</sup> Even now these Brāhmaṇas are found in large

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1. CII, op. cit., No.58, line 24; No.59, line 11.

2. Ibid., Introduction p. (Lviii).

3. Ibid., No.14, lines 61, 104 etc.

4. Ibid., No.14, line 61.

numbers in that part of the country. In some later records of the Kolhāpur District for instance the Kolhāpur stone inscription of Bhōja II, two Karahātāka Brāhmanas that is Prabhakara Ghaisāsa and Vāsīyana Ghaisāsa are differentiated from the 2 Sahavāsīs that is Aditya-bhaṭṭa and Jaṅardanabhaṭṭa.<sup>1</sup>

The Brāhmanas of the Taittiriya Śākhā of the Black Yajurveda were few in numbers. Rudrabhaṭṭapadhaya, the donee of Panhāle Plates belonged to this Śākhā and was especially invited from Varānasi.<sup>2</sup> The Brāhmaṇa of the Madhyandina Śākhā of the White Yajurveda predominate now almost throughout Maharashtra, but they are found in a small number in North-Koṅkaṇ.<sup>3</sup> The donee of the Thāṅā Plates of Nāgārjuna,<sup>4</sup> who had hailed from Hastigrāma in Madhya Pradesh was a Yajurvedīn. Thus it appears the Brāhmanas of the Yajurvedīn Śākhā came from the Gangetic basin region and Madhya Pradesh.

Some Silāhāra grants mention Sāmavedī Brāhmanas. As the Sāmaveda had thousand Śākhās, these Brāhmanas are said to be referred to as grihītasahasra (those who

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1. CII, op. cit., p.259.
  2. Ibid., No.23.
  3. Ibid., Intro., p.lvii.
  4. Ibid., No.13.

had mastered the vēda of a thousand śākhās). One Sāmavēdī Brāhmaṇa is mentioned as having hailed from Gauḍa-dēśa or West Bengal.<sup>1</sup> He belonged to the Kauthuma Śākhā. Modern Broach was the home of the Sāmavēdīs according to V.V. Mirashi.<sup>2</sup> A Brāhmaṇa of the Rānāyanī Śākhā of this Vēda is mentioned in the prince of Wales Museum Plates of Mummunirāja.<sup>3</sup> The Brāhmaṇa Nannapaiya of Thānā Plates of Mummunirāja was of Gobhila (Sāma-vēda) Śākhā who had hailed from Purī.<sup>4</sup> The Brāhmaṇas of the Sāma-Vēda Śākhā mostly hailed to Koṅkaṇ from the eastern part of India.

The Brāhmaṇas of the Atharvavēda were very rare. None has been mentioned in any of the Śilāhāra inscriptions. V.V. Mirashi has pointed out that there are a few Brāhmaṇas of this Vēda in the eastern parts of the Sātārā district.<sup>5</sup> They belonged to the Saunaka Śākhā.

The absence of the Brāhmaṇas of Atharvavēda could be because of the fact, that the orthodox school of thought sneered at this vēda as it manifested the hopes

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1. CII, op. cit., No.15, line 61.
  2. Ibid., Intro., lvii.
  3. Ibid., No.15, line 65.
  4. Ibid., No.14.
  5. Ibid., Introduction.

and aspirations, thoughts and beliefs of the common people as opposed to the higher religious thoughts embodied in other three vēdas,<sup>1</sup> The purpose of Atharvavēda was to "appease, to bless and to curse."<sup>2</sup> Moreover, the Śilāhāra chiefs who were alien to Koṅkan and Kolhāpur region invited only those Brāhmaṇas who were highly regarded and accepted by the society, who would give religious and social sanction to their newly established political rule in the discussed regions. The Brāhmaṇas of Atharvavēda must have been nearly negligible in number. They, in course of time, to be in tune with the social set up must have adopted other branches of learning well-accepted and respected by the concerned society.

It will be interesting to investigate the prevailing Gōtras which had become an important item "in the specification and identification of a Brāhmaṇa."<sup>3</sup> The Gōtra specification held a very important position in the brāhmaṇical society. This can be inferred from the way they figure in the epigraphical records. The

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1. Chitralekha Gupta, op. cit., p.153.

2. Ibid.

3. G.S. Ghurye, Two Brahmanical Institutions - Gotras and Charana, p.5.

Brāhmaṇa donees of Śilāhāras are invariably mentioned along with their Gōtras and Sākhās. The importance of the Gōtras in the life of the Brāhmaṇas is further known from the literary sources which informs that the mantras to be uttered and rituals to be performed in various socio-religious functions depended on the gōtra of an individual Brāhmaṇa. Marriage within one's gōtras was not permitted as they were thought to belong to the same family.

The gōtra is a purely Brāhmaṇic institution which has been extended to the other two upper castes by Brāhmaṇic superiority.<sup>1</sup> The word gōtra in the Rgvēda meant only a herd of cattle or a pen for cattle. In later times, down to the present day, it has meaning of an exogamous patriarchal family unit.<sup>2</sup> From the later vedic times, a 'gotra' - name was used as a component of Brāhmaṇic individual specification. From the Gupta period onwards the inscriptions show that henceforth the Brāhmaṇas were mentioned, almost always, with reference to their gōtras. This must have given rise to the custom of adding the gōtras as part of

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1. D.D. Kosambi, "On the Origin of Brahmin Gotras", J.B.B.R.A.S. (N.Ser.), vol.26, 1950-51, p.21.

2. Ibid., p.21.

the name, a custom which is prevalent even now in many parts of India.

The following gōtras appear in the inscriptions of the Śilāhāras of Konkan and Kolhāpur:

<u>The Inscription Number</u>	<u>Name of the Brāhmana</u>	<u>Gōtra</u>
No.4	CHĀDĀDĒVA	Kāśyapa
No.5	Kolama	Kāśyapa
No.6	Kolama (same as above)	Kāśyapa
No.8	Tikkapaiya	Jāmadagnya
No.9	Amadēvaiya	Parāsara
No.10	Gōvinda	Kāśyapa
No.13	Nārāyaṇa Paṇḍita	Jāmadagnya-Vatsa
"	Rāmba Paṇḍita	Jāmadagnya-Vatsa
"	Karṇāta Kīśavabhaṭṭa	
"	Gōpalī Paṇḍita	Jāmadagnya-Vatsa
"	Dhāresvarabhaṭṭa	Jāmadagnya-Vatsa
"	Nārāyaṇabhaṭṭa	Gārgya
"	Chakrapāṇibhaṭṭa	Kapī
"	Mādhava Jyotirvid	Ātrēya
"	Vambadēvabhaṭṭa	Ātrēya
"	Vāvālaiya	Kāśyapa
"	Dīvākaraiya	Bhāradvāja
"	Janārdana	Kāśyapa

contd...

contd...		
"	Vāmbana	Ātrēya
"	Daddapaiya	Gārgya
"	Vapyaiya	Vasishtha
"	Damupaiya	Kāśyapa
"	Nagadevaiya	Kāśyapa
"	Govindaiya	Jāmadagnya-Vatsa
"	Nannapaiya	Bhāradvāja
"	Lakapaiya	Kāśyapa
No. 15	Kōkā Pandita	Sāndilya
"	Dēvadhara Dikshita	Vatsa
"	Dāmōdara	Bhāradvāja
"	Sudanaia	Bhārgava
"	Dāmōdara	Upamanya
"	Narayana Upāsani	Ātrēya
"	Śripati Agnihōtri	Kusika
"	Śripati	Ātrēya
"	Kanakēśvara	Jāmadagnya
"	Vēlaiyā Upāsani	Ātrēya
"	Sarvodēvaiya	Lōkāksha
"	Vitthapaiya	Ātrēya
No. 20	Trinkrama	Vārshēya
No. 23	Rudrabhattapādhyaya	Bhāradvāja
No. 48	Bhattopadhyaya	Gautama
"	Gōvinda	Bhāradvāja
"	Bhaskara	Atri

contd...



"	Narayanabhṭṭa	Jāmadagnya-Vatsa
"	Mādhava	Bhāradvāja
"	Vāmana	Kāśyapa
"	Vishnubhṭṭa	Dhananjaya
"	Vāmana	Bhāradvāja

G.S. Ghurye scanned about 150 records covering the regions (1) Assam, (2) North India including Rajasthan and Madhya Pradesh, (3) Gujarat, (4) Maharashtra, (5) Andhra Pradesh and (6) Tamil Nadu to which he added the data made available for Gujarat by Dr. H.D. Sankalia.<sup>1</sup> He came to the conclusion that only 12 of the gōtras occur in every one of the six regions mentioned above. These 12 gōtras accounted for 2463 donees out of the total 3161 i.e. 77.9 per cent. These 12 gōtras are the following: Bhāradvāja, Kāśyapa, Vatsa, Kaundinya, Ātrēya, Kausika, Vasishtha, Gautama, Harita, Sāṅḍilya, Parāśara and Bhārgava. The two 'gōtras' Bhāradvāja and Kāśyapa stand apart from the other ten 'gōtras' in having been the most prevalent ones among them.<sup>2</sup>

From the table of the gōtras of the Brāhmaṇa donees of our period and region we notice that out of 12 gōtras

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1. G.S. Ghurye, op. cit., p.184.

2. Ibid., p.185.

found in every one of the six regions, 2 of the gōtras that is Harīta and Kaundinya are absent from the Koṅkaṇ and Kolhāpur regions. But similar to Ghurye's conclusion, the two gōtras Bhāradvāja and Kāśyapa do stand out along with Jāmādagnya-vatsa in the case of the Śilāhāra Brāhmaṇa donees, from the other gōtras in being the most current ones. Out of the 48 Brāhmaṇa donees mentioned in the above table 23 Brāhmaṇas belonged to the Bhāradvāja (7), Kāśyapa (9) and Jāmādagnya-vatsa (7) gōtras. Ātrēya (6) being fourth in rank. Thus the over all distribution of gōtras in the Koṅkaṇ and Kolhāpur region is quite similar <sup>to</sup> those of the 6 regions stated by Ghurye.

The migration of the Brāhmaṇas forms an interesting feature of the socio-economic history of Koṅkaṇ. As more and more Brāhmaṇas were induced to settle down in Koṅkaṇ, their number must have increased. As they settled down in nearby and far flung villages and sometimes agrahāras established by them or the chiefs and officers, they came into direct contact with the masses and must have influenced their various aspects of life.

Most of the donees of the grants of the Śilāhāras had come to Koṅkaṇ from Karahāṭa, modern Karhād in the Sātārā district.<sup>1</sup> There were others, invited from far

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1. CII, op. cit., No.15, line 62.

off places like Muñjasthānā<sup>1</sup> in Central India and Vārānāsi<sup>2</sup> in North India. Mādhava Paṇḍita hailed from Hastigrāma<sup>3</sup> in Madhya-Pradesa.

Why were land grants, known as brahmadeya made to the Brāhmanas? These were in fact, meant for inducing them to come and settle down where they were wanted. Why were the learned Brāhmanas from far off places invited and induced to settle down? This seems to be an attempt on the part of the Śilāhāra chiefs who were alien to Koṅkaṇ and Kolhāpur, to sanskritise and legitimize their rule and get sanction from the learned Brāhmanas who were supposed to be the upholders of ancient cultural traditions and the expounders of the norms of conduct for the king as well as the people. This method of installing the Brāhmanas proved to be very beneficial to the rulers, since they infused loyalty in the people to the established order of things by maintaining and upholding the authority of their patrons.<sup>4</sup>

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1. CII, op. cit., No.15, line 62.

2. Ibid., No.23, line 67

3. Ibid., No.13

4. M. Liceria, "Migration of Brahmanas to Karnataka", P.I.H.C., 1974, 35th Session, p.84.

The relationship between the ruling elite and the Brāhmanas was complementary to each other. Uma Shankari correctly puts forward that "the Brāhmana's knowledge of the dharma without the power or the authority of the king to enforce it, and the king's authority to use the 'stick' without its basis in dharma, are both incomplete."<sup>1</sup> Both of them were contenders of social supremacy. The ruling elite as well as the lay community provided the material support for the Brāhmanas through dānas (gifts) and offerings and in turn the merit, punya, accumulated by the Brāhmanas of the society was in part transferred to the ruling elite and the lay community. Although each of the groups had different symbols their relationship overlapped. Thus<sup>2</sup> the avowed purpose of the performance of medieval dān rites was to acquire religious merit (punya) which would instantly purify the jajmāna of the different types of pollution and help him to retain, consolidate and even improve the degree of his ritual purity and his corresponding social status."<sup>2</sup> From the

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1. Uma Shankari, "Brahman, King and Bhakta in a Temple in Tamil Nadu", Contribution to Indian Sociology, 1984, p.180.
  2. R.N. Nandi, "Client, Ritual and Conflict in Early Brahmanical order", The Indian Historical Review, vol.VI, Nos.1-2 (July 1979-Jan. 1980), p.93.

Brāhmanas point of view, the new dāṇa-rites provided a dependable and adaptive means of subsistence and effective source of social authority.<sup>1</sup> Thus there is a direct relationship between the religion and society in the belief that the performance of certain dāṇa-rites would enhance ones corresponding social status.

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1. R.N. Nandi, op. cit., p.93.

Section.II: KSHATRIYAS

The Kshatriyas ranked next to the Brāhmanas in the social hierarchy. The Śilāhāras claimed to be of the Kshatriya caste and traced their descent from the Vidyādhara Jīmūtavāhana.<sup>1</sup> Why do they trace their lineage and place a heavy accent on the preservation of some memory of lineages? We do not find the word Vamsa in the Vēdas but suddenly in the Puranic texts we find a fairly detailed listing of lineages. The ruling chief, dynasties and even the trading guilds trace their lineage to someone or the other. This phenomenon becomes prominent in the early medieval India. This would definitely suggest that the listing of detailed lineages carried some importance. This could not be sheer fantasy but definitely an attempt to acquire status in the society, a process of social legitimization by providing mythical descent.

Romila Thapar has expounded that the medieval period saw a revival of seeking connection with the Yadava lineage. This is perhaps most insistent in the thirteenth century A.D. with the reference to the south Indian tradition

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1. CII, op. cit., No.47, line 18.

Romila Thapar provides a number of medieval dynasties of the western half of the peninsula - The Tūlavas, Rāshtrakūṭas, Hoysālas, Yādavas of Dēvagiri who claimed Yādava descent.<sup>1</sup> But the Śilāhāras who ruled as independent chiefs in the western half of the peninsula in the early medieval period traced their descent from the mythical Vidyādharma Jīmūtavahana. Why do we find this variation? It would be an interesting study to probe into the matter.

The Śilāhāras claimed to be of the Kshatriya caste. The Śilāhāra family is called Mahā-Kshatriya in the Kolhāpur inscription of Vijayaditya.<sup>2</sup> The Śilāhāra chief Bhōja II is called Kshatriya-Sikhāmani, the crest jewel of the Kshatriyas in the Kasēli plates.<sup>3</sup> It is interesting to note that the Śilāhāras of Kolhāpur claimed themselves to be Maha-Kshatriyas (Śrī. Śilāhār-mahā-Kshatriya-nvya)<sup>4</sup>. The funeral priests known as Mahābrāhmanas.<sup>5</sup>

1. Romila Thapar, op. cit., pp. 252-253;
2. P.B. Desai, Ancient History of Karnataka, pp. 112-13, 305.
3. CII, op. cit., No. 53, line 3.
4. Ibid., No. 50, lines 24-25.
5. Ibid., No. 53, line 3.
6. Crooke, The Tribes and Castes of the North-Western India, vol. I, Intro. p. xxii; J.H. Hutton, Caste in India, Its Nature, Function and Origin, p. 287.

were considered to be degraded Brāhmaṇas. Thus the terminological parallel Mahā-Kshatriya might have also meant a degraded Kshatriya. Probably, the Śilāhāras were of menial origin and tried to validate their rule by adopting <sup>Brāhmanical</sup> dynastic name, using sanskrit as the main language in their inscriptions. They championed the sanskrit tradition and brāhmanical culture, by patronizing the Purāṇic deities and the Brāhmaṇas and adhering to the society as depicted in the Smṛtis. In Bengal and South India, the existence of a viable Kshatriya caste is generally unknown. Hence, may be in order to maintain a balance and represent an ideal society of the Smṛtis where the Kshatriyas alone were rulers, the Śilāhāras assumed the Kshatriya status. This entire assumption is hypothetical and needs further investigation.

Moreover, the Kshatriya rulers of the North claimed to be of Sūryavaṃṣa lineage whereas those

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1. Suvira Jaiswal, "Studies in the Social Structure of the Early Tamils" in R.S. Sharma (ed.) in collaboration with V. Jha, Indian Society: Historical Probing, New Delhi, Second Edition, p.147. Suvira Jaiswal states that the ascription of Kshatriyahood to the Pallavas or Kadambas did not give rise to a viable Kshatriya varṇa, p.126 - The Aryan emigration to the South consisted of the peaceful Brāhmaṇa priests and instructors and not of Kshatriya warriors or vaisya traders.



of South of Chandravamṣa lineage. But the Śilāhāras do not lach on to the Chandravamṣa lineage, why was it so? Was it because they were of lower origin or degraded Kshatriyas similar to the Kshatriyas of Gaya<sup>1</sup> (Bihar) referred as mahā-Kshatriyas or was there some other reason?

An ideal Kshatriya had to be brave, self-controlled, efficient in protecting the people and punishing the wicked. Performing sacrifices, making gifts and reading the Vēdas were as good as penance to him.<sup>2</sup> Śilāhāra inscriptions do not throw light on all the above-mentioned qualities. We do find them making numerous gifts to the Brāhmaṇas and religious institutions. They were brave and efficiently protected their subjects. There were few invasions of their territories by foreign powers, but they courageously resisted them and ultimately drove them out. They rarely invaded others' country. Among the Śilāhāras of North Koṅkaṇ, only Aparājita<sup>3</sup> and Aparāditya<sup>4</sup> are known to have made some conquests. Other rulers

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2. Atri, S., 14 (SS, p.10); Parasara S., I. 64; SNS, I.41; cited in B.N. Sharma, Social Life in Northern India, p.44.

