

A historical study about Ancient Punjab

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Abstract

This paper throws light on the ancient Punjab during Buddhist times, Kautilyan Punjab, Achaemenid Empire, Indo-Scythians, Alexander's invasion, Maurya Empire, Kushan Empire, Indo-Parthian Kingdom, Gupta Empire, Hunas, Ghaznavid Dynasty, Delhi Sultanate, Mughal Empire, Durrani Empire & Maratha Empire, Sikh Rule, British Raj.

Introduction :

The name Punjab is a xenonym/exonym and the first known mention of the word Punjab is in the writings of Ibn Batūta, who visited the region in the 14th century. The term came into wider use in the second half of the 16th century, and was used in the book Tarikh-e-Sher Shah Suri (1580), which mentions the construction of a fort by "Sher Khan of Punjab". The first mentioning of the Sanskrit equivalent of 'Punjab', however, occurs in the great epic, the Mahabharata (pancha-nada 'country of five rivers'). The name is mentioned again in Ain-e-Akbari (part 1), written by Abul Fazal, who also mentions that the territory of Punjab was divided into two provinces, Lahore and Multan. Similarly in the second volume of Ain-e-Akbari, the title of a chapter includes the word Panjnad in it. The Mughal King Jahangir also mentions the word Panjab in Tuzk-i-Janhageeri. Punjab, derived from Persian and introduced by the Turkic conquerors of India, literally means "five" (panj) "waters" (ab), i.e., the Land of Five Rivers, referring to the five rivers which go through it. It was because of this that it was made the granary of British India. Today, three of the rivers run exclusively in Punjab, Pakistan, while Himachal Pradesh and Punjab, India have the headwaters of the remaining two rivers, which eventually run into Pakistan.

This is the original home of the Gypsies, Ods and Sadhs, the Gurjars, Ahirs and Khatri; here came Skylax, Alexander, Huen Tsang and Fa Hien. Here we saw past the pageant of Aryanism, Zoroastrianism, Hellenism, Buddhism, Islam, Sikhism. How did this land fare under each contact, under each cataclysm, under each fresh revolution in thought and deed? How in its blood and brain it received and integrated something of Greece, Persia, China and Tibet, Arabia, Egypt, Central and Western India? Knowing that, we would, also, understand why Buddhism and all it outwardly implied in wood and colour and stone and deed has not much survived in Panjabi life and letters, only, in part in Punjabi religion; and why Brahman ritualism has passed away while the Kshatriya philosophy, the Vedanta, has survived; why the spirit more than the word of Islam as it emerged from its Persian cradle, has appealed to the rural Panjab; why the Chinese and Bengali games of children, the Chinese pigtail, the Chinese magic, the Greek semi-circular head-gear, the Turkish words for daily food and utensils, Vikramadityan Rajput tales and customs, Buddhist folktales, and the lore of saints; and lovers from Persia and Arabia, have found a congenial home in the soil or become favourites with the natives; why again the cult of Krishna or Rama worship

has not struck roots here ; why local saints have prospered ; why comparatively so few traces of the changing past have got preserved in life or literature.

Indus valley civilization

Archaeological discoveries show that by about 3300 BCE the small communities in and around the Indus River basin had evolved and expanded giving rise to the Indus Valley Civilisation, one of the earliest in human history. At its height, it boasted large cities like Harrapa (near Sahiwal in West Punjab). The civilisation declined rapidly after the 19th century BCE, for reasons that are still largely unknown.

Vedic era

The Vedic period is characterized by Indo-Aryan culture associated with the texts of Vedas, sacred to Hindus, which were orally composed in Vedic Sanskrit. It embodies a literary record of the socio-cultural development of ancient Punjab (known as Sapta Sindhu) and affords us a glimpse of the life of its people. Vedic society was tribal in character. A number of families constituted a grama, a number of gramas a vis (clan) and a number of clans a Jana (tribe). The Janas, led by Rajans, were in constant intertribal warfare. From this warfare arose larger groupings of peoples ruled by great chieftains and kings. As a result, a new political philosophy of conquest and empire grew, which traced the origin of the state to the exigencies of war.

An important event of the Rigvedic era was the "Battle of Ten Kings" which was fought on the banks of the river Parusni (identified with the present-day river(Ravi) between king Sudas of the Trtsu lineage of the Bharata clan on the one hand and a confederation of ten tribes on the other. The ten tribes pitted against Sudas comprised five major the Purus, the Druhyus, the Anus, the Turvasas and the Yadus—and five minor ones, origin from the north-western and western frontiers of present-day Punjab—the Pakthas, the Alinas, the Bhalanas, the Visanins and the Sivas. King Sudas was supported by the Vedic RishiVasishtha, while his former Purohita the Rishi Vishwamitra sided with the confederation of ten tribes.

