

CHAPTER XII.

HISTORY.

The area covered by the present district of Muzaffarpur at first inhabited mostly by non-Aryan or mixed races, was occupied by the Aryans towards the end of the early Vedic age. If Jain tradition is to be relied on, it formed part of the kingdom of Videha, the city of Vaisali being its capital.¹ But this is contradicted by the Puranas as well as the Balakanda of the Ramayana, both of which mention Vaisali as a separate kingdom. Raja Vaisala, the founder of the kingdom of Vaisali has been represented to be a son of Ikshvaku in the Ramayana; but the Puranas describe him as a son of Nabhaga. According to the Puranas, Sumati, who was a contemporary of Raja Dasaratha of Ayodhya, was tenth in descent from Vaisala. The Vishnupurana contains a list of thirty-four kings of Vaisali, showing that monarchy had a long history in this area. The Ramayana tells us that when Rama and his brother Lakshmana, accompanied by the sage Visvamitra, crossed the Ganga and reached its northern bank on their way to Mithila, they had a view of the city of Vaisali.² According to Visvamitra, all the kings of Vaisali had been long-lived, high-souled, possessed of strength and power, and highly virtuous.³ The present village Basarh in Muzaffarpur district has been identified by Cunningham with the spot where stood the ancient capital of Vaisali. There is no doubt that the whole of the district was included in that kingdom.

REPUBLIC OF VAISALI.

As to how and when exactly the monarchical rule in Vaisali was replaced by an oligarchical republic nothing definitely can be said. In the Jain *Bhagavati Sutra* as well as the Buddhist *Anguttara Nikaya*, the name of the Vriji republic appears in the list of sixteen *mahajanapadas* which shows that the event must have occurred pretty long before 600 B. C. Bimbisara, the famous king of Magadha, who was a contemporary of the Buddha, is said to have married a Lichchhavi princess of Vaisali. The matrimonial alliance with the Lichchhavis must have strengthened his position. In fact the Lichchhavis formed the most important of the eight confederate clans included in the Vriji republic. Vaisali, the capital of the confederacy, was then at the height of its prosperity, and its citizens numbered 1,68,000. The Buddhist work *Mahavagga* describes it as containing "7707 storeyed buildings, 7707 pinnacled buildings, 7707 Aramas and 7707 lotus-ponds". with its rajas or chiefs also numbering 7707.⁴

It is mentioned in a Jataka passage that of the kings who were permanently residing and ruling in Vaisali, the number was seven thousand seven hundred and seven. The number of *uparajans* was the same, as also the number of *senapatis* and treasurers. The passage should not be interpreted literally; and the number 7,707 should be taken to mean that power was vested in a very large body of men. It

is not likely, however, that every member of the Great Assembly attended its meetings. In actual practice the voice of the elders seems to have prevailed.⁵ The Buddha had a high opinion of the constitution of the Lichchhavis; and had declared that the Lichchhavi state could not succumb so long as the members of their assembly met in concord, and acted in accordance with the ancient institutions of Vaisali, so long as they honoured their elders and hearkened to their words. The system of voting was prevalent amongst the Lichchhavis, but matters were not usually pressed to a voting.

VAISALI IN JAIN AND BUDDHIST LITERATURE.

Vaisali figures prominently both in Jain and Buddhist literatures. The Jains, both Svetambaras and Digambaras, state that Vardhamana Mahavira was the son of one Siddhartha of Kundapura or Kundagrama, a suburb of Vaisali.⁶ In a Jain sutra Mahavira has been described as a Vaisalika, meaning a native of Vaisali. It is said that Siddhartha's wife Trisula was sister to Chetaka of Vaisali.⁷ It is no wonder, therefore, that Vaisali long continued to be a great stronghold of Jainism, and is frequently referred to in Jain scriptures. Mahavira's mother Trisula is described as a princess of Videha, and is said to have been related to Bimbisara, king of Magadha. The first visit of Gautama Buddha to Vaisali was in answer to an invitation of its inhabitants, who had sent a deputation to him imploring him to deliver them from a frightful pestilence which was desolating their country. The Buddha responded to the call, and coming to Vaisali drove away the plague, and made numerous converts. In the Mahavagga of the Buddhists we read that the Buddha, while sojourning at Kotigrama, gave an audience to the courtesan Ambapali, a woman of uncommon beauty, and also to the Lichchhavis of Vaisali. It is very probably that Kotigrama of the Buddhists is identical with Kundagrama of the Jains. During the fifth year of his ministry the Buddha re-visited Vaisali, living in the Kutagara or two-storeyed hall of Mahavana, a great forest stretching to the north of Vaisali. It was here that he established the Buddhist order of nuns, reluctantly yielding to the request of his widowed foster mother Gautami that women might be admitted to the congregation at the intercession of his favourite disciple Ananda. To Vaisali again he returned on his journey to Kusinara shortly before his death and stayed in the mango-grove of Ambapali, teaching and exhorting his disciples and expounding the law to Ananda.