3. CII, op. cit., No.5, lines 40-43.

4. Ibid., No.19, line 64.

1. Personal Communication : Prof. Suvina Jaiswal

were content to rule their country peacefully. Bhōja I of the Kolhāpur branch is said to have taken part in several wars, but that was probably, as a feudatory of the contemporary Chālukya Suzerain.<sup>1</sup> On the whole the period of the Śilāhāra was one of peace and prosperity with ruling chiefs <sup>performing</sup> their prescribed duties of protection of the subjects and looking after the general welfare of all the strata of the society and tolerating the existence of various religious institutions.

The Śilāhāra inscriptions are silent over the caste affiliation of royal officers. Hence, it is very difficult to say anything definite. Many of the Sāmantas, Thākuras and Prabhus <sup>are</sup> mentioned in the Śilāhāra records but they do not claim Kshatriya status. Probably a viable Kshatriya varṇa did not exist in the region. Hence, no one else except the ruling chiefs ~~claimed~~ Kshatriya status.

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1. CII, Op. cit., No.46, lines 18-24, intro. lix.

Section.III: MERCHANTS AND TRADERS

During the period under study the mercantile corporation in Koṅkaṇ and Kolhāpur were many, as seen from the different terms used to denote them namely the Nagara, Settis, Vīra-Banañjas, Settigutas, the Gavares, the Gātriyas, the Gāmandas, the Gamanda-Svāmins<sup>1</sup> and so forth. The traders included among others, Brāhmaṇas and muslims. The Nagara of Guṇapura (North Koṅkaṇ) comprised of the merchants Ambuśrēshthīn and Vappaiya-Śrēshthīn, the village official Chilapaiya and the Brāhmaṇa Govaniya.<sup>2</sup> It is interesting to note that the above guild was composed of not only the merchants but incorporated Brāhmaṇas and officials (of whom caste affiliation is not known). B.A. Saletore is of the opinion that the guilds, if they belonged exclusively to the commercial classes were called Mummuridaṇḍas, or if composed of other citizens; they were known as nagara guilds.<sup>3</sup> The second classification seems to be quite correct for we find in the Bhādāna Plates of Aparājita the Nagara guild constituted of citizens

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1. CII, op. cit., No.49; No.52.

2. Ibid., No.7.

3. S. Gururajachar, "The Vira-Bananjas of Karnataka (1000-1300 A.D.)" in Dr. Shrinivas Ritti and B.R. Gopal (eds.), Studies in Indian History and Culture, p.308.

besides commercial class as mentioned above. Thus there seems to be professional mobility among the various varnas and castes and interchange of professions not prescribed by earlier Smrtis.

It is noteworthy that the economic corporate bodies played a very significant role in the determination of social status and relaxation of the rules pertaining to castes and varnas.<sup>1</sup>

We have literary references recording the Arab settlement on the Malabar and Koṅkaṅ coasts.<sup>2</sup> The Chinchani Plates of Chhittaraja refers to the muslim merchants Alliya, Mahara and Madhumata.<sup>3</sup> The Saṁyana-maṅḍala was governed by Arab feudatory princes during the reigns of the Rāshtrakūṭas Indra III and Krishna III. Since then there was evidently an influx of muslims in north Koṅkaṅ. Soon after the fall of the Rāshtrakūṭas, the Saṁyana-maṅḍala was conquered by the Śilāhāra king Aparājita. Quite a few of the muslim population must have indulged in trade and commerce. There seems to be harmony among the Muslims and Hindus.

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1. D.C. Sircar (ed.), Social Life in Ancient India, p.29.
  2. Heeran, Researches, II, p.438; cited in A. Appadorai, Economic Conditions in Southern India (1000-1500 A.D.), Part II, p.495.
  3. CII, op. cit., No.12.

Since very early times, the Indian artisans and traders were working under the control of their respective guilds (Srēni). Such mercantile guilds have played a prominent part in the economic life of ancient and medieval India. In the Deccan during the Sātavāhana period the guilds played a dominant role in the economy of the period. After that they subsided for quite a few centuries and once again emerged in the 10th century A.D. in the Konkan and Kolhāpur region as well as whole of South India when the trade with the Arab and the Chinese world was revived and <sup>the</sup> merchants reemerged as a dominant social group not only in Karnataka (of which Kolhāpur was a part earlier) but also in the whole of south India. <sup>1</sup> In the discussed region as well as whole of South India, there was a network of guild organizations, both of Craftsmen and merchants; the former were devoted to production and the latter to distribution. The exact significance of the terms Gāmandas, Settis, Gavares and so forth are not easily made out in the present state of our knowledge. Hence, an attempt is made to describe one of the guilds at some length.

The trading corporation of the Vīra-Banañjas was a major one unlike the guild of Gunapura which was a

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1. Ram Bhusan Prasad Singh, Jainism in Early Medieval Karnataka, p.110.

local guild and not widely distributed. The Vīra-Baṇaṅjas was often styled as "Five hundred Svamis of Ayyavale" and was considered to be "the most celebrated of the medieval South Indian merchant guilds."<sup>1</sup> This trading corporation was well known in ancient times and had extensive trade not only in the different parts of India but also in foreign countries such as Siam, Thailand, Sumatra<sup>2</sup>, Burma and Ceylon, where Tamil records mentioning the Five Hundred Svāmis have been found.<sup>3</sup> As far as the geographical limit within India is concerned, we find the records relating to this in northern areas like Bijapur, Mīraj, Kolhāpur, etc. in the Deccan as well as in far of Coimbatore and Tinnevely in the South.<sup>4</sup>

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1. K.A. Nilakantha Sastri, A History of South India, Third edition, 1966, p.331.
  2. K.P. Velayudhan, "Trade Guilds and the character of State in Early South India", P.I.H.C., vol.I, 1978, p.201; Madras Epigraphy Report, 1892, p.12; See also K.A.N. Sastri, "A Tamil Merchant Guild in Sumatra", in South India and South East Asia, Mysore, 1978.
  3. CII, op. cit., p.231; H.C.I.P., vol.V, p.526.
  4. S. Gururajachar, "The Vīra-Baṇaṅjas of Karnataka (1000-1300 A.D.)" in Shrinivas Ritti and B.R. Gopal (eds.), Studies in Indian History and Culture, p.309.

A little may be said about its first and latest references in the inscriptions. On the basis of a reference to the 500 "Chaturvidya Samudaya" in 8-9th centuries A.D. record from Aihole, Fleet thought it was the earliest reference to the 500 svāmis. But S. Gururajachar thought the reference pertained to the Brāhmaṇas of the place and is of the view that 2 Tamil records, found at Munasandai in Puḍukkattai area and belonging to the 9th century A.D. contain the earliest reference to this guild. The latest reference to this guild is said to be in a record of 1860 A.D.<sup>1</sup>

The trading corporation of Vīra-Baṇāṅjas appears twice<sup>2</sup> around 1136 and 1143-44 A.D. in the epigraphical records of the Śilāhāras of Kolhāpur. The Kolhāpur stone inscription of Gaṇḍarāditya<sup>3</sup> contains a lengthy prasasti of the Vīra-Baṇāṅjas. It is said to have consisted of the Five hundred svāmis, the Gavares, the Gātriyas, the Settis, the Setti-guttas, the Gāmaṇḍas and the chief Gāmaṇḍas. They receive high praise here for their heroism as well as for their righteousness, knowledge and charity. They traced their descent from

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1. Shrinivas Ritti and B.R. Gopal (eds.), op. cit., p.309.
  2. CII, op. cit., No.49, No.52.
  3. Ibid., No.49.

Vāsudeva, Khaṇḍalī and Mūlabhadra and proudly stated they had the boon of the goddess Bhagavati. Their banner had the design of a hill and they claimed they had won the goddess of victory in many encounters.

The above description in its original form is one of exaggeration and collection of hyperboles. But it does suggest the importance of the Vīra-Baṇaṅjas in the discussed society. It is difficult to make a scientific account of the constitution of the guild. The guild consisted of the Gātrīyas, the Settis and others and hence, Chandrasekhara Sastri suggests that the Ayyavale might be considered a federation of trade guild,<sup>1</sup> which seems quite plausible. Appadorai is of the view that the most important personage were constituted into a board called "the Five-Hundred Svāmis of Ayyavale" who were more or less permanent ~~body~~ as may be seen from the reference to the 500 in the inscriptions ranging from the 8th to the 17th centuries.<sup>2</sup> V.V. Mirashi subscribes to the view that these 500 Svāmis were the original founders of the corporation.<sup>3</sup> Thus the mercantile corporation of

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1. Chandrasekhara Sastri, Economic Conditions, H.M.V.J., II, p.223; Cited in Appadorai, ECSJ, p.395.
  2. Appadorai, Economic Conditions in Southern India (1000-1500 A.D.), vol.I, p.394.
  3. CII, op. cit., p.231.



Vīra-Baṇāñjas overall consisted of members, who followed the same occupation and must have been united by a sense of belief in common descent from Vāsudeva, Khandali and Mūlabhadra, and by a feeling that one of their prominent duties was to preserve the tenets of the Vīra-Baṇāñju-dharma and to spread them as well.

The Vīra-Baṇāñjas were primarily a trading community with special religious links with Jainism. Their leanings towards Jaina faith are attested by the expression signifying their devotion to the goddess Padmavati occurring in their prasasti.<sup>1</sup> Though the reference to Padmavati does not occur in the Śilāhāra inscriptions of this community in the Kolhāpur region but gavunda-members of this community invariably appear as erecting basadis in the Kolhāpur region, thus testifying their ardent faith in the Jaina religion. At this juncture a little may be said on the gavundas. The gavundas, same as Gaunda or headman, has always been the pivot of the village administration.<sup>2</sup> The gavundas by this time had developed into a distinct class and surname.

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1. P.B. Desai, Jainism in South India and Some Jaina Epigraphs, p.110.

2. G.S. Dikshit, Local Self government in Medieval Karnataka, p.51.

Sri R.S. Panchomukhi has also concluded that Vīra-Baṇaṅjas were Jainas on account of their association with the goddess Bhagavati and Baladēva, Vāsudēva, Khaṇḍalī and Mūlabhadra and monopolised trade in the Deccan and South India.<sup>1</sup> The discussed community extended its support to faiths other than Jainism too for we find them making donation for the service of God Mādhavēśvara.<sup>2</sup> This indicates their grouping towards adjustment in an effort to advertise, stabilize and enhance their social position.

As regards occupation, they were a class of wandering merchants, 'born to wanderers' as they call themselves, visiting all countries, grāmas, nagaras, kedas and paṭṭanas and drona mukhas with valuable articles in their bags. They used asses, buffaloes and carts for transporting goods. They sold wholesale, or hawking about with articles on their shoulders. The chief articles in which they traded were the numerous kinds of precious stones such as sapphires, rubies, diamonds and topaz, pearls, cardamom, cloves, sandalwood, camphor, saffron and such perfumes and drugs, elephants, horses and grains.<sup>3</sup>

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1. Shrinivas Rittis and B.R. Gopal (eds.), op. cit., p.310.
  2. CII, op. cit., No.52.
  3. Appadorai, op. cit., p.395; R.C. Majumdar (ed.), Struggle for Empire, p.525.

The donative inscriptions of the Vīra-Baṇāñjas of Kolhāpur of our period also throw light on the articles of mercandise in which they traded. A careful analysis of the commodities mentioned in our inscriptions of the guild will give a good picture of the goods traded in the Kolhāpur region. The Kolhāpur stone inscription of Gaṇḍarāditya of 1136 A.D. mentions a number of commodities like areca-nuts, betel leaves, gold cloin, cloth, stool, bedstead, green ginger, turmeric, dry ginger, garlic, black pepper, mustard, salt, 18 kinds of grains, fruits, garland and so forth.<sup>1</sup> These were the articles sold at the market place evidently at Kavaḍegolla and certain taxes and dues were levied on them by the Vīra-Baṇāñjas and other merchants plus representatives of certain towns. A fixed amount of these articles were donated to the Tīrthānkara Pārśvanath of the concerned place.

When an extensive list of both ordinary and luxury items is given as available for local sale and not merely as goods in transit one assumes both the development of commercial entrepreneurship as well as the existence of an 'urban' population with needs to complex to be met through the exchange or

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1. CII, op. cit., No.49, lines 26, 32, p.235.

purchase of mere subsistence commodities. On the other hand where relatively few and only utilitarian commodities are mentioned, taking into consideration other factors as well, one estimates the existence of a non-urban population, with a low range of consumer needs in some cases amounting almost to household self-sufficiency.<sup>1</sup>

Thus Kolhāpur region definitely had a urban population as evidenced from the articles ~~Sold~~ there from our inscriptions and other sources. Moreover, we have archaeological evidence for Kolhāpur being urbanized during the 10th-11th centuries A.D.<sup>2</sup> One also witnesses here the development of commercial and monetary economy and the proliferation of various kinds of arts and crafts. In Kolhāpur, generally whole villages were never granted but we find endowments of only few nirvartanas of land being donated to the Brāhmanas. It is in Kolhāpur that we witness the growth and existence of numerous Sects and their sub-sects, and each competing with the other for the

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1. Meera Abraham, "A Medieval Merchant Guild of South India", Studies in History, Jan-Dec. 1982, vol.IV, No.1-2, p.3.
  2. H.D. Sankalia and M.G. Dikshit, Excavations at Brāhmapurī (Kolhāpur) 1945-46, p.8. They point out on the basis of inscriptional evidence and archaeological excavations that Kolhāpur had in the past two periods of prosperity. The 1st was under the Sātavāhanas who turned it into a city having well-built brick-houses out of a modest village. After an interval of some centuries the Silāharas built magnificent temples there.

material support and social base of the various classes. Thus Kolhāpur appears to be a great centre of trade and commerce as the merchants of different towns made grants to the various deities in Kolhāpur.

Now, let us examine the relationship between the trade guilds and the state and try to investigate, as to how far did the state alienate certain political and economic powers and privileges to the trading community.

The relationship between the trade guilds and the state was very cordial. They worked hand in hand for the welfare of the people. The Śilāhāras granted certain political powers and privileges to trade guilds which must have had implications for the development of later history in our region. The political powers and privileges granted to the trade guilds included (a) exemption from payment of dues and taxes, (b) right to collect taxes, (c) administrative powers in village assemblies, (d) military powers and (e) autonomy.

The merchants of the our period had become so prominent and influential that they held the ranks of Mahāpradhāna and mahāsāndhivigrahika. The Khārē-  
paṭan plates of Anantdeva<sup>1</sup> records Bhābhāṇa Śrēṣṭhin

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1. CII, op. cit., No.19.

as Mahāpradhāna and his brother Dhaṇāma-Śrēshṭhin as mahāsāndhivigrahika. The merchants besides performing their prescribed profession of trade and commerce had also become state functionaries. This was an important development and must have definitely raised or enhanced their social status.

The two above-mentioned high officials were exempted from certain dues and other concessions when their ships and sailors entered the ports in North Koṅkaṇ, such as Śrisāthānaka, Nagapura, Sūrparaka and Chēmūlya. A study of these ports regarding their identification and importance will be done a little later. Some of these ports were important during the Sātavāhana period through which Roman trade was carried on. Again by the 10th century A.D. there was re-emergence of trade and commerce in the Koṅkaṇ and Kolhāpur region, hence the prominent ports of ancient India finds mention in the Śilāhāra inscriptions. The merchant cum officers of Khārēpaṭan (South Koṅkaṇ) mentioned above did not confine themselves to Khārēpaṭan but indulged in widespread, extensive commercial activities with their ships and sailors entering ports of North Koṅkaṇ. These merchants were encouraged in their commercial activities by the Śilāhāra chiefs of North Koṅkaṇ

for we find Anantadeva (Śilāhāra chief of N. Koṅkaṇ) exempting them from certain dues. Thus the bestowal of certain concessions to the merchants was to promote trade and commerce in the region and to win over the wealthy, influential merchants. Moreover, the grant may have been made partly in recognition of services rendered by these merchant cum high officers in the conquest of South Koṅkaṇ and perhaps of some parts of Goa. There seems to be an alliance between the ruling elites and merchants who came to the help of the ruling chiefs in the conquest of new territories which would be beneficial to them for commercial purposes.

Moreover, the Śilāhāra chiefs extended royal patronage to the merchants. We have evidences of royal merchants. The Kolhāpur inscription of 1136 A.D.<sup>1</sup> mentions the royal merchant of Gaṇḍarāditya. Another inscription of 1144 A.D. refers to Vēsapayya Setṭi, a great trader and Bappanayya of Miriñje, who were favoured by the Śilāhāras of Kolhāpur.<sup>2</sup>

The trade guilds also enjoyed the right to collect taxes. The Shēdbāl stone inscription of Vijayāditya<sup>3</sup>

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1. CII, op. cit., No.49.

2. Ibid., No.52.

3. Ibid., No.55.

records that certain taxes imposed ad valorem were assigned to the (local) assemblies of guilds by the goldsmith Nāgōja and Reva-gāvūṇḍa. Again for each marriage celebrated locally a tax on cloth sold by the traders' guilds at the rate of one visa per honnu was also assigned apparently to the same assembly. These taxes were to be distributed equally between the basadi and the temple at the place by Revagāvūṇḍa in consultation with assemblies of the guilds. Thus the guilds had not only the right to collect taxes but we find merchants and traders imposing taxes on certain items. This is clearly illustrated by the trading community of Ayyavale.<sup>1</sup>

The temples had started functioning along with the merchants and assemblies of guilds and sometimes basadies and temples provided accommodation<sup>2</sup> facilities for the merchants showing the close association of these institutions. There also began the practice of transferring tolls levied on sale of commodities or on shops to the temples. Thus the temples came to wield some control over the economic activities of the artisans and merchants which they could regulate in

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1. CII, op. cit., No.49.