Punjab during Buddhist time

The Buddhist text Anguttara Nikaya mentions Gandhara and Kamboja among the sixteen great countries (Solas Mahajanapadas) which had evolved in/and around Jambudvipa prior to Buddha's times. Pali literature further endorses that only Kamboja and Gandhara of the sixteen ancient political powers belonged to the Uttarapatha or northern division of Jambudvipa but no precise boundaries for each have been explicitly specified. Gandhara and Kamboja are believed to have comprised the upper Indus regions and included Kashmir, eastern Afghanistan and most of the western Punjab which now forms part of Pakistan. At times, the limits of Buddhist Gandhara had extended as far as Multan while those of Buddhist Kamboja comprised Rajauri/Poonch, Abhisara and Hazara as well as eastern Afghanistan including valleys of Swat and Kunar and Kapisa etc. Michael Witzel terms this region as forming parts of the Greater Punjab. Buddhist texts also mention that this northern region especially the Kamboja was renowned for its quality horses & horsemen and has been regularly mentioned as the home of horses. However, Chulla-Niddesa, another ancient text of the Buddhist canon substitutes Yona for Gandhara and thus lists the Kamboja and the Yona as the only Mahajanapadas from Uttarapatha .This shows that Kamboja had included Gandhara at the time the Chulla-Niddesa list was written by Buddhists.

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Pāṇinian and Kautilian Punjab

Pāṇini was a famous ancient Sanskrit grammarian born in Shalātura, identified with modern Lahur near Attock in the Northwest Frontier Province of Pakistan. One may infer from his work, the *Ashtadhyayi*, that the people of Greater Punjab lived prominently by the profession of arms. That text terms numerous clans as being "Ayudhajivin Samghas" or "Republics (oligarchies) that live by force of arms". Those living in the plains were called Vahika Samghas, while those in the mountainous regions (including the north-east of present-day Afghanistan) were termed as Parvatiya Samghas (mountaineer republics). According to an older opinion the Vahika Samghas included prominently the Vrikas (possibly modern Virk Jatts), Damanis, confederation of six states known as Trigarta-shashthas, Yaudheyas (modern Jojia or Johiya Rajputs and some Kamboj), Parsus, Kekayas, Usinaras, Sibis (possibly modern Sibia Jatts?), Kshudrakas, Malavas, Bhartas, and the Madraka clans, while the other class, styled as Parvatiya Ayudhajivins, comprised among others partially the Trigartas, Darvas, the Gandharan clan of Hastayanas, Niharas, Hamsamaragas, and the Kambojan clans of Ashvayanas & Ashvakayanas, Dharteyas (of the Dyrta town of the Ashvakayans), Apritas, Madhuwantas (all known as Rohitgiris), as well as the Daradas of the Chitral, Gilgit, etc. In addition, Pāṇini also refers to the Kshatriya monarchies of the Kuru, Gandhara and Kamboja. These Kshatriyas or warrior communities followed different forms of republican or oligarchic constitutions, as is attested to by Pāṇini's *Ashtadhyayi*. The *Arthashastra* of Kautilya, whose oldest layer may go back to the 4th century BCE also talks of several martial republics and specifically refers to the [Kshatriya Srenis (warrior-bands) of the Kambojas, Surastras and some other frontier tribes as belonging to varta-Shastr-opajivin class (i.e., living by the profession of arms and varta), while the Madraka, Malla, the Kuru, etc., clans are called Raja-shabd-opajivins class (i.e., using the title of Raja). Dr Arthur Coke Burnell observes: "In the West, there were the Kambojas and the Katas (Kathas) with a high reputation for courage and skill in war, the Saubhuties, the Yaudheyas, and the two federated peoples, the Sibis, the Malavas and the Kshudrakas, the most numerous and warlike of the Indian nations of the days". Thus, it is seen that the heroic traditions cultivated in Vedic and Epic Age continued to the times of Pāṇini and Kautilya. In fact, the entire region of Greater Punjab is known to have reeked with the martial people. History strongly witnesses that these Ayudhajivin clans had offered stiff resistance to

the Achaemenid rulers in the 6th century, and later to the Macedonian invaders in the 4th century BCE.

Achaemenid Empire

The western parts of ancient Gandhara, Kamboja and Taxila in North Punjab lay at the easternmost edge of the Achaemenid Empire. The upper Indus region, comprising Gandhara and Kamboja, formed the 7th satrapy of the Achaemenid Empire, while the lower and middle Indus, comprising Sindhu (Sindh) and Sauvira, constituted the 20th satrapy, both part of the easternmost territories of the Achaemenids. They are reported to have contributed 170 and 360 talents of gold dust in annual tribute. It was said that the then Indian provinces of Sindh and Punjab were the richest satraps of the Persian empires generating vast revenues and even providing foot soldiers for the empire. The ancient Greeks also had some knowledge of the area. Darius I appointed his Greek subject Scylax of Caryanda to explore the Indian Ocean from the mouth of the Indus to Suez. Scylax provides an account of this voyage in his book *Periplus*. Hecataeus of Miletus (500 BCE) and Herodotus (483–431 BCE) also wrote about the Indus Satrapy of the Persians. In ancient Greek texts and maps, we find mention of the "mightiest river of all the world", called the Indos (Indus) of northern Indian subcontinent. The presence of the Scythians in north-western India during the 4th century BCE was contemporary with that of the Indo-Greek Kingdoms there, and it seems they initially recognized and joined the power of the local Greek rulers.