ANNEXATION OF VAISALI TO MAGADHA.

Vaisali's fortunes were affected by the growth of Pataliputra beyond the Ganga. The importance of Vaisali though reduced appears to have been an eye-sore to the Magadha kings.

Ajatasatru, the son and successor of Bimbisara, was determined to annex Vaisali to the kingdom of Magadha. He is said to have obtained the Buddha's view. Although the Buddha did not give his consent to Ajatasatru's plan of conquest nothing could deter the Magadhan King

from his purpose. "I will root out these Vajjians", he said, "I will destroy these Vajjians. I will bring these Vajjians to utter ruin." In order to give effect to his desire Ajatasatru made great preparations for war against the Lichchhavis. He built a fort at Pataligrama and used *mahasilakantakas* (engines of destruction to hurl stones on the enemy) in the war.⁸ Ajatasatru was successful in humbling the pride of the Lichchhavis. But though they might have been forced to acknowledge the suzerainty of Magadha, the republic does not appear to have been completely obliterated. In fact, Vaisali continued to be the centre of the political as well as religious life north of the Ganga. It contained a stupa erected by the Lichchhavis over some of the relics of the Buddha's body, and another enshrining some of the remains of his great disciple Ananda. It was crowded with Buddhist monasteries, and according to the account left by Hiuen Tsang several centuries later, both within and without the city all round it, the sacred places were so numerous that it would be difficult to recount them all. The second Great Buddhist Council was held at Vaisali in the reign of Kakavarni Kalasoka, a descendant of Sisunaga, who ruled in Magadha after the fall of the Bimbisarian dynasty. The Buddhist community was split up into two contending parties, the Theravadins and Mahasanghikas. A council of 700 monks was constituted under the Theravadins which compiled the teachings of the Great Master into a Tripitaka.

VAISALI DURING MAURYA AND SUBSEQUENT TIMES.

Vaisali must have formed part of the Maurya Empire at least down to the end of Asoka's reign. The city, lying as it did on the royal road from Pataliputra to Nepal, was visited by Asoka, who enriched it by a stupa and a lion-pillar. We know nothing of its history during the next few centuries, with the exception of a traditional raid by Kanishka, the Kushana king, who carried off to Gandhara the famous alms-bowl of the Buddha.⁹ At the beginning of the fourth century A. D. Chandra Gupta I, who established a kingdom in Magadha, married the Lichchhavi princess Kumara Devi, and his son Samudra Gupta in his Allahabad Inscription takes pride in calling himself *Lichchhavi-dauhitra* (son of the daughter of the Lichchhavis). In the reign of Samudra Gupta's son Chandra Gupta II Vaisali was visited by the Chinese pilgrim Fa-Hien. It was not, however, until the visit of Hiuen Tsang about 635 A. D. that we find a detailed account of the country. He describes the State of Vaisali as about 1,000 miles in circuit. The soil was rich and fertile; and flowers and fruits were produced in abundance, the mango and the plantain being essentially plentiful. The climate was agreeable and temperate, the manners of the people were pure and honest; and they loved religion and highly esteemed learning. Hiuen Tsang's account of Vaisali also shows that Buddhism was on the decline even in that part of the country. The Jains were numerous, as might be expected in the birth-place of their religion. The old city of Vaisali was 60 or 70 li in circuit,¹⁰ but it was

to a great extent in ruins. "At every step", Hiuen Tsang, writes "commanding sites and old foundations are seen, which the succession of seasons and lapse of years have entirely destroyed."