2. Ibid., No.50, p.236.



their narrow-interests. Thus one can postulate some degree of economic interdependence between the temples and the merchants. It is also possible that the money reserves of a temple were used as a source of credit for mercantile enterprises.

The guilds sometimes received gifts of villages or drammas for the benefit of temples and hence assumed administrative power in the concerned regions. The village Bhādaṇa<sup>1</sup> was granted to the Nagara of Guṇapura for the worship of the holy Sun god Lōṇāditya. The guild was to pay 260 drammas annually to the government evidently out of the revenue of the village. The gift was inclusive of the cluster of trees, extending to its boundaries, inclusive of Udranga and Parikara and exclusive to the gifts previously made to gods and Brāhmaṇas, together with deposits, together with the right to levy fines for major and minor offences such as crimes against the unmarried girls and the right to the property of persons who would die without leaving a son.

Thus the merchants also assumed judicial and administrative power over the village Bhādaṇa and also the right over minerals which was earlier a

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1. CII, op. cit., No.7.

monopoly of the state. Moreover, the merchants held prominent position in the local assemblies and must have been the deciding factors in many a decisions. G.S. Dikshit has shown that the largest local assemblies were the guild assemblies known as the Mahānāḍu.<sup>1</sup> These mahānāḍus generally speaking consisted of three categories of members.

- (i) the guilds of the district and of important towns in it. These formed the driving force of the whole assembly.<sup>2</sup>
- (ii) Representatives of the people of the place where the meeting was held and the surrounding region.
- (iii) Officers of the government of the region.

Let us see, if this general pattern existed in our period and region. A Kolhāpur inscription of 1136 A.D.<sup>3</sup> describes an assembly without designating it by the usual term mahānāḍu. The members who attended this meeting were the guilds, namely, the "Five Hundred Svāmis" and their constituents, the gavares, the

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1. G.S. Dikshit, Local Self-Government in Medieval Karnāṭaka, pp. 29-30.
  2. Ibid., the tradition of the dominance of the district assemblies by the mercantile elements goes to the Gupta times.
  3. CII, op. cit., No. 49.

gatrigas, etc., Settis (or chief merchants) of Kolhāpura (modern Kolhāpur), and Miriṅje (modern Miraj), the royal merchant (Raja-Śrēshthī) of Gaṇḍarāditya, the feudatary of Kolhāpur, an officer of his household, representatives of the towns of Kūṇḍi, Torambagi, Mysige, Baleyavattana and Kavadeḡolla (representing the whole country).

A similar assembly met at Sēdbāl near Miraj, nine years later around 1144 A.D.<sup>1</sup> The head of the district, the Nādapergaḡe Hemmasētti, the representatives of Kūṇḍili, the capital of the nāḡu, and of the neighbouring villages of Piriyuguvara, Siriguppa, and Jygalakappa and a number of merchants of that place participated in the meeting. Certain merchants who were foremost in the trading corporation of the Vīra-Baṇaṅjas and belonged to localities Miriṅje, Bāge, Dōṅikōḡa, Talakole, Kūṇḍili and Sēḡambāl were also present. G.S. Dikshit points out that in this assembly Boppanayya, who had been one of the Settis or merchants of Miriṅje earlier in 1135 A.D., was now the royal merchant in the place of Vesapayyasētti who was now Vaddavyavahāri or a great merchant.<sup>2</sup> This

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1. CII, op. cit., No.52.

2. G.S. Dikshit, op. cit., p.31.

meeting was held on the market day of Sēḍambāl, that is on Friday and granted dues (specified) to the temple of Mādhavēśvara.<sup>1</sup>

The guild assemblies known as Mahānāḍu of the Kolhāpur region, generally speaking did comprise of the three categories of members as enumerated by G.S. Dikshit. The merchants, and specially the Vīra-Baṇāñjas, played a dominant role in these local assemblies.

It is interesting to note that besides being a mercantile and regional body, the mahānāḍu has now crystallized into an association of castes. Thus G.S. Dikshit remarks that "it is curious to find caste assemblies in Karnāṭaka and South India called, mahānāḍu, retaining some of the corporate spirit of the other body."<sup>2</sup>

The merchants had also started possessing private armies. In the prasasti of Kolhāpur stone inscription

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1. Guild meetings ordinarily took place on market days, because it was convenient for the merchants to meet on such a day. Now Tuesday is the market day at Sedambal instead of Friday.
  2. G.S. Dikshit, op. cit., p.35; GJMS, II, pp.62-63  
"The local assembly of the people of our community which is convened by a public announcement is what is called Mahanadu. At this assembly we elect a competent man to be head of of our community in our locality."

of Gaṇḍarāditya,<sup>1</sup> the Vīra-Baṇāñjas are "exalted by their valour in the (whole world); who had obtained the gracious boon of Bhāgavati, who are invincible when they fight; who destroy their enemies." This description suggests that the Vīra-Baṇāñjas must have maintained trained militia. The trade guilds must have maintained militia as a safeguard against robbers and enemies. The military power and wealth of the merchants might have provoked the king or chiefs to win the support of wealthy merchants. At any rate the fact that the state permitted or tolerated the organization of private armies would imply that the state had abandoned the monopoly of military power.

The trade guilds were more or less autonomous bodies. Their activities apparently took little account of political boundaries. The state was not eager to interfere in their transactions and, in fact, encouraged their activities by exempting them from certain dues. All this is indicative of the laxity of state power.

The merchants were particularly noted for their affluence and prosperity and were landowners too. This can be inferred from the fact that 3 merchants

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1. CII, cp. cit., No. 49

named Nagai-Srēshthīn, Lokkai-Srēshthīn and Adityavarman paid 40 dinaras as pādapūja (nazarānā) to the reigning king Avasara II for the confirmation of certain hereditary rights in the villages Kiñjala and Pulisa.<sup>1</sup> The appearance of dinaras is interesting. The fact that these merchants could afford 40 dinaras as pādapūja indicates their affluence. Moreover, gold coins would not have been used in the day-to-day economic transactions. Either these were hoarded by the merchants for such important occasions or they must have carried external trade with some foreigners most probably, the Arab and latter statement seems to be more plausible.

It was not until the 10th century A.D. that the trade with the Arab and the Chinese world was revived, with the merchants emerging as a dominant social group in the whole of South India. Koñkaṇ too emerged as an important centre of trade, the Arabs called Koñkaṇ as the kingdom of Balhāra<sup>2</sup> and finds mention in the accounts of numerous foreign travellers and chorniclers. The natives of Koñkaṇ must have definitely participated in the sea-borne commerce. The Banias of Koñkaṇ coast referred by Marco Polo were probably, the same merchants

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1. CII, op. cit., No.40.

2. Supra, p.496; cited in Appadorai, op. cit., p.506.

referred by Abu'Zaid according to Appadorai who participated in the sea-borne trade.<sup>1</sup>

Besides the natives, the Arabs participated in the sea-borne commerce. We have references to muslim merchants in the Śilāhāra inscriptions and Arab feudatory princes of Saṃyāna-maṇḍala during the reign of the Rāshtrakūṭa Indra III and Krishna III. This maṇḍala was later conquered by the Śilāhāra king Aparājita. Thus, there must have been influx of Arab population in the Koṅkaṇ region since the Rāshtrakūṭa times. This is corroborated by literary references recording the Arab settlements on the Mālābār and Koṅkaṇ coasts.<sup>2</sup> Nairne says that although nothing certain can be adduced to the existence of such colonies in the Dekhan, he believes that there are sufficient reasons to believe the distinct class of Mahomedans known in Bombay as "Koṅkaṇi Mussalmans" to be descendants from the old Arab settlers.<sup>3</sup> When the Roman Empire fell, the Arabians assumed their rank as the first commercial people, on almost every shore of the Mediterranean

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1. Appadorai, op. cit., p.499.

2. Nairne, "The Konkan", Bombay Gazetteer, I, Part II, p.7; cited in Appadorai, op. cit., p.495.

3. Ibid.

sea and the Indian Ocean. They either became the ruling power or established factories and were thereby enabled to command the commerce of silks, precious stones and pearls, **spices** and other articles.<sup>1</sup>

The kings of Koṅkaṇ country seems from all literary accounts to have been specially favourable to the alien traders. In 943 A.D. Al Masudī writes that of all the kings of Sind and India there was no one who paid greater respect to the Mehorāns than the Balhāra (Koṅkaṇ). In his kingdom Islam was honoured and protected.<sup>2</sup> This is quite possible, for the Śilāhāra chiefs followed the traditional policy of toleration and moreover, since quite a few important ports were under their hold, which were rich in various commodities, they must have encouraged the growth of trade and commerce by encouraging both internal and external trade. We have epigraphical references to the encouragement of internal trade. The Khārēpaṭṭan plates of Raṭṭaraja of 1008 A.D.<sup>3</sup> refers to both inland and external trade. A gaḍiyāna of gold from every vessel coming from foreign lands, and a dhārṇa of gold from every ship coming from Kaṇḍalamūliya with the exception of Chēmūliya and Chandrapūra was made over

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1. Appadorai, op. cit., p.493.

2. Al Masudi, Elliot, History, I, p. 240; Sulaiman, Elliot, History, I, p. 4; cited in Appadorai, op. cit., p. 506

3. CII, op. cit., No. 41



for the benefit of temple of Avvēśvara.<sup>1</sup>

Important aspect of commerce is the existence of ports or the outlets for trade. So let us briefly describe the ports mentioned in our inscriptions and try to find out its importance during the discussed period. The occurrence of the following ports - Śrīthānāka, Nagapura, Sūrparaka and Chēmūlya in the Śilāhāra inscription of 1094 A.D. is noteworthy.

Sūrparaka has been identified as modern Sōpāra in the Bassein taluka by V.V. Mirashi.<sup>2</sup> Sōpāra same as Sūrparaka<sup>3</sup> was a very ancient port mentioned

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1. CII, cp. cit., No.41, p.185.

2. Ibid., p.86.

3. Nundo Lal Dey, Geographical Dictionary of Ancient and Medieval India, pp.197-8. Surparaka - It has been correctly identified with Supara or Sopara in the district of Thana, 37 miles north of Bombay and about 4 miles north-west of Bassein. Burgess also identifies it with Supara in the Konkana and Kachh, p.13. ...It is mentioned in the periplus (2nd century A.D.) as Ouppara; perhaps it is the ophis or Sophir of the Bible as Sauvira was too much inland. Surparaka was included in Aparanta - desa (Brahma Purana, Ch.27, v.58.)

by Ptolemy and Arrian. It maintained its sea-borne commerce as can be seen from its occurrence in the inscription of 1094 A.D.<sup>1</sup> Moreover, this is testified by the account of the Arab travellers of the 12th century.<sup>2</sup> From this time however, Sōpārā seems to have declined in importance beyond a solitary mention by Jordanus in a letter dated 1321 A.D. It finds no mention in the writings of later travellers.<sup>3</sup>

The ports which played important part in the discussed period were Thāṇā, Chaul, Dabhol and Goa. The former two finds mention in our inscriptions. Thāṇā was the same as Śrīsthāṇāka,<sup>4</sup> the chief town of the Thāṇā district and the capital of the North Koṅkaṇ.<sup>5</sup> The rise of Thāṇā on the ashes of Kalyān

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1. CII, op. cit., No.19.
  2. Ibn Idankal, Elliot, History, I, p.39; cited in Appadorai, op. cit., p.39.
  3. Jordanus, Yule, Cathay, III, p.76; cited in Appadorai, op. cit., p.39.
  4. N.L. Dey, op. cit., p.193; Śrī-Sthāṇāka-Thāṇā, in the province of Bombay, it was once the capital of Northern Koṅkaṇ. It was the seat of a reigning family called Śilāhāra, hence it was called Purī of the Śilāhāras (Da Cunha's History of Chaul and Bassein, pp.130, 168.)
  5. Alberuni, India, vol.I, p.203; Al Idrise, Elliot, History, I, p.89; cited in Appadorai, op. cit., p.590.

in close vicinity to it is quite natural owing to its excellent position and its being the capital of the Śilāhāras of North Koṅkaṇ who encouraged trade and commerce. An important article of export here was 'drugs', particularly tabashir, the roots of the kāna which were gathered in the neighbouring mountains and transported to the East and West. In the 13th century, it exported leather of various excellent kinds and also good buckram and cotton. The major imports were metals, gold, silver and copper. It continued to be important in the succeeding centuries, though later was partly overshadowed by the rise of Chaul and Dabhol.<sup>1</sup>

Chēmūlya mentioned in the Śilāhāra inscription was Chaul in the Thānā district. It was an important seaport of the Śilāhāras who ruled in the North Koṅkaṇ from 810 to 1260 A.D. In the 12th century it was found to be a good port for export of aromatic plants specially henna. Early in the 14th century Chaul with the rest of the Koṅkaṇ ports fell into hands of the Mahomedans; in 1347 A.D. it formed a part of the Bahmani kingdom.<sup>2</sup>

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1. Appadorai, op. cit., pp.590-91.

2. Ibid., p591.

Nagapura may be modern Nagav, 6 miles south-east of Alibag as suggested by Fleet, in the Kolaba district.<sup>1</sup> This port does not find mention in the accounts of the foreign travellers thereby suggesting its non-importance in ancient as well as medieval times as far as foreign or external trade is concerned.

Now let us turn back to the merchant guilds. The guilds were not merely the receivers of others' gifts, but made gifts themselves in the name of the corporation. The Vim-Banajjas which had representatives in the different towns in the kingdom of the Śīlāhāra occasionally met on market days at different places and often made donations to Jaina and Hindu temples out of the cess levied on different commodities sold in the local markets. The donative records of the merchants on the one hand proves their intense desire for growing social status and on the other indicate the growing authority of the trading community over the religious bodies.

The merchant community was not a homogenous group but was itself socially and economically stratified. Not all the merchants of the discussed period were as prosperous and affluent as <sup>a</sup>Ngai-Srēshtin, Lokkal.

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1. CII, op. cit., p.116.

Śrēshthīn and Adityavarman who could afford 40 dīnaras as pādapūja to the king. There was the other category of merchants like Bhābhāṇa Śrēshthīn (Mahā-pradhāna) and Dhanāma-Śrēshthīn (as Mahā-sāndhivigrahika) who had become state functionaries and others holding prominent positions as heads of local managing committees. There was yet another category of local traders and merchants of the ordinary type.

From around 10th century onwards one notices the growth of trade and commerce within Koṅkaṇ and Kolhāpur region as well as the re-emergence of trade with the Arabs who had settled down in the Mālabar and Koṅkaṇ coasts. The merchants re-emerged as dominant social group and formed themselves into guilds exercising great influence in the towns and village assemblies which had become important administrative units. The corporate spirit of the guild must have given the merchants a degree of self-respect. By this time the merchants came to exercise religious, administrative and military functions besides their prescribed profession of trade and commerce.

Section.IV: KĀYASTHAS

The word Kāyastha does not occur in the ancient dharmasutras of Gautama, Apastamba, Baudhayana, or Vasistha nor in the Manusmṛti. The Vishnu Dh.S. VII.3 defines a public document (rajasaksika) as one written in the royal court or office by a kāyastha appointed by the king and attested by the hand of the superintendent of the office.<sup>1</sup> These words suggest that the Kāyastha was an officer and that there is nothing about a caste here. The constant transfer of land or land revenues made by princes to priests, temples and officials led in early medieval times to the rise and growth of the scribe or the Kāyastha community. By the 11th century A.D., the Kāyasthas had emerged as a separate caste.

The Śilāhāra inscriptions register Uddāma, the Kāyastha as scribe twice. The very fact that Uddāma<sup>2</sup> is referred to as a Kāyastha indicates the emergence of Kāyastha as a distinct caste. The Kāyasthas whose profession appears to be that of a scribe were a part of king's retinue and must have occupied a fairly important place in the royal court. They must have

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1. Vishnu Dharmasutra, VII.3; cited in P.V. Kane, op. cit., vol.II, Pt.I, p.76.
  2. CII, op. cit., No.5 & No.6.

demanded respect from the people too as such because this was the time when numerous grants of land, revenue, orchards, drammas and so forth were made to the Brāhmanas and temples which must have enhanced their importance in the society.

Whether the Kāyasthas took to other professions is difficult to say because the caste affiliations of the numerous Śilāhāra officers mentioned in their records is not given.

The rise of the Kāyasthas as a professional literate caste must have undermined the monopoly of the Brāhmanas as writers and scribes.

Section.V: CRAFTSMEN & ARTISANS AND  
OTHER PROFESSIONAL GROUPS

The Śilāhāra inscriptions mention a number of artisans and craftsmen whose occupation are in some way connected with the life of luxury and ease the nagaraka or a town dwellers led. These are the Mālākara<sup>1</sup> - "the maker of garlands", the Rajaka<sup>2</sup> - "the cleaner of clothes", the Suvarṇakara<sup>3</sup> - "the goldsmith", the carpenters<sup>4</sup> dealing with wood work, the Kumbhakāra<sup>5</sup> - "maker of the pots" and the Telika<sup>6</sup> - "the oilman". The banglesellers<sup>7</sup>, basket makers<sup>8</sup> and shoe-makers<sup>9</sup> also figure in the Kolhāpur inscriptions. The weavers must have existed for we find cloth merchants.<sup>10</sup>

Numerous names of castes arise from the profession they follow. For instance, the Rājakas, Suvarṇakaras,

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1. CII, op. cit., No.41.
  2. Ibid., No.41.
  3. Ibid., No.49, No.52.
  4. Ibid., No.49.
  5. Ibid., No.49, No.52.
  6. Ibid., No.41.
  7. Ibid., No.52.
  8. Ibid., No.52.
  9. Ibid., No.52.
  10. Ibid., No.49.