Indo-Scythians

Maues first conquered Gandhara and Taxila around 80 BCE, but his kingdom disintegrated after his death. In the east, the Indian king Vikrama retook Ujjain from the Indo-Scythians, celebrating his victory by the creation of the Vikrama Era (starting 57 BCE). Indo-Greek kings again ruled after Maues, and prospered, as indicated by the profusion of coins from Kings Apollodotus II and Hippostratos. Not until Azes I, in 55 BCE, did the Indo-Scythians take final control of northwestern India, with his victory over Hippostratos.

Alexander's invasion

The Kambhojas on the Indos (Indus), the Taksas of Taksila (Taxila), the Madras and Kathas (Kathaioi) on Akesines (Chenab), the Malla (Malloi) on the Hydraotis (Iravati or Ravi), the Tugras on the Hesidros (Sutlej) had formed important populations of the Punjab in the pre-Alexandrian age and stubbornly opposed Alexander on the Indus and, in spite of his victories on Hydaspes (Jhelum) and Sakala (Sangala, Sialkot), had finally led him and his soldiers to abandon his planned conquest of India and retire to Babylonia". After overrunning the Achaemenid Empire in 331 BCE, Alexander marched into present-day Afghanistan with an army of 50,000. His scribes do not record the names of the rulers of the Gandhara or Kamboja; rather, they locate a dozen small political units in those territories. This rules out the possibility of Gandhara and/or Kamboja having been great kingdoms in the late 4th century BCE. In 326 BCE, most of the dozen-odd political units of the former Gandhara/Kamboja fell to Alexander's forces.

Greek historians refer to three warlike peoples, viz. the Astakenoi, the Aspasioi and the Assakenoi, located in the northwest west of river Indus, whom Alexander had encountered during his campaign from Kapisi through Gandhara. The Aspasioi were cognate with the Assakenoi and were merely a western branch of them. Both Aspasioi and Assakenoi were a brave peoples. Alexander had personally directed his operations against these hardy mountaineers who offered him stubborn resistance in all of their mountainous strongholds. The Greek names Aspasioi and Assakenoi derive from Sanskrit Ashva (or Persian Aspa).

They appear as Ashvayanas and Ashvakayanas in Pāṇini's Ashtadhyayi and Ashvakas in the Puranas. Since the Kambojas were famous for their excellent breed of horses as also for their expert cavalry skills, hence, in popular parlance, they were also known as Ashvakas. The Ashvayanas/Ashvakayanas and allied Saka clans had fought the Macedonians to a man. At the worst of the war, even the Ashvakayana Kamboj women had taken up arms and fought the invaders side by side with their husbands, thus preferring "a glorious death to a life of dishonor." In a letter to his mother, Alexander described his encounters with these trans-Indus tribes of Punjab: I am involved in the land of a leonine and brave people, where every foot of the ground is like a well of steel, confronting my soldier. You have brought only one son into the world, but everyone in this land can be called an Alexander. Alexander then marched east to the Hydaspes, where Porus, ruler of the kingdom between the Hydaspes (Jhelum) near Bhera and the Akesines (Chenab) refused to submit to him. The two armies fought the Battle of the Hydaspes River outside the town of Nikaia (near the modern city of Jhelum) and Poros became Alexander's satrap. Alexander's army crossed the Hydraotis and marched east to the Hyphases (Beas). However, Alexander's troops refused to face the vastly superior imperial army of Magadh Empire, Persoi refused to go beyond the Hyphases (Beas) River near modern-day Jalandhar. The Battle with Porus depressed the spirits of the Macedonians, as too many valiant comrades died helplessly by Porus' war elephants, and made them very unwilling to advance farther into India. Moreover, when they learned that a vastly superior imperial army of Magadh, Gangaridai and Prasii are waiting for the Greeks, all the generals of Alexander refused to meet them for fear of annihilation. Therefore, Alexander had to return. He crossed the river and ordered to erect giant altars to mark the eastern most extent of his empire thus claiming the territory east of Beas as part of his conquests. He also set up a city named Alexandria nearby and left many Macedonian veterans there, he himself turned back and marched his army to the Jhelum and the Indus to the Arabian Sea, and sailing to Babylon. Alexander left some forces along the Indus river region. In the Indus territory, he nominated his officer Peithon as a satrap, a position he would hold for the next ten years until 316 BCE, and in the Punjab he left Eudemus in charge of the army, at the side of the satraps Porus and Taxiles. Eudemus became ruler of the Punjab after their death. Both rulers returned to the West in 316 BCE with their armies, and Chandragupta Maurya established the Maurya Empire in India.