UNDER PALA AND SENA DYNASTIES.

From the time of Hiuen Tsang there is practically no historical information regarding North Bihar until the ascendancy of the Pala dynasty. At the time of Hiuen Tsang's visit Muzaffarpur must have formed part of the dominions of Harsha of Kanyakubja who possessed full sovereign power over Bihar, Northern and Central Bengal. But after his death in or about 647 A. D. the local rajas asserted their independence, and Tirhut was probably under the rule of petty potentates. Late in the eighth century, Gopala, the founder of the Pala dynasty, became ruler of Bengal, and subsequently extended his sway westward over Bihar. In the eleventh century, Tirhut was wrested from the Palas by the ambitious kings of Chedi, and in 1019 A. D., it acknowledged the sovereignty of Gangeyadeva,¹¹ who aimed at attaining paramount power in Northern India. The end of that century witnessed the rise of the power of the Sena Kings, who not only wrested from the Palas their eastern provinces but also appear to have carried their arms north-westwards. Practically the whole of Tirhut including Mithila formed part of the kingdom of the Senas: and their rule in this part of Bihar is commemorated by the use of the Lakshmana Sena era, the first current year of which was apparently the eighth year of the accession of Lakshmana Sena, the last great king of the Sena dynasty.¹²

MUSLIM INVASION.

At the close of the twelfth century, or the beginning of the thirteenth, the tide of Muslim conquest swept over Bihar, but it does not appear to have reached far north of the Ganga. Indeed it was not until the time of Ghyasuddin Ilias, the Mohammadan Governor of Bengal between 1211 and 1226, that we learn that he carried the banner of Islam into the territories of the Raja of Tirhut, which had never before been subdued by the Muslims, and compelled him to pay tribute. This appears, however, to have been rather a successful invasion than an effectual conquest of the country. For a local dynasty of Hindu kings was established about this time at Simraon in the north-east corner of the Champaran district, and these kings succeeded in maintaining their rule over Tirhut for over a century, until the invasion of Ghayasuddin Tughluq in 1323 finally put an end to their independence.

Of the earlier kings of the Simraon dynasty we have only traditional accounts.¹³ Its founder was one Nana or Nanyupa Deva, who is said to have established himself at Simraon, and to have eventually subdued the whole of Mithila and to have overcome the king of Nepal. Tradition relates that one of his sons reigned in Nepal, and the other, Ganga Deva, in Mithila. There he is credited with having introduced the system of fiscal divisions or parganas for the purposes of revenue

administration, while a chaudhuri or headman was appointed in each pargana to collect the revenue, and panchayat was chosen to settle all disputes. Ganga Deva was succeeded by Narasingha Deva. His son and successor Rama Singha Deva was a pious devotee and a firm patron of sacred literature. Under his auspices several well-known commentaries on the Vedas were compiled.* Various reforms of internal administration are attributed to this king. In every village, a police officer was appointed whose duty it was to make a daily report of all occurrences worthy of note to the chaudhuri or revenue-collector of the pargana. The rise of the system of *patwaris* or village accountants in North Bihar is ascribed to this period.

On the death of Rama Singha Deva, his son Sakti Singha ascended the throne; but his despotism appears to have offended the nobles, and one of his ministers established a council of seven elders as a check upon the autocratic power of the king. His son Hara Singha Deva, the last of the line, is said to have prepared records of the caste subdivisions of the Brahmanas and Karna Kayasthas within his dominions. In 1323 A. D. the Emperor Ghyasuddin Tughluq led his victorious forces into Tirhut on his march back from Bengal. The fort of Hara Singha was taken and he fled northwards into the valley of Nepal, where he is said to have reigned for the rest of his life.

SUGAONA DYNASTY.