Carpenters, Kumbhakara, Telika, shoe-makers and weavers. All these occupational groups had crystallized into castes much before our period. They exist even now in many parts of India.

The Rajaka or the Dhōbi is a scheduled caste in U.P., Bihar and C.P. and in Bengal called Dhoba. He is one of the antyajas according to several writers.<sup>1</sup> The Rajakas during our period appear to be of low caste and status. A family of washermen was permanently donated for the service of the temple of Avvēśvara<sup>2</sup> and thus must have turned into bonded-labourers.

The Suvarṇakarās appear to have gained importance during our period. They must have taken to engraving as one of their professions. The Bāmani stone inscription of Vijayāditya<sup>3</sup> records that the inscription was incised by Gōvyaja, son of goldsmith-Bammyoja and lay disciple of Abhinandadeva. The improved status and influential position of the goldsmith is testified from another inscription stating that certain taxes imposed and valerum were assigned to the local assemblies

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1. P.V. Kane, op. cit., vol.II, Pt.I, p.93.
  2. CII, op. cit., No.41.
  3. Ibid., No.54.

of guilds by goldsmith Nagaja and Reva-gāvūṇḍa.<sup>1</sup>

In the Dharmasastra

the Kumbhakāra was included among the Sudras and even now in the Central Provinces the Kumbhakāra is a scheduled caste.<sup>2</sup> During our period<sup>to</sup> they held a inferior position because they along with Telikas were donated permanently to the temple of Avvēśvara for its service.<sup>3</sup> This must have led to their subjection in the society. Nothing much can be said on the other lower professional groups and castes as the inscriptions do not throw light on them.

The Miraj stone inscription of Vijayāditya mentions "Kuduv" thrice.<sup>4</sup> V.V. Mirashi has translated them as shoe-makers, basket-makers and cobblers. The term "Kuduv" probably denoted a people of low occupational groups. They must have in course of time crystallized into a caste. They are probably synonymous with the Kuruba caste of shepherds and blanket weavers, found in all districts but in largest numbers in Mysore.<sup>5</sup> They are to be found in southern India also as a caste of stone-

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1. CII, op. cit., No.55.

2. P.V. Kane, op. cit., p.78.

3. CII, op. cit., No.41.

4. Ibid., No.52, line 36-38.

5. C.H. Rao, Mysore Gazetteer, vol.I, p.230; see Hutton, Caste In India, p.286, and Thurston, Castes and Tribes, IV, pp.155.

masons.<sup>1</sup>

Most of these artisans and craftsmen must have formed their own guilds which would have enhanced their social and economic status. These artisans and craftsmen invariably figure along with the merchants. This is quite natural because both catered to the needs of urban population generally. Whenever the grants were made by the important merchant guilds, village assemblies, or in any way related to the trade guilds, such grants were addressed to the artisans as well. Their relationship was one of interdependence because the craftsmen were devoted to production and the merchants to distribution. Thus the close association of merchants, artisans and craftsmen is understandable.

Connected with the phenomenon of trade and commerce, growth of money economy and growth of urban life is the proliferation of arts and crafts and hence the emergence of numerous professional groups to cater to the needs of the urban population of Kolhāpur.<sup>2</sup> Kolhāpur being a urban town<sup>3</sup> has already been mentioned earlier. Om Prakash in his article on "Stages in the Urban History of Karnataka" correctly suggests on the basis of epigraphical records and archaeological excavation

1. J.H. Hutton, op. cit., p. 286.

2. Refer to the footnotes on Brahmapuri Excavation, p. 67

3. H.D. Sankalia and Dikshit, op. cit., p. 39— Excavations in layer (3) yielded two tiny gold coins (Nos. 732A + 1268), about half an inch in diameter and weighing about 2½ grains. Sankalia and Dikshit ascribe to the view that these coins were issued by rulers of the Kolhāpur branch of the Silāhāra dynasty for various reasons.

that Kolhāpur had two periods of prosperity. The first stage was the Sātavāhana period and the second was from 11-14th centuries when coins again make their appearance although their small size and low metallic content would indicate a level of commercial exchange which was sharply different from what we notice in the Sātavāhana period.<sup>1</sup>

The merchants had a hold over the artisans and craftsmen. They organised fairs and markets which were important centre of business where large number of buyers and sellers gathered. The merchants who were generally the organisers of these markets imposed certain dues on the commodities sold by them. Moreover, it were the merchants who decided in the Friday markets (held by the trading community of Ayyavale) the amount which was to be donated for the benefit of religious institutions as well for the festivals. The Miraj stone inscription of Vijayāditya<sup>2</sup> of 1143-1145 A.D. records that certain merchants who were foremost in the trading corporation of the Vīra-Banājas and belonged to the localities Miriñje, Bāge, Dōnikōda, Tolakole, Kūṇḍili

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1. Om Prakash, "Stages in the Urban History of Karnataka", P.I.H.C., 1976, p.102.

2. CII, op. cit., No.52.

and Sēdambāl assembled at Sēdambāl on Friday as the General Body representing the districts of Piriyuguvāra, Siriguppa, Jugulakappa and one other place and donated certain dues on commodities such as areca-nuts, oil, clarified butter etc. sold in the market evidently at Sēdambāl in favour of the god Mādhavēśvara. The chief merchants on their part made certain donations in cash or kind for the same purpose. The artisans and craftsmen were also to contribute for the festival of Chāitra and that of Dipāvāli as well as for the service of God as fixed by the General Body mentioned above in accordance to their economic status. Thus it was laid down that one pot shall be given on each shop of the potters; one adda shall be paid to the God by the goldsmiths as the assay-fee of each honga (gold coin); one pair of slippers shall be given by the shoe-makers every six months at each fair; one strap shall be given by the cobblers for every six months.<sup>1</sup>

The Friday fair was organised by the Vīra-Baṇaṅjas. Small duties must have been imposed in kind or cash on goods entering and sold in the fair. Many a times collective donations were made to the religious institutions at common gatherings where the General Body of

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1. CII, op. cit., No.52, lines 32-38, p.245.

the respective places fixed a certain amount in cash or kind in accordance to the economic status of the artisans, craftsmen and merchants. Thus Meera Abraham is quite right in pointing out the tribute relationship of traders with established religion as a necessary, almost imperative aspect of medieval commerce whether undertaken by organised group or by individual.<sup>1</sup> The bulk of the inscriptions connected with guild records the donations made for the benefit of temples and religious institutions through the cess levied in kind or cash on goods handled in trade.

We find another interesting Śilāhāra inscription referring to the settlement of families of female attendants, oilmen, gardeners, potters and washermen for the permanent service of the temple of Avvēśvara.<sup>2</sup> These were to serve the temple whole-heartedly and were to discharge their specific duties for instance the female attendants were to look after the cleanliness of the temples, the potters to provide with pots, the the gardeners to work in the temple gardens and to supply flowers and garlands for the worship, oilmen to provide

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1. Meera Abraham, op. cit., p.1.

2. CII, op. cit., No.41.

"Tathā dvīpāntarā-yātavahī-trātśvarṇa-gadiyāra 9  
 chēmūlyachandra-parvarjīkanda-mūli-yāyāt-pravahanāt-  
 śvarṇa-dharna-dvārikā-kutumbāni-cha | Tailika-kutumba-  
 mekañ 9 mālākān-kutumbā 9 kumbhakāra-kutu tumba 9  
 rajak-kutumba 9"

oil for the lightening of temple and the washermen to wash the vestments of the deities. Thus the development of temples into complex socio-economic institutions is to be noticed. All this must have led to the growth of bonded-labourers in course of time.

The term used for female attendant is "Dārika"<sup>1</sup> and as stated above a family of female attendants was donated for the permanent service of the temple of Avvēśvara. In another inscription of the Śilāhāras reference is made to the dancing hall<sup>2</sup> (Nrityaśāle) suggesting the existence of the institution ~~of existence~~ ~~of the institution~~ of dēvadāsi. The institution of dēvadāsi must have been in the initial stage and had not yet developed into a complex institution. There are many references to dancing girls (dēvadāsis) attached to temples in other contemporary epigraphs of the period under review. The institution is much talked about in recent times and described as a regrettable feature in the otherwise holy and pious atmosphere.

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1. CII, op. cit., No.41; Monier Williams gives the meaning of "Dārika" as kanya, putri.
  2. CII, op. cit., No.50, V.II, Monier Williams gives the meaning of "Nritya" as dancing, acting and gesticulation and "Śāl" as room. Thus "Nrityaśāle" stands for the dancing hall.

## Section.VI: STATUS OF WOMEN

AS regarding the status of women there is not much information. By and large patriarchal society must have prevailed where the male naturally must have dominated in family and social life. Women do find mention in the Śilāhāra inscriptions, where we find that donations were made for their religious merit. This type of references were common during the discussed period and region and even earlier in many parts of India. The Śilāhāra king of South Koṅkaṇ Raṭṭarāja made a donation for the religious merit of his granddaughter Annaṇā.<sup>1</sup> King Aparājita of North Koṅkaṇ granted an orchard for the spiritual welfare of his mother Lilādevi.<sup>2</sup> Women were objects of protection. The wives and sons were to be guarded.<sup>3</sup> Women had no right of inheritance for we find in numerous Śilāhāra inscriptions, the property of sonless persons would go to the respective donees.<sup>4</sup> The chastity of the unmarried girls was to be preserved for we find fines being levied for crimes against unmarried girls.<sup>5</sup>

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1. CII, op. cit., No.42.

2. Ibid., No.22.

3. Ibid., No.1.

4. Ibid., No.5, 6, 7 etc.

5. Ibid., No.5, 6, 7 etc.



The women of the royal family did have some authority in the religious field for we find them making religious donations and patronizing creeds of their own choice. At the instance of Nāgalādevi who was probably the mother of the Śīlāhāra king of Kolhāpur-Gaṇḍarāditya, a basadi was erected by Nēmagāvunḍa.<sup>1</sup> She finds mention also in the Kolhāpur stone inscription of Gaṇḍarāditya<sup>2</sup> and in the Śēshāsayi temple inscription<sup>3</sup> of the same king's reign.

Among the commercial classes too there was the tendency to portray the image of a dutiful, charming, respectable wife and comparing her to the mythological figures. Thus the Herle Stone inscription of Gaṇḍarāditya after describing Nēmagāvunḍa belonging to the trading community gives that of his wife Mailiyakka in the following words: "The world lovingly eulogises Mailiyakka, the wife of Nēmaṇa as resembling the respected Sīta in pre-eminent character, as equal to Rati in charming beauty, as similar to Pārvati in good fortune and as equal to the wife of Indra (i.e Sachi) in the greatness of enjoyments."

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1. CII.op. cit., No.47.

2. Ibid., No.49.

3. Ibid., No.50.

Thus the woman is honoured as an ideal wife rather than as a woman per se. On the one hand, women finds mention in the inscriptions in such loving words is itself important but on the other hand, she is referred only as wife and mother and not woman per se. The concept of dutiful wife is always extolled; Sītā being the classic example is again and again reaffirmed. Thus women were always being idealized as Pārvati in good fortune, Rati in charming beauty and other mythological characters so that they would behave accordingly.

To conclude, overall one witnesses no radical changes or complete transformation in the socio-economic structure of the period and regions under study. The elements of continuity can be traced from the earlier period to the Śilāhāra period. As far as the social structure of the period under study is concerned, it remained more or less similar to the earlier times that is based on the varṇa system or caste system which essentially meant social stratification - a society based on social-economic inequality. But within this broad framework or arena of stability, numerous changes are to be witnessed.

## CHAPTER II

## RELIGION

Religion is essentially a social phenomena. It is essentially an institution of society.<sup>1</sup> Historically speaking religion has always been a collective phenomena. We have studied it at the collective levels - firstly at the elite level, that is, the kings and princes' attitude towards religion and religious activities, and secondly at the popular level.

In this chapter an attempt is also made to study the prevailing religious cults of the early medieval India in the Konkan and Kolhāpur regions; to investigate the various changes undergone by them the antiquity of the various religious centres and the transformation, if any, which took place at these centres. We shall examine social bases of the major religions.

**BUDDHISM:**

Buddhism was in a fairly flourishing condition all over India even in the 7th century A.D. as testified by Huan Tsang and I-Tsing. But when we come down to

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1. W.S.F. Pickering (ed.), Durkheim's Sociology of Religion, Themes and Theories, p.194.

the end of 9th century A.D. Buddhism seems to be on the brink of disappearance from the Koṅkaṇ region and this seems to be an all India phenomena. This is testified by the epigraphical evidence. Only three Buddhist inscriptions belong to the period of early Śilāhāras which shows that Buddhism had the least votaries of all the 3 ancient Indian religions, Hinduism, Jainism and Buddhism.

The Deccan trap has been particularly beneficial for the existence of the excavated Buddhist monuments. Out of some 1200 excavated rock monuments in India, 800 or about 60% are located in Western India, mostly in Maharashtra.<sup>1</sup> The Chinese traveller Huien Tsang visited India around 7th century A.D. (629-645 A.D.). He visited Koṅkaṇapura which has been identified by Cunningham with the whole coastline from Bombay to Mangalur. The pilgrim saw here 100 monastries with 10,000 monks of either Hīnayana or Māhāyāna school. There was also a temple with a sandalwood image of Bodhisattva Maitrēya, said to have been made by Śrava Vimsātiketi, of whom also there was a stūpa.<sup>2</sup> But

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1. B.G. Gokhale, Buddhism in Maharashtra: A History, p.3.

2. Walters, Yuan Chwang's Travels in India, II, p.239; cited in Nalinaksha Datt, Buddhist Sects in India, pp.300-301.

only the Buddhist centre at Kānhērī figures in the Śīlāhāra inscriptions.

The Buddhist centre at Kānhērī is mentioned thrice in the Śīlāhāra inscriptions and donations of some drammas were made to it by amatya Vishṇugupta of Pullaśakti<sup>1</sup> for the worship of the Bhagavat (Buddha), the repairs of the Vihāra, the clothing of the monks and the purchase of their religious books at Kṛīshṇagiri (hill of Kānhērī) around 843 A.D. Another donation to this centre was made around 853 A.D. by Gemin Anighnākara - a devout worshipper of Buddha who hailed from Gauḍa country during the reign of Kapardin II.<sup>2</sup> Third donation was also made during the reign of Kapardin II around 877 A.D. by Veva who made perpetual donation for the Buddhist monks by depositing 100 drammas with the venerable community of the Mahavihara at Kṛīshṇagiri.<sup>3</sup> All this indicates that Kānhērī was a famous centre for Buddhism and that Buddhism was flourishing in western Maharashtra even in the second half of the 9th century A.D. But on the whole Buddhism seems to be a decadent religion whereas Hinduism was on the ascendency.

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1. CII, vol.VI, No.1.
  2. Ibid., No.2.
  3. Ibid., No.3.

The Buddhist settlement at Kānhērī is one of the largest in Maharashtra. It has a continuous history of occupation for almost a thousand years. The Kānhērī establishment has a total of 112 caves, 107 viharas and some 5 chaityas and chaityagriha. The excavational activity at Kānhērī extends over centuries, beginning with the 1st century B.C. to 1st A.D. to 11th century A.D. It reflected the transformations in Buddhism from Theravāda to Māhayāna and Vajrayāna - Tantrayāna.<sup>1</sup>

Information regarding Buddhism in the Konkan region is confined to the well-known Buddhist settlement at Kānhērī. Its popularity can be attested from the fact that it enjoyed patronage not only from a number of places in Maharashtra but, as is depicted in one of the aforementioned Kānhērī inscriptions, it attracted devotees from far off places like Gauḍa (West Bengal). B.G. Gokhale is of the view that the donors of the Buddhist establishments located in Kingdom of the Maharashtra that controlled large areas outside the region came from all the four neighbouring regions, that is, Gujarat and Madhya Pradesh on the one hand and Karnataka and Andhra Pradesh on the other. Maharashtra had intimate relationships with these areas <sup>inspite</sup> of its

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1. B.G. Gokhale, op. cit., p.54.

distinct social and cultural history.<sup>1</sup>

The Kānhērī cave inscription of Pullas'akti<sup>2</sup> made provision for the purchase of books, it therefore, appears that the Saṅgha had a library and perhaps a school attached to it. A.S. Altekar points out that it resembled in this respect the famous monastic university of Valabhi where also there was a library which often received grants for the purchase of books.<sup>3</sup>

The donors of these permanent endowments were not the Śīlāhāra chieftains but the amatya of Pullas'akti (Śīlāhāra chief), Gamin Avighnākara - a devout worshipper of Buddha who had hailed from Gauḍa and Veva. The social basis of Buddhism thus appears to be limited in the Koṅkaṇ region. But the very fact that Vishṇugupta, amatya of Śīlāhāra chief Pullas'akti was a patron of Buddhism and made a donation to the Buddhist monks at Kānhērī suggests that the Śīlāhāra administration of North Koṅkaṇ within whose jurisdiction the Saṅgha was situated did not look upon it with an hostile eye. Moreover, the Śīlāhāra king Gaṇḍarāditya of the Kolhāpur

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1. B.G. Gokhale, op. cit., p.2.

2. CII, op. cit., No.1.

3. A.S. Altekar, Rashtrakutas and Their Times, p.308.

branch constructed a temple of the Buddha together with those of Śiva and Jina at the village of Irukudi and donated a nirvartana each for their worship<sup>1</sup> showing the tolerant attitude of the Śilāhāras and also that to some extent royal patronage extended to Buddhism in the Kolhāpur region where few adherents of Buddhism must have existed as late as the beginning of 12th century A.D. (1110 A.D.).