Maurya Empire

The portions of the Punjab that had been captured under Alexander were soon conquered by Chandragupta Maurya. The founder of the Mauryan Empire incorporated the rich provinces of the Punjab into his empire and fought Alexander's successor in the east, Seleucus, when the latter invaded. In a peace treaty, Seleucus ceded all territories west of the Indus, including Southern Afghanistan while Chandragupta granted Seleucus 500 elephants. The Sanskrit play Mudrarakshasa of Visakhadutta as well as the Jaina work Parisishtaparvan talk of Chandragupta's alliance with the Himalayan king Parvatka, sometimes identified with Porus. This Himalayan alliance is thought to given Chandragupta a composite and powerful army made up of the Yavanas (Greeks), Kambojas, Shakas (Scythians), Kiratas, Parasikas (Iranic tribe) and Bahlikas (Bactrians). The Punjab prospered under Mauryan rule for the next century. It became a Bactrian Greek (Indo-Greek) territory in 180 BCE following the collapse of Mauryan authority.

Indo-Greek kingdom

Alexander established two cities in the Punjab, where he settled people from his multi-national armies, which included a majority of Greeks. These Indo-Greek cities and their associated realms thrived long after Alexander's departure. After Alexander's death, the eastern portion of his empire (from present-day Syria to Punjab) was inherited by Seleucus I Nicator, the founder of the Seleucid dynasty. Seleucus is said to have reached a peace treaty with Chandragupta of the Maurya Empire, by giving control of the territory south of the Hindu Kush to him upon intermarriage and 500 elephants, establishing the close links that would develop between India and Afghanistan. This was followed by the ascendancy of the Greco-Bactrian Kingdom. The Bactrian king Demetrius I added the Punjab to his Kingdom in the early 2nd century BCE. Some of these early Indo-Greeks were Buddhists. The best known of the Indo-Greek kings was Menander I, known in India as Milinda, who established an independent kingdom centred at Taxila around 160 BCE. He later moved his capital to Sagala (modern Sialkot).

The Indo-Scythians were descended from the Sakas (Scythians) who migrated from southern Siberia to Punjab and Arachosia from the middle of the 2nd century BCE to the 1st century BCE. They displaced the Indo-Greeks and ruled a kingdom that stretched from Gandhara to Mathura. Following the centuries of Parthian clashes with its arch rival, the Roman Empire, a local Parthian leader in South Asia, Gondophares, established the Indo-Parthian Kingdom in the 1st century CE. The kingdom was ruled from Taxila and covered much of modern southeast Afghanistan and Pakistan. Christian writings claim that the Apostle Saint Thomas – an architect and skilled carpenter – had a long sojourn in the court of king Gondophares, had built a palace for the king at Taxila and had also ordained leaders for the Church before leaving for Indus Valley in a chariot, for sailing out to eventually reach Malabar Coast.

Kushan Empire

The Kushan kingdom was founded by King Herais, and greatly expanded by his successor, Kujula Kadphises. Kadphises' son, Vima Takto conquered territory now in India, but lost much of the west of the kingdom to the Parthians. The fourth Kushan emperor, Kanishka I, (c. 127 CE) had a winter capital at Purushapura (Peshawar, Afghanistan) and a summer capital at Kapisa (Bagram). The kingdom linked the Indian Ocean maritime trade with the commerce of the Silk Road through the Indus valley. At its height, the empire extended from the Aral Sea to northern India, encouraging long-distance trade, particularly between China and Rome. Kanishka convened a great Buddhist council in Taxila, marking the start of the pantheistic Mahayana Buddhism and its scission with Nikaya Buddhism. The art and culture of Gandhara — the best known expressions of the interaction of Greek and Buddhist cultures — also continued over several centuries, until the 5th century White Hun invasions of Scythia. The travelogues of Chinese pilgrims Fa Xian (337 – c. 422 CE) and Huen Tsang (602/603–664 CE) describe the famed Buddhist seminary at Taxila and the status of Buddhism in the region of Punjab in this period.

Indo-Parthian Kingdom

The Gondopharid dynasty and other Indo-Parthian rulers were a group of ancient kings from Central Asia, who ruled parts of present-day Afghanistan, Pakistan and India, during or slightly before the 1st century AD. For most of their history, the leading Gondopharid kings held Taxila (in the present Punjab province of Pakistan) as their residence, but during their last few years of existence the capital shifted between Kabul and Peshawar. These kings have traditionally been referred to as Indo-Parthians, as their coinage was often inspired by

the Arsacid dynasty, but they probably belonged to a wider groups of Iranian tribes who lived east of Parthia proper, and there is no evidence that all the kings who assumed the title Gondophares, which means "Holder of Glory", were even related.