With the flight of Hara Singha, Tirhut became a dependency of the Empire of Delhi. The Sultan placed it under Kameshwar Thakur, the founder of the Sugaona or Thakur dynasty, which continued to rule over Tirhut till early in the sixteenth century.¹⁴ According to some authorities, Kameshwar was deposed in favour of his son Bhogishwara by Firuz Shah Tughluq. Perhaps the most famous prince of the Sugaona dynasty was Kirti Singha, who has been praised by the poet Vidyapati in his *Kirtilata*. It appears from this prose-work of Vidyapati that Muslim influence was well-established in Tirhut at this time. None the less, the chiefs of the Sugaona dynasty continued to rule, paying only a nominal tribute to the Delhi emperor. Raja Siva Singha was another illustrious ruler of this dynasty. Vidyapati, the immortal poet of Mithila has praised him and his queen Lakhima Devi in a large number of songs. Indeed the rulers of this dynasty were great patrons of learning and literature. Four of the most eminent writers of Tirhut, Jagaddhara, Vidyapati, Sankara and Vachaspati Misra, flourished during the rule of this dynasty.¹⁵

MUSLIM INFLUENCE.

Mohammadan supremacy was far more pronounced in the southern part of Tirhut than in the north. It appears that the Muslim armies generally marched in the northern part of Tirhut and other districts of North Bihar to take advantage of the fordability given and left behind a number of Muslim villages on the northern border. Hajipur, situated at the confluence of the Gandak and the Ganges, was a place

of great strategical importance. It was long the headquarters of the Governors of the rulers of Bengal and was the scene of more than one rebellion. In its neighbourhood Muslim influence was maintained through war. The town was an ancient urban site and came to be named after Haji Ilyas, king of Bengal (1345—58), who invaded and ravaged Tirhut, the frontier between the Bengal Kingdom and the Delhi Empire, and apparently built a fortress to consolidate his conquest. To punish him and his growing powers Firuz Tughluq invaded Tirhut in 1353 following hard after Haji Ilyas, who retreated to Pandua. The expedition was short and decisive, and after the entire defeat of Haji Ilyas, the Emperor returned to Delhi, appointing collectors to uphold his authority in Tirhut.

Shortly after this, Tirhut appears to have been annexed by the Sharqi kings of Jaunpur, and remained subject to them for about 100 years. They were then deprived of this outlying portion of their dominion by the Emperor Sikandar Lodi, who conquered Jaunpur and then in 1499 advanced against Hussain Shah, the independent king of Bengal. A treaty was concluded at Barh in which it was agreed that the Emperor should retain Bihar, Tirhut and Saran on condition that he should not invade Bengal, and Sikandar Lodi then swept down upon Tirhut. Unable to face the imperial forces, the Raja of Tirhut advanced to meet him, and was allowed to make terms on payment of a fine amounting to several lacs of rupees.¹⁶ The treaty between the Emperor and the Bengal King was not observed for a long time. For in the early part of the sixteenth century, Hussain Shah's son and successor Nusrat Shah invaded Tirhut, put its Raja to death and appointed his son-in-law Alauddin to be its governor.¹⁷ He then marched against Hajipur, and having subdued the neighbouring tract, placed it in charge of another son-in-law named Mukhdum Alam. Shortly afterwards, in 1538, the latter rose in revolt against his brother-in-law Mahmud Shah and made common cause with Sher Khan, who was at this time beginning to strive for the throne of Delhi, which he finally won.¹⁸

MUGHAL PERIOD.

Mahmud Shah was the last independent king of Bengal, and after his fall Tirhut again formed a part of the Delhi Empire. But the allegiance of its chieftains was very loose and they were practically independent. Babar, who won the throne of Delhi in 1526 after defeating Ibrahim Lodi at the Battle of Panipat, makes a mention of Tirhut in his Memoirs. Raja Rup Narain of Tirhut paid a tribute of about 5,25,000 silver *tankas* to the imperial exchequer.¹⁹ In the reign of Akbar, Daud Khan, the Governor of Bengal, raised the standard of rebellion against the empire; and many of the Afghans who had settled down in North Bihar rallied round his banner. Akbar sent Khan-i-Khanan to crush the rebel and directed the Mughal chiefs and those Afghan chiefs of the neighbourhood, who were loyal to the empire, to assist him. Finally, Akbar himself marched to the south to assert his

rights, Daud Khan holding out against him in Patna. A picked force of 3,000 men was sent to attack the fort, the assault being delivered under the supervision of Akbar himself. The imperial troops were repulsed time after time, and it was not until large re-inforcements were sent up that the fort was taken by storm. The commandant together with the greater part of the garrison was slain; and their heads were sent to Daud Khan to show the fate which awaited him. With the fall of Patna, shortly afterwards, Bihar was lost to Daud Khan. It was placed under a separate Moghal Governor and Tirhut was included in the *sobah* thus formed. Those chieftains who had assisted in maintaining the imperial authority were granted lands in the Hajipur Sarkar, where they settled with their followers. Subsequently in 1579, when they revolted, Azam Khan, the successor of Akbar's great finance Minister Todar Mal, bought them off by confirming them in possession of the lands they had already held and by granting them fresh lands. In this way a large number of petty Muslim chiefs with their followers were permanently settled to the south of Muzaffarpur.