The donors of the Kānhērī Buddhist settlement during the time of the Śilāhāras deposited a certain amount of money (drammas) which carried interest with some merchant body of the town. This seems to be a convenient type of benefaction as compared to the grants of villages which could be made only by rulers or with their permission.

Recent excavational activity in Kānhērī caves (1969) undertaken by S.R. Rao on behalf of the Archaeological Survey of India have revealed that the residing monks not only preached and practiced the tenets of Buddhism but were also engaged in trade and industry. They knew metallurgy and employed smiths to melt and purify metals. The occurrence of a large number of

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1. CII, op. cit., No.45, lines 33-35.



Nālanda sealings here clearly shows that Kānhērī was a flourishing centre of Buddhism as late as the 9th century A.D. and that it maintained contact with other great religious-centres such as Nālanda, Vikramśilā and Bodh-Gaya in Bihar.<sup>1</sup> All this cannot be corroborated through epigraphical sources of the Śilāhāras. But one thing is noteworthy that all the donations made to this centre were in cash that is in drammas which carried interest and must have been entrusted either to some merchant body of the town or the merchants staying at the Kānhērī centre itself. The merchants of the Kānhērī centre engaged in trade and industry besides practicing the tenets of Buddhism. They probably, must have used the dramma reserves of the monastery as a source of credit for mercantile enterprise. This proves the popular theory of the close connection between the trading community and Buddhism.

Buddhism and Jainism generally flourished at urban centres. The monasteries were often located at the meeting point of important trade routes because of their association with the trading community. Kānhērī was the meeting point of two important trade routes, one connecting Paithan (ancient Pratiśthāna)

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1. S.R. Rao, "Excavations at Kanheri (1969)" in Shrinivas Ritti and B.R. Gopal (eds.), Studies in Indian History and Culture, pp.43-46.

in Aurangabad district of Maharashtra with Amaravati on the east coast and the other connecting Nāsik with Ujjaini, Mathurā and Vārānaśi in the north and Kalyān in the south.<sup>1</sup> According to Ptolemy, Kalliena (Kalyān) was one of the six important trade centres on the west coast and it handled metals, cotton and sandalwood.<sup>2</sup> S.R. Rao is of the opinion that perhaps, metal extracted at Kānhērī was exported through the ancient ports of Kalyān and Sōpārā.<sup>3</sup>

With the decline of Buddhism in the North, Kānhērī too must have gone into oblivion. We have no further mention of this centre of Buddhism until we come to the time of Mallikārjuna<sup>4</sup> (2nd half of the 12th century A.D.) one of the later Śilāhāras. In the 11th century A.D. some Parsis visited it.<sup>5</sup> It maintained its specifically Buddhist nature, at least until the 11th century A.D. The Kānhērī caves in part were occupied even as late as the 16th and 17th centuries, though it is

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1. S.R. Rao, op. cit., p.46.

2. Ibid.

3. Ibid.

4. CII, vol.VI, intro. XI vii.

5. ASWI, vol.4, p.69; cited in R.N. Nandi, Religious Institutions and Cults in the Deccan, p.110.

doubtful if the occupants were Buddhists, probably they were ascetics of the Śaiva pantheon.<sup>1</sup>

We do not get any direct information regarding the reasons for the decline of Buddhism through the Śilāhāra inscriptions. Judging from the number of Buddhist inscriptions of the discussed period, one gathers that Buddhist monasticism suffered from lack of popular support as well as royal support. The Śilāhāras of North Koṅkaṇ and South Koṅkaṇ were ardent Śaivites and Buddhist monasticism here stands in sharp contrast with the dynamic śaivite monasticism. Whereas in Kolhāpur region except for once it does not figure in inscriptions and stands in contrast to Jaina monasticism which was revived under a new form and propagated more vigorously during the period.

#### JAINISM:

Jainism was also flourishing in the dominion of the Śilāhāras. Sōḍhala mentions some Jaina poets and authors who were honoured in the Lāṭa and Koṅkaṇ countries.<sup>2</sup> But we have no reference to

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1. B.G. Gokhale, op. cit., p.55-56.

2. Udayasundaripatha, p.15; cited in CII, vol.VI, Intro. p.ii.

<sup>Basadis</sup>  
Jaina<sup>1</sup> in the inscriptions of the Silāhāras of both North and South Koṅkan.

Kolhāpur appears to be a popular Jaina centre. Kolhāpur was an eminent stronghold of Jainism from early times and it has maintained its reputation almost to the present day. It was reckoned among the four pontifical centres or spiritual thrones sacred to the Jaina community.<sup>1</sup> This tradition is affirmed in a later inscription,<sup>2</sup> from the Jaina temple at Vadgaon in the Kolhāpur area. The record is dated A.D. 1774 and refers to the preceptor Lakshmīsēna Bhattāraka as presiding over the Siṃhāsanas of Dillī, Karavira (Kolhāpur) Jina Kañchi and Penugonda.

Besides Kolhāpur being popular for Jainism, it was the seat of mother Goddess too. From the legendary, Purāṇic, literary and epigraphical accounts, it would appear that the site of modern Kolhāpur, grew on the banks of the river, known as Pañcaganga was called "Kolhāpura", probably after the goddess Kollā, referred to by the Sarasvatipurana and the Karavīramahatmya.<sup>3</sup>

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1. Ind. Antiquity, vol. XXXII, p.460; cited in P.B. Desai, Jainism in South India and Some Jaina Epigraphs, p.121.
  2. Inscriptions in Northern Karnataka and Kolhapur State No.46; cited in P.B. Desai, op. cit., p.122.
  3. H.D. Sankalia and M.G. Dikshit, Excavations at Brahmapurī (Kolhāpur) 1945-46, p.8.

So, from very early times the site came to be known as a seat of Mother Goddess (Matrkasthana, kshetra or pītha). It grew in importance when another goddess Mahālakshmi, was installed in the city and a temple built there, during the Rāshtrakūṭa period (C. A.D. 800).<sup>1</sup> Numerous inscriptions of our period testify that gifts of land, villages, revenues, cess, drammas etc. were made to the goddess mahālakshmi and <sup>to</sup> other pūrāṇic deities by diverse categories of people, right from the Śilāhāra chiefs, sāmantas, trading community to the lower echelons of the society - the potters, cobblers, goldsmiths and others.

The very fact that so many deities thrived at Kolhāpur and were patronized by diverse categories of people proves its being commercially and agriculturally rich. Thus Kolhāpur was a urban centre with monastic establishments, agriculturally rich with a surplus to support not only the Jaina monks but ascetics of other creeds too.

At Kolhāpur there was a Jaina saint named Māgha-nandi-Siddhāntadēva, who officiated as the priest of the temple of Rūpanārayana and was the head of the

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1. H.D. Sankalia and M.G. Dikshit, op. cit., p-8

Pustaka Gaccha of the Dēsi Gaṇa of the Mūla Saṅgha.<sup>1</sup>  
 He was an eminent personality in the history of Jaina church of this area and he contributed immensely to the prosperity of the faith by his erudition and efficient administration of the ecclesiastical organisation.<sup>2</sup> The credit of turning Kolhāpur into a tīrtha for the Jainas is to be given to him.<sup>3</sup>

The inscriptions of the Śilāhāras of Kolhāpur refer to other Jaina saints too. The Herle Stone inscription of Gaṇḍarāditya<sup>4</sup> mentions that the gift was entrusted to the care of the preceptor Sāntivīra-Siddhantadēva, the āchārya of Kolhāpur-tīrtha. He was a disciple of Bālachandravrati, previous āchārya of the Chandraprabha Jinalaya. He is glorified in the Nēmināthpurāna of Karnaparya, who was patronized by Lakshmidhara, a minister of the Śilāhāra king Vijayāditya son and successor of Gaṇḍarāditya. Bālachandra is described in that work as the āchārya of the Chandraprabha temple called Tribhuvanatilaka. It seems therefore, that like the Rūpanārāyaṇa temple of

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1. CII, op. cit., No.53.
  2. P.B. Desai, op. cit., p.121.
  3. B.A. Saletore, Medieval Jainism, p.206.
  4. CII, op. cit., No.47.

Pārsvanātha near the Sukravara gate in Kolhāpur, this temple also bore the name of a biruda of Gaṇḍarāditya. The inscription further mentions two Jaina ascetics, Tribhuvanachandra and Nagachandra Saiddhāntika evidently the disciples of Bālachandra. <sup>Bālachandra</sup> appears to be popular <sup>an</sup> āchārya next to Māghan<sup>h</sup>disiddhāntadēva.

The Jaina saints or preceptors of Kolhāpur held important place in the life of the faithful. They were given high sounding titles as Āchārya. They were popular not only with the community of monks but also with the common people. Kings, feudataries, ministers, merchants and commoners all obeyed their preceptors for the sake of righteous and steadfast life.

Why were <sup>the</sup> donations made to the Jaina saints and monasteries? The Śilāhāra chiefs Gaṇḍarāditya, Vijyāditya and Bhōja of Kolhāpur patronized Jainism. This was done because as Romila Thapar points out<sup>4</sup> the monasteries had access to a large local base in the lay community and could be mobilised to provide a focus for public opinion and possibly even provide political legitimacy to the king. One of the channels for exercising public opinion was through the educational function performed by the Sangha and the matha.<sup>1</sup> All

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1. Romila Thapar, op. cit., p.92.

this accounts for the numerous donations of land, drammas, cess etc. made to the basadis by the Śilāhāra chiefs.

Our period marks the proliferation of the Jaina monastic community into numerous small groups. This process had already started in the early centuries of the Christian era, but during our period it culminated into an intense religious movement. The proliferation of the monastic organisation in the early medieval period is suggested by such terms as Saṅgha, gaṇa, gaccha, avvaya, bali, Samudaya.<sup>1</sup> All these terms stand for monastic order. In the Śilāhāra inscriptions of Kolhāpur monastic orders are referred as Saṅgha, gaṇa and gaccha.<sup>2</sup>

The Jaina saint Māghanandi-Siddhāntadēva is referred as the head of the Pustaka Gaccha of the Dēsiya Gaṇa of the Mūla Saṅgha. The Mūla Saṅgha was the earliest monastic group of any importance. Its members belonged to the Digambara order of the Deccan.<sup>3</sup> The Mūla Saṅgha was followed by the establishment of

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1. R.N. Nandi, Religious institutions and Cults in the Deccan (A.D. 600-1000), p.45.
  2. CII, op. cit., Nos. 44, 53
  3. R.N. Nandi, op. cit., p.41.



the Yapaniya Saṅgha which had attained the status of a separate and independent church with its own set of doctrines and rules of conduct.<sup>1</sup> In the seventh century A.D. the monks of this order had spread into the kingdom of the Western Chālukyas of Badāmi.<sup>2</sup> One of the Kolhāpur inscriptions refers to the Jaina nun Ratrimatikanti of the Punnāgavrikshmūla gāṇa of the Mūla Saṅgha.<sup>3</sup> The Punnāgavrikshmūla is generally associated with the Yapaniyas. Thus suggesting the existence of the Yapaniyas in the Kolhāpur region.

Punnāgavrkṣamūla was the name of another monastic order whose monks were probably the descendants of a sage who had performed penance under the Punnāga tree.<sup>4</sup> Later it spread to Belgaum district.<sup>5</sup>

The Dēsi Gāṇa was another important monastic order of the Jainas found in the Śilāhāra inscriptions of Kolhāpur. It figures in other inscriptions of the tenth century and more often in the records of the eleventh and twelfth centuries. Govinda Pai states that the country between the Western Ghats (the uplands of the present North Kanara district), the Karnataka country of ancient and medieval times and the river

1. R.N. Nandi, op. cit., p.41.
2. P.B. Desai, Jainism in South India and Some Jaina Epigraphs, p.104; cited in R.N. Nandi, op. cit., p.41.
3. CII, op. cit., No.44.
4. R.N. Nandi, op. cit. p.44
5. E.I., 18, p.172; cited in R.N. Nandi, op. cit., p.44.

Godavari was known as dēśa, and that the teachers of the Nandi Saṅgha who settled here christened their order as the Dēśī Gaṇa.<sup>1</sup> R.N. Nandi suggests that the adjective dēśī is derived from Sanskrit dēśa which means homeland.<sup>2</sup> The Dēśī gaṇa of the Śīlāhāra inscriptions similar to most records is referred to as a branch of the Mūla Saṅgha which was the parent church of the Digambara monks of the Deccan.

It is interesting to note that most of the monastic orders trace their origin to Mūla gaṇa. This could be because of the fact that Mūla gaṇa was one of the earliest Jain monastic order of any importance. Hence, the tendency of the various Jain monastic orders of Kolhāpur to latch on to the Mūla gaṇa in order to establish its validity in the area and play up its organizational status. This was also a method of impressing the masses by claiming origin to an influential gaṇa. Thus the small orders constantly endeavoured to force their way into a higher grade and acquire the privileges of the important and influential Saṅghas. R.N. Nandi has shown the monastic gradations indicating

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1. JA, vol.I, no.3, p.65; cited in R.N. Nandi, op. cit., p.45.

2. R.N. Nandi, op. cit., p.45.

the position of a particular order.<sup>1</sup> A record of 1198 mentions Ingalēsvara Bali and gives the hierarchical gradation in descending order as Mūla Saṅgha, Dēśī Gana, Kundakundanvaya, and Pustaka Gaccha.<sup>2</sup> This further explains why the <sup>Jaina</sup> monastic orders of Kolhāpur trace their origin to Mūla Saṅgha.

The popularity of Jainism in the Kolhāpur region can be attested by quite an adequate number of Jaina basadis erected during the period and the Śīlāhāra inscriptions referring to the donations made to the Jaina monks by a wide range of people. The Kolhāpur stone inscription<sup>3</sup> of Gaṇḍarāditya introduces his reputed feudatory Mahāsāmanta Nimbadeva as one who had obtained a boon by the grace of the divine Padmavati, as a devout Jaina. He had perpetuated his religious fervour by erecting the temple of Rūpa-Nārāyaṇa at Kolhāpur previously. He erected another temple of Pārśvanātha in the market place of Kavadagolḷa. In 1136 A.D. a grant of income derived from imports was made for the repairs of the temple and supply of food to the ascetics living there, by several members of the mercantile corporation

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1. R.N. Nandi, op. cit., p.46.

2. SII, 4, no.798; cited in Desai, op. cit.; cited also in R.N. Nandi, op. cit., p.46.

3. CII, op. cit., No.49.

of Ayyavala Five Hundred. The gift was made to the preceptor Srutakirti Traividya<sup>dēva</sup> of the Rūpa Nārāyaṇa Basadi, who was a pupil of Māghanandi. Rūpa-Nārāyaṇa was an epithet of Gaṇḍarāditya and the Jaina shrine bearing the name was evidently designed by Nimbadeva after the title of his master.<sup>1</sup> The Sāmanta, Nimbadeva also constructed the Chaityagara of Adinatha evidently at Kolhāpur.<sup>2</sup> The present day Pārśvanātha temple near the Sukravarā gate must be a survival of the ancient shrine built by Nimbadeva at Kavadeḡalla.

The popularity of the Jaina dharma among the gāvūṇḡas is seen from the many examples of devotion met within the Śilāhāra records. The Gāvūṇḡas were local chiefs or pivot of the village administration.<sup>3</sup> They were associated with trade and commerce. They must have been some sort of a socio-economic group with distinct profession and appear to be ardent Jainas. By this time Gāvūṇḡas appear to have evolved as a <sup>distinct trading</sup> community with distinct surname and appear to possess adequate wealth as they could afford to construct basadis

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1. Ind. Ant., XIV, p.141; The Teri data ins. states explicitly that the basadi of Rupanarayana was erected by samanta Nimbadeva of Kolhapur.
  2. CII, op. cit., no.50.
  3. G.S. Dikshit, Local Self Government in Medieval Karnataka, p.61.

individually, may be to enhance their position and prestige in society. The Herle Stone Inscription of Gaṇḍarāditya<sup>1</sup> records the grant of land in Edenade and a garden to the Tīrthāṅkara Chandraprabhā in the Basadi erected by Nēmaḡāvunḍa at Vagubana-Herilage in Edenada at the instance of Nagaladevi probably, the mother of Gaṇḍarāditya. Chodhorekama-Gāvunḍa constructed a Basadi at Bāmani to which Śīlāhāra chief Vijayāditya granted a piece of land around 1151 A.D.<sup>2</sup> At Honnur, a Basadi was constructed by Bamagāvunḍa to which 2 Śīlāhāra brothers Mahāmandalēśvara Ballāladēva and Gaṇḍarāditya made donations both in kind and cash.<sup>3</sup>

Jainism during the discussed period and region seems to have attracted diverse categories of devotees ranging from Śīlāhāra kings and queens to the betel box carrier vāsudeva, the betel-box carrier of the Sāmanta Kānadeva of Śīlāhāra king Vijayāditya perpetuated his religious fervour by erecting a temple at Kolhāpur.<sup>4</sup> He was a disciple of Māghanandi. In 1143 A.D. King Vijayāditya<sup>5</sup> made a gift to the Manikyanāḍipandita

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1. CII, op. cit., No.47.

2. Ibid., No.54.

3. Ibid., No.44.

4. Ibid., No.53.

5. Ibid., No.53.

who was another disciple of the aforementioned Māghanandi, for the eight-fold worship of Pārāśvanātha, as well as for keeping the temple in good repairs and for providing food to the ascetics living in the temple constructed by Vāsudeva. In this inscription Arhat Purudēva is mentioned. Purudēva was the former name of Bahubali, son of the first Tīrthānkara.