Gupta Empire

Gupta empire existed approximately from 320 to 600 CE and covered much of the Indian Subcontinent including Punjab. Founded by Maharaja Sri-Gupta, the dynasty was the model of a classical civilization and was marked by extensive inventions and discoveries. The high points of this cultural creativity are magnificent architectures, sculptures and paintings. Science and political administration reached new heights during the Gupta era. Strong trade ties also made the region an important cultural centre and set the region up as a base that would influence nearby kingdoms and regions in Burma, Sri Lanka, Malay Archipelago and Indochina. The empire gradually declined because of many factors like the substantial loss of territory and imperial authority caused by their own erstwhile feudatories and the invasion by the Hunas from Central Asia. After the collapse of the Gupta Empire in the 6th century, India was again ruled by numerous regional kingdoms. A minor line of the Gupta clan continued to rule Magadha after the disintegration of the empire. These Guptas were ultimately ousted by the Vardhana king Harsha, who established an empire in the first half of the 7th century.

Hunas

The White Huns, who initially seem to have been part of the predominantly Buddhist Hephthalite group, established themselves in Afghanistan by the first half of the 5th century, with their capital at Bamiyan. Led by the Hun military leader Toramana, they invaded the Punjab region and made their capital at the city of Sakala, modern Sialkot in Pakistan, under Toramana's son, Emperor Mihirakula, who was a Saivite Hindu. But later the Huns were defeated and driven out of India by Narasimhagupta and Yasodharman in the 6th century.

Empire of Harsha

Harshavardhana (c. 590–647), commonly called Harsha, was an Indian emperor who ruled northern India from 606 to 647 from his capital Kanauj. He belonged to Pushyabhuti Dynasty. He was the son of Prabhakarvardhana and the younger brother of Rajyavardhana, a king of Thanesar in present-day Haryana (earlier known as Eastern Punjab). At the height of his power his kingdom spanned the Punjab, Rajasthan, Gujarat, Bengal, Odisha and the entire Indo-Gangetic plain north of the Narmada River. Harsha was defeated by the south Indian Emperor Pulakeshin II of the Chalukya dynasty when Harsha tried to expand his Empire into southern peninsular of India. According to Arab chroniclers, the Rai Dynasty of Sindh (c. 489–632) arose after the end of Ror Dynasty. They were practitioners of Hinduism and Buddhism; they established a huge temple of Shiva in present-day Sukkur – close to their capital in Al-ror. At the time of Rai Diwaji (Devaditya), influence of the Rai-state extended from Kashmir in the east, Makran and Debal (Karachi) port in the south, Kandahar, Suleyman, Ferdan and Kikanan hills in the north.

Ghaznavid Dynasty

In 997, Ismail of Ghazni, succeeded to the Ghaznavid dynasty on the death of his father, Sabuktigin, a ruler of Turkic origin. His brother-in-law Mahmud of Ghazni contested the succession and defeated Ismail at the Battle of Ghazni. Starting from the city of Ghazni (now in Afghanistan), Mahmud conquered the bulk of Khorasan, marched on Peshawar against the Hindu Shahis in Kabul in 1005, and followed it by the conquests of Punjab (1007), deposed the Shia Ismaili rulers

of Multan, (1011), Kashmir (1015) and Qanoch (1017), and the Ghaznavid dynasty lasted until 1187. Contemporary historians such as Abolfazl Beyhaqi and Ferdowsi described extensive building work in Lahore, as well as Mahmud's support and patronage of learning, literature and the arts.

Delhi Sultanate

The Delhi Sultanate is a term used to cover five short-lived kingdoms or sultanates of Turkic and Afghan origin in medieval India including the Punjab region. The sultanates ruled from Delhi between 1206 and 1526, when the last was replaced by the Mughal dynasty. The five dynasties were the Mamluk dynasty (1206–90); the Khilji dynasty (1290–1320); the Tughlaq dynasty (1320–1414); the Sayyid dynasty (1414–51); and the Lodi dynasty (1451–1526). In 1160, Muhammad Ghori, a Turkic ruler, conquered Ghazni from the Ghaznavids and became its governor in 1173. He for the first time named Sindh Tambade Gatar roughly translated as the red passage. He marched eastwards into the remaining Ghaznavid territory and Gujarat in the 1180s, but was rebuffed by Gujarat's Hindu Solanki rulers. In 1186–87, he conquered Punjab, bringing the last of Ghaznavid territory under his control and ending the Ghaznavid empire. Muhammad Ghori's successors established the Delhi Sultanate. The Turkic origin Mamluk Dynasty, seized the throne of the Sultanate in 1211. Several Central Asian Turkic dynasties ruled their empires from Delhi: the Mamluk (1211–90), the Khalji (1290–1320), the Tughlaq (1320–1413), the Sayyid (1414–51) and the Lodhi (1451–1526). The sultans eventually lost Afghanistan and western Pakistan to the Mongols (see the Ilkhanate Dynasty). The Sultanate declined after the invasion of Emperor Timur, who founded the Timurid Dynasty, and was eventually conquered in 1526 by the Mughal king Babar.