Hajipur, however, lost its former importance with the transfer of the headquarters to Patna. Tirhut, deprived of its separate governor, no longer comes into prominence during the Mughal period; and its history for the next two centuries or so is merged in that of the province of which it formed part. During the reign of Aurangzeb, Sarkar Tirhut with Darbhanga as the Headquarters formed the biggest Sarkar in Bihar, containing 102 mahals, while Sarkar Hajipur consisted of 11 mahals in all.²⁰

EARLY BRITISH PERIOD.

With the British victory at Buxar in 1764 Tirhut passed with the rest of Bihar under British rule. From then on the history of the district was confined to the establishment of order and settled government, the growth of cultivation and commerce, and the general advance of civilization. During the early days of British administration a great part of the territory was in an acute state of lawlessness. The trade routes were infested by robbers, who preyed on the surrounding tenantry; crimes went unpunished, and even high officials were molested. The correspondence in the first twenty years of British rule presents an extremely unhappy picture of the internal state of the country, the trade-routes blocked by gangs of free-booting zamindars, large stretches of land lying waste owing to their depredations, the revenue officers in league with and sharing the booty of these outlaws, blackmail extorted from the servants of the local officers and the attempts to apprehend arch-criminals set at naught. To the south it was reported that the zamindars had assumed authority in defiance of law and order and that the situation of their estates among the jungles and on the banks of the Baghmati enabled them to keep forces which no person in those parts could repel and that they managed to maintain them by means of depredations on both sides of the river. In the north matters were no better. The zamindars on the borders of Nepal,

secure in their jungle fastnesses, mocked at the authorities: About them the Judge wrote in 1781 that they were all to a man tyrants, and that many of them had been in a state of warfare with Government. Many of the peasants unable to bear the constant oppression of these petty tyrants abandoned their houses and lands and fled to Nepal, so that "in every village there were several empty houses, and many villages were quite waste."

The soil of Tirhut was indeed very fertile and rivers were abundant. Yet the district suffered from some serious handicaps during the early period of British administration. In 1790 the Collector wrote: "I cannot forbear, now that I am writing of Tirhoot, to remark that whilst many indulge their fancy in expatiating on the natural advantages of this district, the richness of its soil and its multifarious streams, not a single individual stops to reflect that along their solitary banks scarce a hamlet is to be seen, and for miles and miles not a human foot-step to be traced—*golas*, *gaunges*, *bazars*, *beoparies*, manufacturers, inland traders and the foreign purchasers (without which rivers flow to no purpose and the earth's productive to no end) exist only in imagination. From one town to another even the high roads (on which the traveller and the merchants used formerly to pursue their journey in safety and in ease) are in some parts choked up with weeds and grass and in others are excavated by the periodical rains."²¹ The abundance of rivers, while it certainly favoured agriculture, was often a cause of sorrow to the inhabitants of Tirhut. The district had frequently, as now, to experience floods, which sometimes were devastating in their effects. In 1795 the Collector reported that almost every part of it had been "inundated in a manner never known before."²²

In the correspondence of the closing years of the eighteenth century and the early years of the nineteenth, we frequently come across references to indigo manufacture in Tirhut. The district owed the introduction of proper manufacture of indigo to its first official collector, Francois Grand, who at his own initiative, established three factories between 1782 and 1785. It may be mentioned that prior to Francois Grand being designated as the Collector near about 1781 there was a European Officer by the designation of Supervisor for Tirhut appointed in 1769. This post was converted to the post of a Collector with Grand as the first incumbent.