The Śilāhāra chief Vijayāditya figures eight years later (A.D. 1151) in a similar religious transaction recorded on a stone at Bēmani in the Kagal area of the Kolhāpur region. He donated a field, a flower garden and a house for the worship of Pārāśvanāth for the repairs of it and for providing food for the ascetics residing in the temple or Basadi erected by Chodhorekama gāvunḍa.<sup>1</sup> The Śilāhāra chieftain Gandarāditya as well as Bhōja II were both patrons of Jainism. The two Śilāhāra brothers Ballāladēva and Gandarāditya<sup>2</sup> donated 200 kammas and a house for the purpose of providing food in the Jaina Basadi in the first quarter of the 12th century A.D. Besides epigraphical evidence we also have literacy evidence to prove that the above-mentioned Śilāhāra chiefs extended royal patronage to

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1. CII, op. cit., No.54.

2. Ibid., No.44.

Jainism. Samādēva who lived at the court of Bhōja II of the Śilāhāra dynasty, says that he composed his Sabdarnava-Chandirika, in Sāka 1127, in the Tribhuvana-Tilaka Jinālaya built by Gaṇḍarāditya.<sup>1</sup> The colophon of the work reads:

Svasti Śrī-kollāpurvāṅgīya-jurikāmahāsthāne  
Yudhiṣṭharāvatār mahāmaṇḍalēśvara-gaṇḍarādityeva  
nirmāpita tribhuvanatilaka jinālaye Śrīmat  
Parmēsti Śrī-Nemīnātha-Śrī-pāda-padma-rādhita-  
balēn vādī-bhava-Jrāntkuṣh Śrī-Vibāla-Kīrtidīva  
-Vaivrit-dyatak etc.

Thus it is clear that Gaṇḍarāditya as well as Bhōja patronised Jainism which accounted for its popularity in the Kolhāpur region to a great extent. Vijayāditya of the same family also extended his royal support to Jainism as testified by the aforementioned inscriptions.

The Śilāhāra queens of Kolhāpur were also supporters of Jainism and many a times at their instance Jain Basadis were constructed. For example, at the instance of queen Nagaladevi most probably mother of Gaṇḍarāditya, Nemaḡavunda erected the Chandraprabha Basadi.<sup>2</sup>

1. Bombay Gazetteer, I.ii, p.549; cited in S.R. Sharma, Jainism and Karnataka Culture, p.48.

2. CII, op. cit., No.47.

Many feudatories of the Śīlāhāras of Kolhāpur were devout Jains and in various ways tried to propagate their religion. Thus Nimbadeva, feudatory of Gaṇḍarāditya is known to have erected three Basadis and generally named them after the title of his master, which fact had become a common trend during the period under discussion.

The popularity of Jainism is to be seen in the ardour and devotion of the commercial classes. The Kolhāpur Stone Inscription of Gaṇḍarāditya<sup>1</sup> records that certain taxes and dues levied by the trading corporation of the Vīra-Baṇāṅjas and certain merchants, representatives of certain towns as well as royal merchant of Gaṇḍarāditya and others were donated to Jaina āchārya Srutakīrti for the benefit of the Basadi. This indicates that merchants in their own way contributed towards the popularity and growth of Jainism. The motive of merchants for donation to the Basadis may have been in part propitiatory to ensure success for trading ventures.

Ayyavāle Five Hundred or the Vīra-Baṇāṅjas leanings towards the Jaina faith are attested by the expression

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1. CII, op.cit., No.49.



signifying their devotion to the goddess Padmavati recurring in their prasasti.

Our period witnesses the proliferation of numerous monastic orders and Basadis. The practice of building temples was as much popular with the theistic as with the atheistic sects. The notion of monastic organisation was adopted by the Jainas when it became socially necessary for <sup>the</sup> purpose of recognition and support.<sup>1</sup> The rigidity of the doctrine generally attributed to Jainism was hardly maintained. All religions have their moorings in social surroundings. Jainism also adopted measures to be in tune with the standards of people. Thus to compete with Saivism, Jainism gave up its lofty and <sup>i</sup>rigid precepts. With the desire to perpetuate, popularise and strengthen their religion, the Jaina saints encouraged the construction of Basadis, accepted wealth and gifts of land, cess, etc. from the ruling elite as well as the trading community.

Jainism, thus, took on shades of conformism by their association with the ruling elite and through the acquisition of wealth and power. They were not totally immune to the lure of divine powers. Under the influence of Hindu devotionalism, there appeared

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1. Romila Thapar, op. cit., p.78.

certain god images in Jaina temples during the medieval period.<sup>1</sup> Thus we find in Kolhāpur goddess Padmāvati earlier female attendant spirit (sāsandevata) of Pārśvanāthato have attained immense popularity as a female goddess. The images of Jina along with those of their female consorts were worshipped in Basadis with devotional songs, accompanied by rites and ceremonies.<sup>2</sup> The Yapaniya school which appears to have been the early pioneers of the reformist movement in the Jaina church of South India,<sup>3</sup> also existed in Kolhāpur.



Why so many Basadis were erected and numerous endowments made to the Jainas and other creeds? The generous endowments to temples and Basadis is simultaneously a symbol of kingly protection as well as the depth of devotion.<sup>4</sup> The land grants and other gifts made to the monasteris and temples by the Śilāhāra chiefs were a part of systematic royal policy aimed to strengthen their authority by ritual means.<sup>5</sup>

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1. P.S. Jaini, The Jaina Path of Purification, p.194.
  2. N.N. Bhattacharyya, History of Sakta Religion, p.90.
  3. P.B. Desai, Jainism in South India and Some Jaina Epigraphs, p.167.
  4. Uma Shankari, op. cit., p.185.
  5. V.H. Kulke, op. cit., p.224.

The spectacular effect of the impressive monuments constructed during the period together with the active support extended by kings, queens, feudatories and merchants must have been greatly responsible for the popularity of Jainism in the Kolhāpur region. But the most practical means which the Jainas adopted to win for themselves the allegiance and devotion of the masses was that relating to the four gifts - learning, food, medicine and shelter - the primary needs of humanity.<sup>1</sup>

Interesting information is furnished by the inscription<sup>2</sup> on the pedestal of an image in the Jaina temple at Honnur near Kagal in the Kolhāpur region. A Jaina Basadi was constructed by Bama<sup>m</sup>gāvunda who was a lay disciple of Rātrimatikanti that is the Jain nun who belonged to the Punnāgavrikshamūla-gaṇa of the Mūla Saṅgha. It becomes clear from this that as in the Tamil country, there were in Kolhāpur (then under Karnataka) Jaina nuns who entertained men as their disciples.<sup>3</sup> The information regarding the existence

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1. B.A. Saletore, Medieval Jainism, p.173.
  2. CII, op. cit., No.44.
  3. P.B. Desai, op. cit., p.119.

in the Mūla Saṅgha, of the Punnāgavṛiksha-mūla gaṇa which is generally associated with the Yapaniyas, is also noteworthy.

On the pedestal bearing the Honnur image of the reign of Ballāla<sup>1</sup> stands the stately image of the Jina surmounted by seven hooded-serpent. He might be identified as the Tīrthāṅkara Pārśvanātha. The inscription on which Jina appears with a cow and a calf, and above these sun and moon, may be identified as Mahavir, the 24th Tīrthāṅkara. Among the 24 Tīrthāṅkaras of the Jainas, the worship of the 23rd and 24th Tīrthāṅkaras, that is, Pārśvanātha and Mahāvīr, who were historical figures, appear to be popular in the Kolhāpur region. In general the favourite Tīrthāṅkaras are the first and the 3 last ones, but temples of the remaining ones are also met with.<sup>2</sup> Temples of Ādinath<sup>3</sup> (1st Tīrthāṅkara) and Chandraprabha<sup>4</sup> (VIII) also do figure in the Kolhāpur region of the discussed period. The Yakshini (female attendant spirit) of Pārśvanāth that is Padmāvati seems to have wielded

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1. CII, op. cit., No.44.

2. Jaco Bi, Studies in Jainism, p.8.

3. CII, op. cit., No.50.

4. Ibid., No.47.

popularity in the Kolhāpur region as is indicated by the reputed Sāmanta of Gaṇḍarāditya, Nimbadeva - a devout Jaina who is said to have obtained a boon by the grace of the divine Padmāvati.<sup>1</sup>

The worship of goddesses Padmāvati, Jogēśvarī, Bhagavatī and Mahālakshmi (all these goddesses appear in the Silāhāra inscriptions) must have been the natural outcome of the growth of tantricism in the early medieval India. Thus as in the case of Buddhism and Brāhmanical religion, tantricism must have affected Jainas too and influenced the religious outlook of the Jaina teachers who sought the aid of the goddesses for the attainment of ordinary worldly gains and spiritual salvation.<sup>2</sup> But Jainism remained for the most part untouched by the sort of tāntric practices which typified many Sāivite cults and eventually permeated the Buddhist community as well.<sup>3</sup>

Padmāvati is the same goddess in the Jaina pantheon as Tara is in the Buddhist is stated clearly in the Padmāvati stotram.<sup>4</sup> Padmāvati who is associated

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1. CII, op. cit., No.49.
  2. Ram Bhushan Prasad Singh, Jainism in Early Medieval Karnataka, p.60.
  3. P.S. Jaini, op. cit., p.254.
  4. A.K. Bhattachary, "Tara As a Serpent Deity and Its Jain Counterpart Padmavati" in D.C. Sircar (ed.), The Sakti Cult and Tara, p.156.

with snakes is a Jaina adaptation of Manasa.<sup>1</sup> It is interesting, however, that in the case of Padmāvati, she has been most systematically affiliated to one, or the other of the higher divinities in Brahmanism, Buddhism and Jainism. A.K. Bhattacharya points out the evolution of goddess Padmāvati from a Sāsandēvata attached to the 23rd Tīrthaṅkara Pārśvanāth to an independent deity who received worship as a serpent goddess during snake-bites as also to be invoked for such purposes as marana, uccatana, vasikarana etc.<sup>2</sup> The names and iconographic features of the Sāsana-dēvatas, female attendants of the Jinas, distinctly indicate the Śakta association of many of them. The Sāsana-dēvatas, guardian spirits, are considered able to fulfil mundane wishes; they may often be appealed to on this level by "weaker" segments of the Jaina community.<sup>3</sup> All this indicates the immense popularity of the goddess Padmāvati in the Jaina pantheon and, her association with the tāntric and Śakti cult which Jainism alone had withstood and maintained its rigid

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1. N.N. Bhattacharya, History of Sakta Religion, p.92.
  2. A.K. Bhattacharya, op. cit., p.167.
  3. P.S. Jaini, op. cit., p.194.

orthodoxy till 7th-8th centuries A.D. But with the rapid spread of Saivism in the discussed region and to be in tune with the social surroundings, the lofty and rigid precepts of Jaina religion were abandoned to overcome the crisis and all possible measures were adopted to suit the standard of the people. By 8th century A.D. the Digambara Jainas concentrated in the Karnataka, well-~~es~~coned in the patronage of traders, merchants and officers of the state.<sup>1</sup>

Jainism in South India was dominated by the preceptors of the Digambara order but the rigidity generally attributed to the sect was hardly maintained. The new monasticism upheld the practice of living in monasteries but the old counterparts denounced it. The idea of image worship denounced by Mahāvira had become popular in the 11th-12th centuries A.D. and was propagated by the Jaina teachers from Kolhāpur and other places in India among the Jainas who responded to their appeal by erecting many new basadis in different parts of Kolhāpur. This is substituted by the donative records of the Śilāhāras of Kolhāpur, their feudatory chief and other merchants, who made liberal gifts of lands and villages and imposts for the continuous performance of Jina worship.

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1. S.B. Deo, The History of Jaina Monarchism, p.114 ff & 568 ff.

Thus owing to the patronage received and the literary and religious activities of a number of famous monastic scholars, Jainism continued to be a strong rival of Hinduism in Kolhāpur. The Jaina Basadis became the main channel through which the sect communicated with society. Monastic establishments thrived near urban centres and in rich agricultural regions where there was a surplus to support the monks. Thus Kolhāpur-stronghold of Jainism was an urban centre and agriculturally rich with a surplus to support not only the Jaina monks but ascetics of other creeds too.

#### HINDUISM:

There are 3 important sects in Hinduism:

(1) Śaivas (worshippers of Lord Śiva); (2) Vaiṣṇavas (worshippers of Lord Viṣṇu); and (3) Śaktas (worshippers of Śakti - power). All three were in existence during the time of Śilāhāras. An attempt is made to study them on the basis of epigraphical sources of the Śilāhāra dynasty.

Vedic gods had become far and distant figures; they ceased to command respect. Viṣṇu, Śiva, Sun, Gaṇesh and other pūrāṇic deities had taken place of the Vedic divinities. Quite a few Śilāhāra inscriptions



open with two maṅgala ślōkas in praise of Viṣṇu and Śiva.<sup>1</sup> But Śiva figures more often than Vishnu and, numerous benefactions were made for the worship of Śiva as the Śilāhāras of North and South Koṅkaṇ were ardent Śaivas.

Saivism or the worship of the God Śiva, is considered as the oldest religion in India. Its roots lie deep in the religion of the Indus Valley people. Unfortunately, the history of this cult from prehistoric times down to the early centuries of the Christian era is somewhat obscure. By the 6th century A.D., it became an established sect of Hinduism and God Śiva who was now considered not only as a destroyer but also as a creator and preserver, was worshipped by people. In the early medieval period various sects of Saivism rose into prominence, such as Pāsupata, Kāpālika, Lingāyata or Vīraśaiva, Kālamukha and others.

The Śaiva sects in the early medieval period can be divided into the following groups:<sup>2</sup>

- (1) The Siddhānta School or the ordinary Śaivas who followed the Purānic doctrine.

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1. CII, op. cit., No.4, lines 1-2; No.5, lines 1-2; No.6, lines 1-2 etc.

2. Pranabananda Jash, History of Saivism, p.11.

- (2) The Agamic Śaivas:
- (a) The Tamil Śaivas or the Śaiva sects of the Far South;
  - (b) The Lingāyats or the Vīra Śaivas;
  - (c) The Kashmīra-Śaivas.
- (3) The Pāsūpatas:
- (a) Kāpālikas;
  - (b) Kālamukhas.

Of the above-mentioned sects of Śaivism, the Śaivas and Pāsūpatas flourished in the early medieval period in the Konkan and Kolhāpur region. The ordinary Śaivas laid great emphasis on bhakti and followed the doctrine of the Purāṇas known as Śiddhānta-mārga mentioned in the Śiva-Purāṇa. The Śaivas were far more moderate in their religious beliefs and ritualistic practices than the ordinary Pāsūpatas and the two other extremist branches, the Kāpālikas and the Kālamukha who accepted the left-hand tāntric method of worship.<sup>1</sup>

The Pāsūpata school was founded by Śrīkantha from which later on several branches spring forth.<sup>2</sup> Gihavāsi promulgated the doctrine of Śaiva-Siddhānta school. In the Gihavāsi line three main branches spring forth:

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- 1. Pranabananda Jash, op. cit., p.18.
  - 2. V.S. Pathak, Saiva Cult, p.8.

(a) Amarddaka-maṭha, (b) Mattamayūra and (c) Madhumātaya respectively founded by Amarddakatirthanātha, Rudra-Śambhu, Mattamayura-nātha Purandra & Pavanaśiva.<sup>1</sup> The Mattamayūra branch of Śaiva-siddhānta school is mentioned in the Śilāhāra inscriptions. Prof. Mirashi has identified mattamayūra town with Kadawaha as it "possesses remains of a Hindu monastery" and because "it is not far from Terahi, Ranod and Malwa."<sup>2</sup> V.S. Pathak locates the Mattamayūra town in Punjab in the kingdom of Varmmans.<sup>3</sup> Whatever be the location of the Mattamayūra town, the fact is that Karkarōnī branch of the Mattamayūra clan flourished in the Deccan during the reign of Śilāhāras. Different groups of the Śiddhanta school spread over a large part of India, particularly in the Central India. Often the Mattamayūra sub-sect was the most popular and powerful and appears in various medieval inscriptions. From the 10-13th centuries A.D. this sub-sect extended far into the South.<sup>4</sup>

Some of the āchāryas of Mattamayūra line settled down in Koṅkaṇ. The Khārēpattān Plates of Rattarāja,<sup>5</sup>

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1. V.S. Pathak, op. cit., p.8.
  2. CII, op. cit., Intro. I.
  3. V.S. Pathak, op. cit., p.34.
  4. Pranabananda Jash, op. cit., p.18.
  5. CII, op. cit., No.41 (South Konkan).

Saka year 930 (1008 A.D.) records that 3 villages that is Kūshmāṇḍi, Asanavira and Vaḍaṅgula were donated to the learned preceptor Ātrēya, who was a disciple of the Śaiva ascetic Ambhōja śambhu of the Karkarōṇī branch of the Mattamayūra clan, by the Śilāhāra chief Raṭṭarāja for the purposes of worshipping with fivefold offerings the holy God Avvēśvara and keeping his temple in proper repair and of providing food & raiment to ascetics and for the use of disciples, learned men and visitors. Thus the preceptor Ātrēya who in 1008 A.D. settled in the monastery attached to the temple of Avvēśvara in Ratnagiri district must have originally belonged to the Karkarōṇī division of the Mattamayūra sect which was active about the same time in the Gurgi region of Madhya Pradesh.<sup>1</sup> As the Śilāhāra of North and South Koṅkaṇ were ardent Śaivas, they invited Śaiva ascetics to their capital even from distant places, and made liberal grants to them in order to lure them into settling down in the Koṅkaṇ region and establishing mathas and to spread the Śaiva religion among the masses.