Guru Nanak (1469–1539), was born in the village of Rai Bhoi di Talwandi, now called Nankana, near Sial in modern-day Pakistan into a Hindu Khatri family. He was an influential religious and social reformer of north India and the saintly founder of a modern monotheistic order and first of the ten divine Gurus of Sikh Religion. At the age of 70, he died in Cartarpur, Punjab of modern-day Pakistan. Sikhism was created and would continue to grow; its followers, the Sikhs, would politicalise and militarise to play a historic role later.

Mughal Empire

In 1526, Babur, a Timurid descendant of Timur and Genghis Khan from Fergana Valley (modern-day Uzbekistan), swept across the Khyber Pass and founded the Mughal Empire, covering modern-day Afghanistan, Pakistan and India. The Mughals were descended from Central Asian Turks (with significant Mongol admixture). However, his son Humayun was defeated by the Afghan warrior Sher Shah Suri in the year 1540, and Humayun was forced to retreat to Kabul. After Sher Shah died, his son Islam Shah Suri became the ruler of North India from 1540–53, on whose death his prime minister, Hemu, also known as 'Hem Chandra Vikramaditya', who had won 22 battles continuously against Afghans and Mughals during 1553–56, from Punjab to Bengal ascended the throne and ruled North India from Dehli. He was defeated by Emperor Akbar's forces in the Second Battle of Panipat on 6 November 1556.

Akbar the Great, was both a capable ruler and an early proponent of religious and ethnic tolerance and favored an early form of multiculturalism. He declared "Amari" or non-killing of animals in the holy days of Jainism and rolled back the *jizya* tax for idolators. The Mughal dynasty ruled most of the Indian subcontinent by 1600. The Mughal emperors married local royalty and allied themselves with

local *maharajas*. For a short time in the late 16th century, Lahore was the capital of the empire. The architectural legacy of the Mughals in Lahore includes the Shalimar Gardens built by the fifth Emperor Sahajhan, and the Badshahi Mosque built by the sixth Emperor, Aurangzeb, who is regarded as the last Great Mughal Emperor as he expanded the domain to its zenith of 1 billion acres. After his demise, different regions of modern Pakistan began asserting independence. The empire went into a slow decline after 1707, until the British would eventually decisively end it.

Durrani Empire & Maratha Empire

In 1747, the Durrani kingdom was established by an Afghan general, Ahmad Shah Abdali, and included Balochistan, Peshawar, Daman, Multan, Sind, and Punjab. In the south, a succession of autonomous dynasties (the Daudpotas, Kalhoras and Talpurs) had asserted the independence of Sind, from the end of Aurangzeb's reign. Most of Balochistan came under the influence of the Khan of Kalat, apart from some coastal areas such as Gwadar, which were controlled by mutually competing and armed Portuguese, French and Dutch trading companies. In 1758 the Maratha Empire's general Raghunathrao marched onwards, attacked and conquered Lahore and Attock and drove out Timur Shah Durrani, the son and viceroy of Ahmad Shah Abdali. Lahore, Multan, Kashmir and other subahs on the eastern side of Attock were under the Maratha rule for the most part. In Punjab and Kashmir, the Marathas were now major players. In 1761, following the victory at the Third battle of Panipat between the Durrani and the Maratha Empire, Ahmad Shah Abdali captured remnants of the Maratha Empire in Punjab and Kashmir regions and had consolidated control over them.

Sikh Rule

Before Ranjit Singh took control of the Sukerchakias misal, and the Punjab was fragmented due to the weakening of the Durrani Empire, The edifice of Ahmed Shah Abdali's empire in India had crumbled. Afghanistan was dismembered. Peshawar and Kashmir, though under the suzerainty of Afghanistan, had attained de facto independence. The Barakzais were now masters of these lands. Attock was ruled by Wazrikhels and Jhang lay at the feet of Sials. The Pashtuns ruled Kasur. Multan had thrown off the yoke and Nawab Muzaffar Khan was now ruler. Both Punjab and Sind had been under Afghan rule since 1757 when Ahmed Shah Abdali was granted suzerainty over these provinces. However, the Sikhs were now a rising power in Punjab. Taimur Khan, a local Governor, was able to expel the Sikhs from Amritsar and raze the fort of Ram Rauni. His control was short-lived, however, and the Sikh misal joined to defeat Taimur Shah and his Chief minister Jalal Khan. The Afghans were forced to retreat and Lahore was occupied by the Sikhs in 1758. Jassa Singh Ahluwalia proclaimed the Sikh's sovereignty and assumed leadership, striking coins to commemorate his victory. While Ahmed Shah Abdali was engaged in a campaign against the Marathas at Panipat in 1761, Jassa Singh Ahluwalia plundered Sirhind and Dialpur, seized towns in the Ferozepur district, and took possession of Jagraon and Kot Isa Khan on the opposite bank of the Sutlej. He captured Hoshiarpur and Naraingarh in Ambala and levied tribute from the chief of Kapurthala. He then marched towards Jhang. The Sial chief offered stout resistance. However, when Ahmad Shah left in February 1761, Nawab Jassa Singh Ahluwalia again attacked Sirhind and extended his territory as far as Tarn Taran. When he crossed the Bias and captured Sultanpur in 1762, Ahmad Shah again appeared and a fierce battle took place. The ensuing holocaust was called Ghalughara. Following the rout of Sikh forces, Nawab Jassa Singh fled to the Kangra hills. After the departure of Ahmad Shah Abdali, Nawab Jassa Singh Ahluwalia again