By the end of the century the indigo industry was well-established with considerable capital invested in it by European planters. According to a statement of 1802, there were then in Tirhut 13 planters,* of whom 1 was Indian, 4 Englishmen, 1 Scotch, 4 Irishmen, 1 German and 2 Italians.²³ There were 16 indigo factories at the time, but the number rose to 25 by 1810. Dwelling on the benefits of indigo manufacture the Collector wrote in that year that not less than thirty to fifty thousand persons received their principal support from indigo factories in the district. According to his estimate, "a sum possibly not less than 6 or 7 lacs of rupees is annually circulated in Zillah Tirhoot by a few enterprising European indigo planters, and that too, to people who

are most in want of such constant and certain aid, cultivators, day labourers and their families." 24

A study of the old correspondence, preserved in the Revenue Record Room of Muzaffarpur gives a good cross section of the main trends of the administration during that period. The background was that a body of traders known as the United Company of Merchants of England trading in the East Indies with headquarters at the Presidency of Fort William had come into the administration of the country through the channel of trade. But the main idea behind the administration was to collect the revenue and to encourage trade for and on behalf of the Company. There was no hesitation to put the defaulter of rent to prison or to torture him so that his people would come forward and make up the arrears.

The Governor-General and the members of his Council and under them the Board of Revenue, consisting of a President and a few members controlled the Collectors who were in charge of the actual administration of the districts. The old correspondence shows an overcentralised administration with the Collector at the district headquarters who knew that he was not trusted and in many cases wanted to make as much as he could for himself without, however, seriously jeopardizing the interests of the Company. Frequent warnings used to be issued, and the Collectors were severely reprimanded or punished for their lapses. Francois Grand, the first Collector designated as such was once fined one month's pay for not sending the treasury account to the Accountant-General in time. The order of this punishment was sent on 22nd May 1782. Grand satisfactorily explained his position, and Sir John Shore in a letter on 22nd August 1782 communicated that the fine was remitted. In another letter, dated the 31st July, 1783, the Board communicated to Grand a warning against the Company's servants forcibly occupying grounds which were not their property and erecting buildings on them and then applying for sanction. From the old records it is found that the Company's servants, taking advantage of their position, were having their own private trade. Francois Grand, was running several indigo concerns of his own, which eventually led to his dismissal from the Company's service. He, however, should be remembered for being the first man to introduce the western method for manufacturing indigo dye.

Another Collector, Bathurst, also came to grief because of his private dealings. Lord Cornwallis, however, prescribed a form of oath for the Company's covenanted servants; and a part of the oath ran as follows :—

“ I will not demand, take or employ directly or indirectly by myself or by any other person for my use or on my behalf or from any Raja, Zamindar, Talukdar, Polygar, Rector, Ryat, or other person paying or liable to pay any tribute, rent or tax for the use of the said United Company in sum of money, or other valuable thing by way of gift and

presents or otherwise for and on behalf of or besides and accept actual tribute, rent or tax authorised to be taken by and for the use of the said United Company and that I will justly and truly account and answer to the said United Company."

The Governor-General in Council was taking a serious view of the lapses on the part of the Company's servants which often occurred. Sweedland, the Collector of Tirhut was in 1796 detected by the Military Auditor-General as having wasted a lot of Government money over the payment of full salaries to persons in the Company's employment who had been invalidated. There was an Invalid Establishment at Bhagalpur; and Collector Sweedland who had paid full pay to some persons of Sarkar Tirhut sent to the Invalid Establishment at Bhagalpur, had to make good the loss personally. Another charge against Sweedland was that these invalids had been promised lands in Tirhut, but they had never been put in possession of these.

Another instance of the Revenue Board's anxiety to check corruption is seen in a letter dated the 11th October, 1799, to Sweedland. This letter shows that the Board had found the charge of misappropriation against the late Collector of Burdwan substantiated. Evidently, there was misappropriation of an amount of the Establishment, and a warning was circularised to all Collectors including Sweedland that they were not to make "any alterations in the distribution of their Establishments under any pretext whatsoever, and that any actual misappropriation (of the amount) which can be viewed in no other light as embezzlement of their public money will be considered not only as a ground for the immediate dismissal from his office, but as subjecting them to that penalty to which they may come liable in consequence of public trust."

TRADE WITH NEPAL.