The names of most of the Mattamayūra gurūs end either in Śambhu or in Śiva, indicating their

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1. R.N. Nandi, Religious Institutions and Cults in the Deccan (A.D. 500-1000), p.82.

affiliation to the moderate Śaiva school while those of Pāsupatas ended in rasī. Some Śaiva Āchāryas of both these schools are mentioned in Śilāhāra inscriptions. Thus Jñānsīva of Bhāiyapēsvara, probably belonged to this Śaiva sect.<sup>1</sup> He is described as a disciple of Vādāchārya of Western Amnāya. This shows that there was a great centre of this sect in Western India. The afore-mentioned Ambhōja sambhu was another ascetic of this sect. Vēdaśīva who was the Rājagurū of Mallikārjuna, was also of this sect. Vyomaśīva, who is described as Bhōpaka also belonged to this very sect. He later became the Mahāpradhāna of the Śilāhāra chief Mallikārjuna's successor Aparādītya II.<sup>2</sup> This indicates what political influence these Śaiva Āchāryas wielded at the court of the Northern Śilāhāras. Socially and religiously these Āchāryas must have commanded immense respect and admiration as this was the age when preceptor occupied a place of great importance in the life of the faithful as well with the lay maternity. The kings, feudatories, ministers, merchants and commoners all obeyed their preceptor for the sake of righteous and steadfast life.

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1. CII, op. cit., No.11, line 58.

2. Ibid., No.30, line 5.

The t̄antric texts mention about the status and dignity of the preceptors of different land. The Brhat-Gautamiya Tantra thus says that "those coming from the West are the best, those from the South are middling, those from Gauda and Kāmrūpa are inferior to the preceding and those from Kalinga are the worst."<sup>1</sup> According to the above-mentioned text, the Śaiva Āchāryas of Śilāhāras were the best of the lot as they had some connection with the gurūs of Western India.

A critical study of the inscriptions will give us an idea of the nature of the activities of the Śiddhānta Śaivas. The afore-mentioned Khārēpaṭan plates of Raṭṭarāja mentions Ambhōjasambhu who by intense self-mortification had destroyed every worldly attachment; who by the light of wisdom had revealed the way to heaven and final beauty, and had secured fame in the three worlds by the acquisition of meditation.<sup>2</sup> The Śaiva āchāryā lived a very pious life, denounced the world and worldly attachments and achieved wisdom through meditation.

This is the time when numerous Śaivite monasteries or maṭhas attached to the temples emerged. At Khārēpaṭan

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1. Pranabananda Jash, op. cit., p.23; P.C. Bagachi, Studies in the Tantras, pp.17-18.

2. CII, op. cit., No.41.

in Ratnagiri district<sup>1</sup> flourished a monastic body known as Karkarōṅī branch of the Mattamayūra sect belonging to the Siddhānta school of Śaivism. At Kolhāpur there was a matha of Uma-Mahēśvara constructed by the Sahavāsī Brāhmaṇa Lokana Nayāka.<sup>2</sup> This matha appears twice in the Silāhāra inscriptions.<sup>3</sup> The Silāhāra chief Bhōja II and some individuals made several benefaction to it for the worship of the God, keeping the matha in good repairs, to provide for the food for students studying at a school established for the study of the Vēdas and for the feeding of the Brāhmaṇas in the charitable feeding house (sātras) established by the donor's (son of Lokana Nayāka) mother Pomakauva.<sup>4</sup> This matha must have belonged either to the Siddhānta school or the Lingāyats or the Vira-Śaivas whose revival was "the most important event in the cultural and religious history of South India, particularly in Karnataka and the Telugu regions."<sup>5</sup> Neither the Pāsupata sūtra nor Kaundinya refers to the worship of Uma as the power or consort of Śiva.

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1. CII, op. cit., No.41.

2. Ibid., No.59.

3. Ibid., Nos. 58 & 59.

4. Ibid., No.59.

5. Prabanand Jash, Op. cit., p.99.

But Vīra-Śaivism as expounded by Śripati Paṇḍita in the Śrikarabhāṣya on the Brhmasūtra<sup>1</sup> emphasises it. Unlike Pāśupatas the Śaivas (Śiddhanta school) believe that God (Śiva) cannot extend His grace and liberate bound souls without the help of His power (śakti).<sup>2</sup> Thus the above Maṭha which refers to Uma must have belonged either to Vīra-Śaivism or to the Śiddhānta school and not to the Pāśupata school.

The Śaivite monasteries unknown before the 8th century A.D. were not confined to religious activities but were the most important seats of learning where the Vēdas and other sāstras were taught. Many of them maintained rest-houses where free meals were available for the destitutes. These philanthropic activities conducted by the ascetics of the Śiddhanta school were in fact the means for propagating their religion and philosophy among the common people. The other Śaivite sects as well as other religious monasteries adapted the same method for popularising their respective creeds and must have competed with one another to seek the royal patronage as well as

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1. Jadunath Sinha, School of Saivism, p.81.

2. Ibid., p.102.



the support of the feudatories, ministers and merchants. On the other hand the Śaivites popularised and propagated their respective creeds among the common people through their cultural and philanthropic activities.

The monasteries built by Śaivite sects were more in number than other creeds and must have exerted greater influence on the society of Koṅkaṅ during the early medieval period. What were the reasons for the phenomenal growth of the Śaivite monasteries? The Śilāhāras of North and South Koṅkaṅ were ardent Śaivites and extended their full support to them. Jhañja of N.K. is said to have erected 12 temples of Śiva evidently at the sites of 12 Jyōtirliṅgas and named them after himself.<sup>1</sup> The Śilāhāra chief Chittarāja (N.K.) began the construction of the famous temple of Śiva at Ambarnāth, which was completed in the reign of his youngest brother Mumnūṅi.<sup>2</sup> The multiplication of temples fostered monasticism. The temples were no longer religious bodies but turned into complex socio-economic institutions. Provisions were made for running a choultry attached to the temple, for imparting education

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1. CII, op. cit., No.10.

2. Ibid., No.17.

in the temple. All this made inevitable the construction of monasteries or mathas as integral parts of the temple. The notion of monastic organization which initially was associated with the Jainas and Buddhists was also adopted by the Śaivas and other groups when it became socially necessary for purposes of recognition and support.

The complexity of the Śaivite monasteries attached to the temples can be gauged from an interesting Śilāhāra inscription. The khārēpaṭan plates of Raṭṭarāja:<sup>1</sup> Śāka year 930 in records not only the grant of 3 villages for the benefit of the God Avvēśvara and providing food and raiment to the ascetics and for the use of disciples, learned men and visitors. But further gifts - a gaḍyāna of gold from every vessel coming from foreign lands, a dharāṇa of gold from every ship coming from Kandalamūluja excepting chāmūlya and chandrapūra were also made to the matha. To top it as if this much of resources was not adequate to run this particular Śaivite matha, bonded labourers were permanently granted to this temple for its service. Thus a family of female attendants (devadāsīs), oilmen, gardeners, potters and washermen were permanently

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1. CII, op. cit., No.41.

donated to the aforementioned Śaivite temple complex for its service. Moreover, one can postulate that some amount of economic interdependence existed between the temples and the merchant groups. Khārēpaṭan, the capital of the Śilāhāras of S. Koṅkaṇ must have been an important hinterland where immense mercantile activity was carried on as testified by the above inscriptions. One can surmise that few of the Śaivites residing in the above temple complex must have engaged themselves in commercial activities.

The Pāsūpata sect of Śaivism also prevailed in the reign of the Śilāhāras. They were the most important Śaiva sect in the post-Gupta period as in the Purāṇas any Śaiva is generally called a Pāsūpata.<sup>1</sup> They besmeared their body with ashes, laid down in ashes, made the sound ha! ha! walked as if disabled and practiced various austerities.<sup>2</sup> They were devoted to Śiva and regarded God as the independent efficient cause of the world.<sup>3</sup> Few Pāsūpatas figure in the

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1. Sudhakar Chattopadhyaya, Evolution of Hindu Sects upto the time of Samkaracarya, p.146.
  2. B.N.Luniya, Evolution of Indian culture, p.351
  3. Jadunath Sinha, op. cit., p.102.

Śilāhāra inscriptions. Miraj plates of Narasimha<sup>1</sup> mentions the Pāsūpata Paṇḍita Brāhmēsvara, who is highly eulogised there in. His disciple was Chikkadēva who also was learned like him. The village Kuṇṭavāda was granted to him to provide for the worship of the pañchayatana at Miriṅja (Kolhāpur). Another Pāsūpata ascetic Vēdāṅgarāsika is mentioned in the Nandui inscription.<sup>2</sup>

A critical study of the inscriptions will reveal the character and the nature of activities undertaken by the Pāsūpatas of the discussed period and region. The Miraj plates of Narasimha depicts Brāhmēsvara Paṇḍita as venerable to the (whole) world by (his knowledge of) the Pāsūpata agama acquired by him by the touch of the holy Siṃha. Paṇḍita Brāhmēsvara is described as being adorable to the people, steadfast in austerities, one who has conquered the missiles of the God of love and has given up worldly life. He is a young well-conducted brahmacharin, meditates on the feet of Śiva, is free from all deceit and pursues the noble path. His foremost disciple knows all the agamas, (he) who has kept away from the blemishes such as lustful passion, anger and greed; who has pleasing

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1. CII, op. cit., No.43.

2. Ibid., No.63.

appearance, who is well-conducted and is a light showing the right dharma, who is proficient in the knowledge of the padārthas (categories of the Vaiśiṣhika philosophy) and the foremost among those who long for liberation.

Thus the Pāsūpatas are highly eulogised in the inscriptions of the Śilāhāras for their austere life devoid of lustful passion, anger and greed, proficiency in the Pāsūpata agama and the padārthas, devotion to God, meditation, disciplined life and for showing the right dharma. About 1350 A.D. the great Vedic commentator Sayana-Mādhava<sup>1</sup> roughly grouped Pāsūpata system into 4 divisions in his Sarva Darsana Sangraha:

(1) Nakulīsa or Lakulīsa Pāsūpata, (2) Śaivism as practiced then in the South supported by Śiva agamas and other voluminous literature, (3) The 3rd system was in vogue in Kāshmir and other parts of northern India and (4) Rasesvara Darsana, started by Śiddha Nāgarjuna (400 A.D.). The Pāsūpatas of Kolhāpur just discussed above most probably belonged to the second category.

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1. R. Ananthakrishna Sastri (ed.), Pasupata Sutras with Pancharattabhashya of Kaundinya, pp. 2-3.

Āchārya Haribhadra Surf in his Shād-darsana-Samuchehaya<sup>1</sup> observes that the Adherents of Nyāya school were Śaivas while the Vaiśēshikas were Pāsūpatas. Guṇaratna also repeats the same thing.<sup>2</sup> V.S. Pathak regards the statement that the Vaiśēshikas were all Pāsūpatas in contradiction to Naiyāyikas who are described as Śaivas to be faulty and avers that the Vaiśēshikas were Śaivas while the Naiyāyikas belonged to the Pāsūpata school.<sup>3</sup> This statement of V.S. Pathak cannot be accepted in view of the above inscription which refers to the Pāsūpatas as proficient in the knowledge of the padarthas (categories of the Vaiśēshika philosophy).

Śaivism was the most dominant religion practiced in both North and South Koṅkaṇ during the time of the Śilāhāras. An interesting feature to be noticed is that the Śilāhāra kings of North Koṅkaṇ themselves undertook the construction of Śaivite temples unlike the Jaina Basadis in Kolhāpur which were erected generally by the gavundas,—village headmen, betel box bearers and others and not the Śilāhāra kings. Thus Jhañja of

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1. V.S. Pathak, op. cit., p.13.

2. Ibid.

3. Ibid., p.40.

North Koṅkaṇ is said to have erected 12 temples of Śiva evidently at the sites of 12 Jyōtirliṅgas and named them after himself.<sup>1</sup> The practice of constructing temples culminated in the Ambarnāth temple in North Koṅkaṇ. The Ambarnāth temple is still in a fair condition and is regarded as the best and earliest example of the Deccan style.

The Śilāhāras of North Koṅkaṇ were the feudatories of the Rāshtrakūtas and later became independent. In order to stabilise and legitimise their power and position and to make their rule distinct they took the sanction of the Brāhmanas who were invited in the large numbers to settle down in Koṅkaṇ and at the same time resorted to some religious or cultural symbol by erecting numerous Śaivite temples and making numerous benefactions for the prosperity of Śaivism. They identified themselves with Śaivism. An attempt was made to reach the masses by adhering to the Śaiva faith - a religion which has always been popular with the masses. Besides erection of temples, numerous benefactions made to Śaivites, some Śilāhāra chiefs undertook pilgrimage to well-known Śiva-kṣhētra Somanāth pattana and made grants of land in their kingdom to

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1. CII, op. cit., No.10.

the God Sōmēsvara. Few Śīlāhāra inscriptions state that the Śīlāhāra chief Arikesarin even while he was a mere boy, went to Somanāthapattana as directed by his father and there offered to the God all his victories.<sup>1</sup> All this indicates the immense popularity of Śaivism during the discussed period.

Śaivism was not confined to the Śīlāhāra chiefs of North and South Konkan but some Śīlāhāra chiefs of Kolhāpur also patronised Śaivism and made several benefactions to the Śaivite mathas. At Kolhāpur - which was regarded as maḥātīrtha<sup>2</sup> for both the Śaivites and Jainas, an intense rivalry must have existed between the Śaivite monasteries and Jaina basadis to seek the lion's share in both the royal as well as popular patronage. Quite a few grants of Kolhāpur refer to composite grants for instance the Talale plates of Gandarāditya records the grants to Śiva, Buddha and Arhat.<sup>3</sup> The Shēdbāl stone inscription of the reign of Vijayāditya records that certain taxes were to be distributed equally between the Basadi and the temple at the place by Revagāvūṇḍa in consultation with the

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1. CII, op. cit., No.13, lines 20-28.

2. Ibid., No.50.

3. Ibid., No.45.



assemblies of the guilds.<sup>1</sup> Thus there seems to be a tendency on the part of the Śilāhāra chiefs to satisfy and propitiate all the established religions of the period and to portray themselves as just and tolerant. Call it an attempt towards cultural integration or anything but there is definitely an attempt on the part of the royal dynasty to incorporate all the existing cults of their region into the royal fold by extending patronage to them through royal endowments. The purpose was to consolidate, validate and entrench their hold over their territory through the existing religious institutions.

Besides the Śilāhāra chiefs the feudatories, ministers and other royal officers, the women also participated in propagating the Śaiva faith by erecting Sattras in the Saivite monasteries. For instance, Pomakauvā mother of a Brāhmaṇa established a charitable feeding house in the matha of Umā-Mahēśvara at Kolhāpur.<sup>2</sup>

The popular participation in the advancement of Śaiva faith is clear from the Miraj Stone inscription of Vijayāditya<sup>3</sup> which records that certain merchants

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1. CII, op. cit., No.55.

2. Ibid., No.59, lines 18-19.

3. Ibid., No.52.

of Vīra-Banājas belonging to the localities Miriñje, Bāge, Dc̄nikōda, Talakale, Kūṇḍilī and Sēḍambāl assembled at Sēḍambāl as the General Body representing the districts of Piri<sup>L</sup>yuguvāra and other 3 places and donated certain dues on commodities such as areca-nuts, oil, clarified butter etc. sold in the market evidently at Sēḍambāl in favour of the God Mādhavēsvara. The chief merchants on their part made certain donations in cash or kind. The people of the town, the guilds, potters, goldsmiths, shoemakers and cobblers also made similar other gifts for the festival of Chaitra and that of Dipāvālī as well as for use in the service of the God. The donations of merchants were frequently announced at large gatherings where important people in the urban settlements as well as traders from other towns were present along with artisans of the town. This shows, <sup>th</sup> people from the various strata<sup>of</sup> society who met on fridays<sup>and</sup> made donations for festivals as well as for the benefit of the God Mādhēsvara in accordance to their economic status.

Ganapati (Gaṇēsh - the son of Śiva) is praised in quite a few inscriptions of the Śilāhāras,<sup>1</sup>

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1. CII, op. cit., No.8; No.14.

indicating that worship of Gaṇapatī which had already come into prominence in the 6th century A.D. was quite popular. Gaṇapatī is worshipped with great devotion and reverence even today in Maharashtra, whereas the other son of Śiva, Karttikēya had receded to the background there being hardly any (exceptance) reference to him in the Śilāhāra records.

Among the 2 principal schools of Bhakti cult prevalent in South India Saivism comes in for a large clientele. Vaisnavism was not very popular. Though Viṣṇu in his varaha incarnation appears on the maṅgala-sloka of many of the charters of Kolhāpur Śilāhāras<sup>1</sup>, there is hardly any reference to the construction of Vaishnaivite temple or any donation made to it <sup>except one.</sup> Lakshmi-dhara, minister of Kēśidēva II constructed the temple of Lakshmi-Nārāyaṇa at Māṇḍavali to which a grant was made in the reign of Kēśidēva II by Sōma Thākura.<sup>2</sup>

The other Gods mentioned in the records of the Śilāhāras are Brāhma and Aditya.<sup>3</sup> Brāhma was no more considered to be an important God.

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1. CII, op. cit., No.46, lines 1-2; No.48, lines 1-2.
  2. Ibid., No.34.
  3. V.R.R. Dikshitar, Purana Index, vol.I, p.154. Aditya - a name of Surya.

The Sun God had more devotees. Quite a few inscriptions record that before making a grant Sun God was worshipped in temples as a sectarian deity and not as a subsidiary one of the other sects. The Śīlāhāra prince Aparājita granted village Bhādāna to the God Lōṇāditya at Lavenētaṭa in the Śaka year 919. The grant was made for the worship of the holy Sun God Lōṇāditya and the repair for his temple.<sup>1</sup>

Another important aspect of the religion of this time was the cult of goddess or the sakti cult. The goddesses, Mahālakshmi, Jōgēśvarī and Bhāgavati were worshipped on their own account and not as subsidiary deities or as consorts of their male partners. Grants were made to them independently.