attacked Sirhind, razing it and killing the Afghan Governor Zen Khan. This was a great victory for the Sikhs who now ruled all the territory around the Sirhind.

Ahmad Shah died in June 1773. After his death the power of the Afghans declined in the Punjab. Taimur Shah ascended the throne at Kabul. By then the Misls were well established in the Punjab. They controlled territory as far as Saharnpur in the east, Attock in the west, Kangra Jammu in the north and Multan in the south. Efforts were made by Afghan rulers to dislodge the Sikhs from their citadels. Taimur Shah attacked Multan and temporarily defeated the Sardars of the Bhangi Misl. The Bhangi Misl controlled this principality and the powerful Bhangi misl army ("the most powerful of all the misl at this time"), Lehna Singh, and Sobha Singh fled Lahore in 1767 when Abdali attacked, but reoccupied it, when Abdali left after plundering the town. They remained in power in Lahore until 1793 - the year when Shah Zaman acceded to the throne of Kabul.

The first attempt at conquest by Shah Zaman was in 1793. He came to Hasan Abdal from which he sent an army of 7000 cavalry under Ahmad Shah Shahnachi but the Sikhs routed them. It was a great setback to Shah Zaman, but in 1795 he reorganised forces and again attacked Hasan Abdal, This time he snatched Rohtas from the Sukerchikias, whose leader was Ranjit Singh. Singh suffered at Shah Zaman's hands. However, Shah Zaman had to return to Kabul as an invasion of his country from the west was apprehended. When he returned, Ranjit Singh dislodged the Afghans from Rohtas.

In 1796 Shah Zaman crossed the Indus for the third time and planned to capture Delhi. By now he had raised an Afghan army of 3000 men. He was confident numerous Indians would join him. Nawab of Kasur had already assured him help. Sahib Singh of Patiala declared his intention to help Shah Zaman. Shah Zaman was also assured of help by the Rohillas, Wazir of Oudh, and Tipu Sultan of Mysore. The news of Shah Zaman's invasion spread quickly and people began fleeing to the hills for safety. By December Shah Zaman occupied territory up to Jhelum. When he reached Gujrat (Punjab), Sahib Singh Bhangi panicked and left the place.

Next Shah Zaman marched on the territory of Ranjit Singh. Singh was alert and raised an army of 5000 horsemen. However, they were inadequately armed with only spears and muskets. The Afghans were equipped with heavy artillery. Ranjit Singh foresaw a strong, united fight against the invaders as he came to Amritsar. A congregation of Sarbat Khalsa was called and many Sikh sardars answered the call. There was general agreement that Shah Zaman's army should be allowed to enter the Punjab and that the Sikhs should retire to the hills.

Forces were reorganised under the command of Ranjit Singh and they marched towards Lahore. They gave the Afghans a crushing defeat in several villages and surrounded the city of Lahore. Sorties were made into the city at night in which they would kill a few Afghan soldiers and then leave under cover of darkness. Following this tactic they were able to dislodge Afghans from several places. In 1797 Shah Zaman left for Afghanistan as his brother Mahmud had revolted. Shahanchi khan remained at Lahore with a sizeable army. The Sikhs followed Shah Zaman to Jhelum and snatched many goods from him. In returning, the Sikhs were attacked by the army of Shahnachi khan near Ram Nagar. The Sikhs routed his army. It was the first major achievement of Ranjit Singh.

Again in 1798 Shah Zaman attacked Punjab to avenge the defeat of 1797. The Sikh people took refuge in the hills. A Sarbat Khalsa was again called and Sada Kaur persuaded the Sikhs to fight once again to the last man. This time even Muslims were not spared by Shah Zaman's forces and he won Gujarat easily. Sada Kaur roused

the Sikhs sense of national honour. If they were to again leave Amritsar, she would command the forces against the Afghans. The Afghans plundered the towns and villages as they had vowed and declared that they would defeat the Sikhs. However, it was the Muslims who suffered most as the Hindus and Sikhs had already left for the hills. The Muslims had thought that they would not be touched but their hopes were dashed and their provisions forcibly taken from them by the Afghans.

Shah Zaman requested that Raja Sansar Chand of Kangra refuse to give food or shelter to the Sikhs. This was agreed. Shah Zaman attacked Lahore and the Sikhs, surrounded as they were on all sides, had to fight a grim battle. The Afghans occupied Lahore in November 1798 and planned to attack Amritsar. Ranjit Singh collected his men and faced Shah's forces about eight kilometres from Amritsar. They were well-matched and the Afghans were forced to retire. They fled towards Lahore. Ranjit Singh pursued them and surrounded Lahore. Afghan supply lines were cut, crops were burnt and other provisions plundered so that they did not fall into Afghan's hands. Nizam-ud-din of Kasur attacked the Sikhs near Shahdara on the banks of the Ravi, but his forces were no match for the Sikhs. Here too, it was the Muslims who suffered the most. The retreating Afghans and Nizam-ud-din forces plundered the town, antagonising the local people. By this time the people of the country had become aware of the rising strength of Ranjit Singh. The people of Lahore were favorably disposed towards Singh who they saw as a potential liberator. Muslims joined Hindu and Sikh residents of Lahore in making an appeal to Singh to free them.

A petition was written and was signed by Mian Ashak Muhammad, Mian Mukkam Din, Mohammad Tahir, Mohammad Bakar, Hakim Rai, and Bhai Gurbaksh Singh. It was addressed to Ranjit Singh, requesting him to free them from the Bhangi sardars. They begged Singh to liberate Lahore as soon as possible. He mobilised an Army of 25,000 and marched towards Lahore on 6 July 1799.

Ranjit Singh entered the city with his troops through the Lahori Gate. Sada Kaur and a detachment of cavalry entered through Delhi gate. Before the Bhangi sardars realised it, a part of the citadel had been occupied without resistance. Sahib Singh and Mohar Singh left the city and sought protection. Chet Singh was left to either to fight to defend the town or flee. He shut himself in Hazuri Bagh with 500 men. Ranjit Singh's cavalry surrounded Hazuri Bagh. Chet Singh surrendered and was given permission to leave the city along with his family.

Ranjit Singh ultimately acquired a kingdom in the Punjab which stretched from the Sutlej River in the east to Peshawar in the west, and from the junction of the Sutlej and the Indus in the south to Ladakh in the north. In 1825 Kulehar State was annexed by Punjab.^[81] Ranjit died in 1839, and a succession struggle ensued. Two of his successor maharajas were assassinated by 1843.

British Raj

The entire Punjab region was occupied by the British East India Company, then the British Empire, by 1845 the British had moved 32,000 troops to the Sutlej frontier, to secure their northernmost possessions against the succession struggles in the Punjab. In late 1845, British and Sikh troops engaged near Ferozepur, beginning the First Anglo-Sikh War. The war ended the following year, and the territory between the Sutlej and the Beas was ceded to Great Britain, along with Kashmir, which was sold to Gulab Singh of Jammu, who ruled Kashmir as a British vassal. As a condition of the peace treaty, some British troops, along with a resident political agent and other officials, were left in the Punjab to oversee the regency of Maharaja Dhalip Singh, a minor. The Sikh army was reduced greatly in size. In 1848, out-of-work Sikh troops in Multan revolted, and a British official was killed. Within a few

months, the unrest had spread throughout the Punjab, and British troops once again invaded. The British prevailed in the Second Anglo-Sikh War, and under the Treaty of Lahore in 1849, the Punjab was annexed by the British East India Company, and Dhalip Singh was pensioned off. The Punjab became a province of British India, although a number of small states, most notably Patiala, retained local rulers who recognised British sovereignty.

In every way, the Punjab was one of Great Britain's most important assets in colonial India. Its political and geographic predominance gave Britain a base from which to project its power over more than 500 princely states that made up India. Lahore was a centre of learning and culture under British rule, and Rawalpindi became an important Army installation. The Jallianwala Bagh Massacre of 1919 occurred in Amritsar. In 1930, the Indian National Congress proclaimed independence from Lahore. The 1940 Lahore Resolution of the Muslim League to work for Pakistan, made Punjab the centre-stage of a different, bloodier and dirtier struggle. In 1946, massive communal tensions and violence erupted between the majority Muslims of Punjab, and the Hindu and Sikh minorities. The Muslim League attacked the government of Unionist Punjabi Muslims, Sikh Akalis and the Congress, and led to its downfall. Unwilling to be cowed down, Sikhs and Hindus counter-attacked and the resulting bloodshed left the province in great disorder. Both Congress and League leaders agreed to partition Punjab upon religious lines, a precursor to the wider partition of the country. The British Punjab province, which includes present-day Punjab province of Pakistan, and the Indian states of Punjab, was partitioned in 1947 prior to the independence of Pakistan and subsequently, India. In India, the Panjab province was further partitioned into and forming Haryana, and Himachal Pradesh.

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