The goddesses were worshipped at all times in India but between the days of the Harappa culture and the Gupta period the cult of goddess attracted little attention from the learned and influential, and only emerged from obscurity to a position of real importance in the middle ages, when female forms were once more worshipped by the upper classes. The Goddess was the Śakti, the strength, potency of her

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1. CII, op. cit., No.7.

male counterpart. It was thought that the God was inactive and immanent, and by the Gupta period the wives of the Gods, whose existence had always been recognized but who had been shadowy figures in earlier theology, began to be worshipped in special temples.<sup>1</sup>

The goddess Bhāgavati was worshipped in a special temple Kautuka Mathika at Saṃyana. In 1034 A.D. Chamundarāja, feudatory of the Śīlāhāra chief Chittarāja granted a ghāṇaka (oil mill) in favour of the goddess Bhāgavati.<sup>2</sup> The oil of the mill was used for burning a lamp in the temple and also for the besmearing of the feet of the Brāhmana scholars that may visit the temple. Among the persons addressed are the chief artisans, prominent citizens, the governor and madhumata. The goddess Bhāgavati was worshipped independently and attracted learned Brāhmana scholars as well as the artisans and people from upper class of the society.

Yōgēśvarī was another popular female deity and was prominent enough to get figured in the inscriptions

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1. A.L. Basham, The Wonder That was India , p.313.
  2. CII, op. cit., No.12.

on her own accord. Cintra stone inscription of Aparāditya I<sup>1</sup> Śaka year 1039 states the existence of the temple of goddess Jōgēsvarī. The inscription further mentions the following:

-- ih[bhu]midenak-nirmuktō grihe(hān) 13  
 gñihavikar - śrī - Jōgēsvarā - devyā Satk - mathapatigriha 1 tathā  
 Lingapūjipūjārigriha 1 Bhuttēvalgriha 1 Māṭigriha [u]ttarī griha  
 [ku]mbhakāragriha 1 āratigriha 1 māchalāgrihē 1  
 gaṣāmgrihē 2 [P]arkigriha 1 , Vāṣikārgriha 1 Ubhaṣṭ-  
 Sattam grihē 3 ----

Thus 13 houses in number of certain persons connected with temple of Goddess Jōgēsvarī such as the mathapati, the pūjāri, the potter, the person in charge of the Āratī and so forth were exempted from the house-tax which was usually levied on the houses in North Koṅkan. This shows the popularity wielded by the aforementioned goddess and the number of persons involved for her service. Just because the above-mentioned people were connected with the temple of Goddess Jōgēsvarī, they became the privileged citizens and were exempted from house tax.

The goddess Jōgēsvarī was sometimes added to the list of Mothers generally 7 in number. The Mothers were considered as the energies of different major

1. CII, op. cit., No. <sup>21</sup> <sub>h</sub>, line 2.

Kolhāpur was the centre of this cult<sup>1</sup> and continues to this day to be a flourishing centre of goddess. The early Purānic literature mentions Karāvīra which is same as Kolhāpur as the seat of the goddess. This is attested by the aforesaid charter of king Karṇa. The temple of Mahālakshmi at Kolhāpur had become famous before the 9th century A.D. for the Rāshtrakūṭa king Amoghavarsha I is said to have offered her a finger of his left hand to ward off a public calamity.<sup>2</sup> The Kolar grant of Mayūravarna (1037-48) refers to the Manneya Kaliyarimarasa of Basavura 140 as having obtained the favour of the goddess Mahālakshmi of Kolhāpur.<sup>3</sup> King Shashtha of the later Kadamba dynasty is reported to have worshipped Mahālakshmi by going to Kolhāpur.<sup>4</sup> The cult of goddess Mahālakshmi was widespread and not confined to the Silāhāras of Kolhāpur but attracted devotees from far off places and other dynasties too.

The cult of Mahālakshmi started diffusing in the 11th-12th centuries and new centres were opened at

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1. Statistical Report on Kolhapur, cited in JBBRAS, II, (1874), p.104; cited in R.N. Nandi, op. cit., p.116.
  2. Ep. Indi., vol.XVIII, no.26; cited in R.N. Nandi, op. cit., p.139.
  3. G.M. Moraes, The Kadambakula, p.393; cited in R.N. Nandi, p.250.
  4. Dikshit, Select Inscriptions from Maharashtra (in Marathi), pp.46-68; also JUPHS XVIII, p.175; cited in H.D. Sankalia and M.G. Dikshit, op. cit., p.4.

Gods and described as assisting the great Śakta Devi in her fight with the demon.<sup>1</sup> The Varāha-Purāna says that Yogēśvarī is the symbol of lust.<sup>2</sup> Goddess Yogēśvarī appears to be the consort of Śiva as from the above inscription we came to know that one out of the 13 persons who were exempted from house tax was a lingapujāri. This is further confirmed from the Matsya-Purāna where she is depicted as an image with hanging tongue, knotted hair ~~on~~ the top of the head and a garland of skulls and bones, etc.<sup>3</sup>

The Śilāhāras of Kolhāpur were fervent devotees of Mahālakshmi. The goddess wielded immense popularity and was worshipped in a special temple independently. Her popularity can be evidenced from the fact that the Śilāhāras of Kolhāpur believed that they had obtained their kingdom by her grace; for they state in their grants that they had secured her gracious boon.<sup>4</sup>

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1. N.N. Bhattacharyya, History of Sakta Religion, p.102.
  2. Ibid., p.102.
  3. W.R.R. Dikshitar, op. cit., <sup>Vol. III</sup> p.39.
  4. CII, op. cit., No.48, line 2.



Gaddamballi in Hasan district and at Dharwar district.<sup>1</sup>

Where does Mahālakshmi figure in the brāhmanical pantheon? The name Mahālakshmi would suggest that she was the consort of Vishnu as Lakshmi is the consort of Vishnu. Dēvi Bhāgavata Purāṇa explains that Vishnu's original head was cut off by the chord of his own bow due to the curse of his wife goddess Mahālakshmi.<sup>2</sup>

The Purāṇic Index refers Mahālakshmi as Kamākshi, mother of Brahma, Vishnu and Isa.<sup>3</sup> But as R.N. Nandi has shown, the goddess Mahālakshmi seems to have dissociated from the Vishnuite pantheon and was made into a female partner of Siva.<sup>4</sup> Lakshmi is supposed to be the goddess of wealth but there is nothing to show that Mahālakshmi of Kolhāpur was ever conceived as such. Instead the goddess Mahālakshmi seems to have a liking for blood-rites. This is apparent from the aforementioned inscription from which we come to know that the Rāshtrakūṭa king Amōghavarsha in <sup>the year</sup> 871 <sup>A.D.</sup> made offering of one of his finger to the

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1. R.N. Nandi, op. cit., pp. 138-139.

2. Suvira Jaiswal, "The Demon and the Deity: Conflict Syndrome in the Hayagriva Legend", Studies in History, 1985, p.3.

3. V.R.R. Dikshitar, op. cit. <sup>Vol II</sup> p.663.

4. R.N. Nandi, op. cit., p. 139.

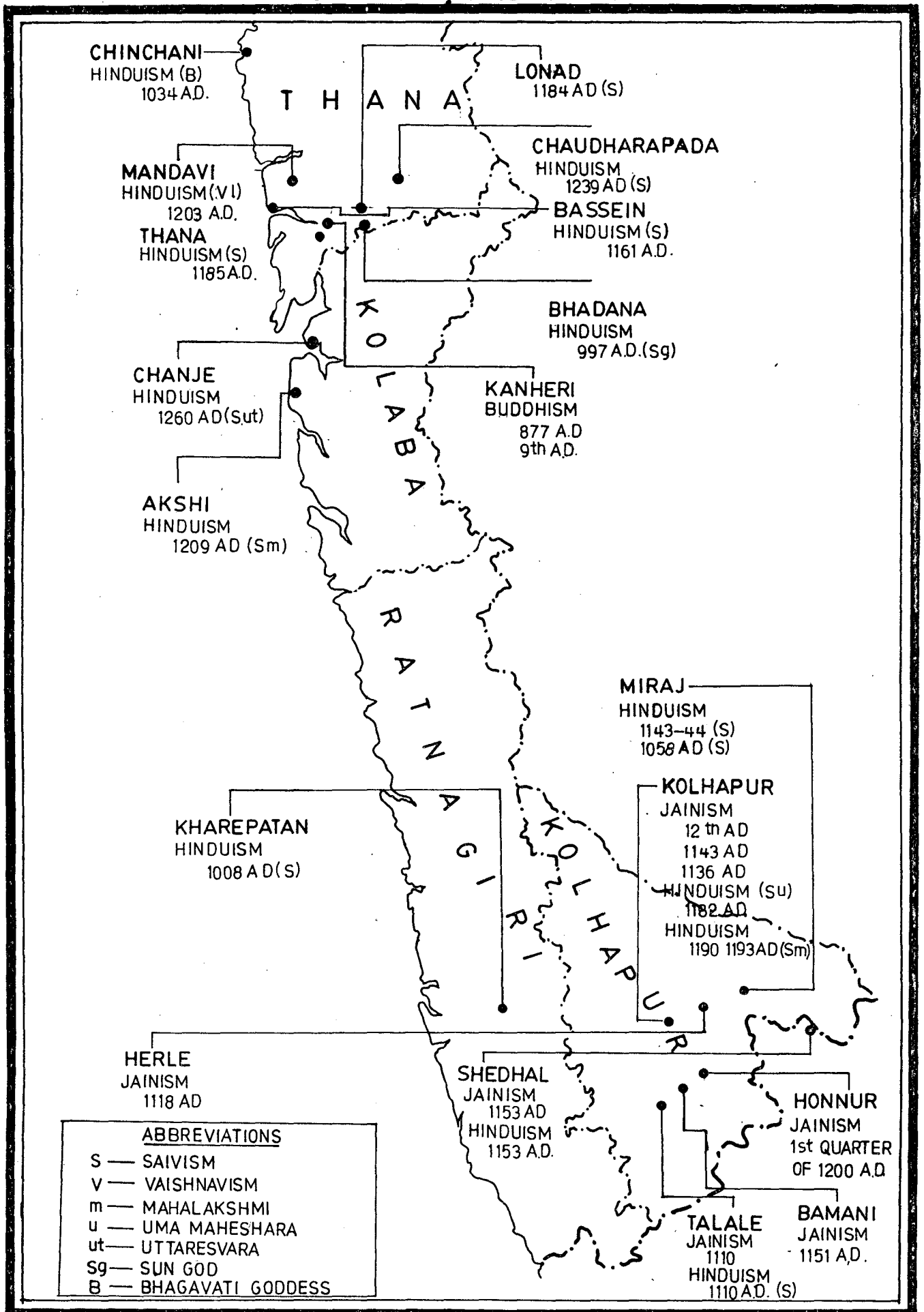
goddess in order to ward off a calamity which was likely to befall his people. R.N. Nandi ascribes to the view that the evolution of the goddess as a consort of Śiva probably followed from her conception as the protectress of humanity<sup>1</sup> which is clear from the above-mentioned inscription. That the goddess had a liking for blood rites shows her proximity to the malignant goddesses of the Śakta pantheon, who are invariably associated with Śiva as his consort. The goddess's liking for sacrifice is attested from one of the Śilāhāra inscriptions. If Dikshit's translation is correct then Bhairju Mahāpradhāna of Kēśīdēva dug a puṣhkarini (large well) on the occasion of a sacrifice in honour of Mahālakshmi.<sup>2</sup> The cult of Lakshmi had no provision for sacrifice and blood rites. Moreover, joint worship of Śiva and Mahālakshmi at Kolhāpur is revealed in the Kolhāpur stone inscription of Bhōja II: Śaka year 1112-1115.<sup>3</sup> In 1190 A.D. the King Bhōja and a private individual made grants to certain Brāhmaṇa for the five-fold worship of the God Umā-Mahēśvara, a form of Amritēśvara (Śiva), for the feeding of Sahavāsi Brāhmaṇas, for providing naivedya

1. R.N. Nandi *op. cit.*, p. 139

2. *CII, op. cit.*, No. 35, p. 167.

3. *Ibid.*, No. 59, p. 264.

Map IV: DISTRIBUTION OF RELIGIOUS CULTS AS REFLECTED IN THE INSCRIPTIONS OF THE SILĀHĀRAS OF KONKAN AND KOLHĀPUR



three times everyday to the goddess Mahālakshmi and for keeping the maṭha in good repairs. One can postulate that the triumph of Śaivism during the time of Śilāhāras or even before changed the designation of the goddess and she was transformed into female partner of Śiva who had gained precedence over Vishnu in the Koṅkaṇ and Kolhāpur region where the majority of the population were followers of Śaivism.

Brāhmanical deities enjoyed great popularity. The Śilāhāras of North and South Koṅkaṇ were Śaivites and tried to validate their power through Śaivite ideology and patronising Brāhmanas. Buddhism was still flourishing at Kānhērī till the end of 9th century A.D. after which it appears to be on the brink of decline from the region under study. Kolhāpur was a stronghold of Jainism and was considered to be a mahā-tīrtha for both Hinduism and Jainism. Tantricism seems to have affected Buddhism and Brāhmanical religion along with Jainas, who sought the aid of the goddess for the attainment of ordinary worldly gains and spiritual salvation. All the three institutionalised religions specially Hinduism and Jainism competed with one another to seek royal as well as popular support and adopted various measures to be in tune with the social surroundings and to suit the standards of the

people. An increasing axis between the agencies of temporal power and those of the spiritual centres during the 11th and 12th centuries can hardly be missed. The result of this axis was the emergence of a network of temples all over the discussed region specially at urban centres. Earlier in the Rāshtrakūṭa period and even in the initial phase of the Śīlāhāras, rarely do we find instances of individuals bearing the burden of building temples which was certainly not an easy task, from the point of providing huge finances but during the latter period (11th-12th centuries A.D.) this activity was in full swing specially in the Kolhāpur region which was a prosperous town with immense mercantile activity going on, a fact which is confirmed both by archaeological and epigraphical evidences.

## CONCLUSION

During the Śilāhāra period one witnessed no complete transformation in the socio-religious structure. The changes were in the nature of continuation or elaboration of the previous period. As far as the social structure is concerned, it remained based on the four-fold caste system divided into a number of sub-castes which has been the predominant character of the Hindu society since ages. But within this broad framework of stability numerous changes and developments are to be noticed.

The functions of caste as decided by birth had been relaxed in their rigidity in the period under study. The barriers of the caste system were broken centuries before the Śilāhāra period in so far as its functional foundation was concerned. The Brāhmanas did not necessarily confine themselves to learning and matters relating to religion. The shift of a number of Brāhmanas towards secular roles is indicated in our study. The Brāhmanas besides performing their prescribed duties of teaching, conducting sacrifices, etc. adopted other professions such as agriculture, administrative job and trade and commerce, a job considered to be degrading for them earlier.

The Brāhmaṇa caste multiplied into numerous sub-castes, some of which were still in the process of formation. The epithets Kramavid and Chaturvedin only indicated the learning of the Brāhmaṇas and not their surnames. But surnames like Ghaisasa found only in western India had stereotyped as family name. The Brāhmaṇas were still the most privileged and honoured caste. They were the recipients of most of the Śilāhāra grants. But the Brāhmaṇas could not exploit their ritual superiority without being well-equipped with the knowledge of scriptures.

Not much is known about the Kshatriya caste except that the Śilāhāras claimed themselves to be maha-Kshatriyas.

The Kāyasthas whose profession was that of a scribe had crystallized into a hereditary caste. By 11th Century A.D. Kāyasthas were a separate caste.

The merchants emerged as prominent figures in the society with the growth of trade and commerce in the Koṅkaṇ and specially Kolhāpur regions. They had formed powerful guilds like the Vira-Banaḥjas who were the most celebrated of the medieval South Indian merchant guilds. There seems to have been professional mobility even among the merchants. Some of the merchants of the concerned period had become state functionaries, acquired land and wielded certain political and judicial powers

and privileges. By this time the merchants came to exercise religious, administrative and military functions besides their prescribed profession of trade and commerce.

Connected with the phenomenon of trade & commerce and growth of urban life is the proliferation of arts and crafts and hence the emergence of numerous professional groups like carpenters, weavers etc. to cater to the needs of the urban population of Kolhāpur.

The temples came to wield some control over the economic activities of the artisans and merchants, which they could regulate in their own narrow interests. The temples by this time became vast landed magnates and performed socio-economic functions along with religious, cultural and educational activities.

By and large patriarchal society prevailed where the male naturally must have dominated in family and social life. Women were honoured as ideal wives rather than as a woman per se. They did not enjoy inheritance right. The women of the royal family did have some authority in the religious field.

The inscriptions of our period do not throw light on the lower echelons of the society but adequate material is available on the Brāhmanas and the merchants. Hence, the researcher has been handicapped to portray a total picture of the concerned society.



All the three ancient Indian religions, Hinduism, Buddhism and Jainism were in existence, Buddhism was on the brink of decline from the Koṅkaṇ region by the end of the 9th century A.D. Kolhāpur was the stronghold of Jainism and the cult of Mahālakshmi. Tantrism had affected all the three institutionalized religions who competed with one another for royal as well popular support and adopted various measures in accordance to the socio-economic change. An increasing axes between the agencies of temporal power and those of the spiritual centres during the 11th and 12th centuries is to be noticed. The outcome of which was the emergence of a network of temples all over the concerned regions. The Śilāhāras of North and South Koṅkaṇ were ardent saivites and tried to validate their power through Saivite ideology and by patronizing the Brāhmanas who represented the religion of a group, assimilative and well-established. The Śilāhāras of Kolhāpur patronized Jainism but simultaneously, extended support to Buddhism, Saivism and other puranic deities showing their tolerant attitude. They also tried to legitimize, stabilize and entrench or consolidate their rule over their territory by patronizing the Brāhmanas and the existing religious cults and their centres.

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