During those early days of the Company's administration, Tirhut had a brisk trade with Nepal. This trade was actively encouraged by the Company's Government. In a letter dated the 2nd February, 1792, the Collector of Tirhut gave a list of articles exported to and imported from Nepal. The letter is as follows:—

"Enclosed you will receive the current exports and imports required by your letter of the 17th last. Though the articles are numerous the trade is very condigned and is likely to continue so, unless the Nepal Government can be prevailed upon to afford the protection to the trader and to reduce and fix the Duties which are at present arbitrary and exorbitant."

The exports to Nepal were salt, white woollen cloth, muslin, Malda cloth, English red cloth, Hindustani shoes, muskets, nutmegs, cloves, pepper, betel-nut, cocoanut, all sorts of pulses and opium.

The imports from Nepal were gold dust, crude borax, ivory, wax, cow's tails, lead, iron, copper, Cochin cloth, phints, cinnamon, honey, silajeet and tin.

BONA FIDE BUSINESS IN OPIUM AND INDIGO.

A certain amount of encouragement was given by the Government for the manufacture of indigo. Since 1761 opium manufacture and trade had been a Government monopoly. Regular advances used to be given to the recognised opium ryats under the control of the Government. The Collectors were warned to keep an eye on contraband business in opium.

STATISTICS.

The need for statistics for running the administration appears to have been early realised. The proposals of the Collectors for taxation used to be accompanied with some sort of statistics.

A letter from Tirhut Magistracy on the 17th October, 1791 to the Secretary to the Board of Revenue is as follows:—

"I have the pleasure of transmitting you an abstract of an estimate of the population of the *Lakhrage* land in this Collectorship of Tirhut..... men 2,20,351 women 1,12,250.....children 1,75,400 total 6,08,901."

FAMINE DUE TO RAINS.

Scarcity or excess of rains leading to famine or conditions preceding a famine were not unknown in 1791. The extracts from the following letter written from the Tirhut Magistracy on the 27th October, 1791 to William Cowper, President of the Board of Revenue will show:—

"In the month of Jaite 1198 when the cultivation of the current fusli year commenced, such quantity of rain fell, that numberless land which had been sown and the crop already above grounds were inundated and the promised harvest destroyed. Immediately on the waters drying up lands were sown afresh, and from the month of Assar to the middle of Bhadon there was no scarcity of seasonable showers; but from that period to the end of Assin which is a season for rice crop and the fusli harvest there was not a single shower except on a very few partial spot....., one month of moderate expectancy still remains for the cultivation of Rabbi and should there be a rain much Rabbi cultivation may be still carried on enough to diminish the general despondency and avert many of the Malguzars of that ruin that seems inevitable."

NEPALESE INCURSIONS.

The difficulties of administration in Trihut were further increased by external trouble owing to the incursions of the Gurkhas. Attempts to induce them to aid British officers in the suppression of frontier dacoities were fruitless; and all remonstrances against their aggressions were disregarded. The Collector reported that between 1787 and 1813

upwards of 200 villages had been seized by the Gurkhas upon one or other unjustifiable pretext. In 1815 he was again obliged to report that the zamindars complained that in consequence of the incursions of the Nepalese, who had come down and burnt their villages and plundered their property, their ryots had in many instances failed to pay their rent. When the Nepal War at last broke out, a large body of troops had to be posted at Majorganj near Mahlai; and a few miles to the north across the frontier, one of the few successful British actions in this part of the country was fought. Here close on the frontier, a Gurkha outpost had been established under Parasram Thapa; and Major Bradshaw, who was in command of the English forces, determined to attack it, preparatory to occupying the whole Tarai. Early in the morning of the 25th November, 1814, he surprised and carried the post, killing the Gurkha commander and capturing a Gurkha envoy. The Tarai was immediately evacuated by the Gurkhas and occupied by the British, Captain Blackney being posted at Samarpur to the north of the district on the extreme right of the line, where he was left with a small force without any support. Here he was taken completely by surprise at day-break on the 1st January, 1815; the camp was rushed, the tents fired, the sepoy broke and ran in the utmost confusion, and Captain Blackney himself was killed. Peace was, however, established with Nepal by the Treaty of Sigauli in 1816. In the records of the period there are references to money being sent from the Muzaffarpur treasury for the expenses of troops engaged in the Nepal war.²⁵

EXTENSION OF PERMANENT SETTLEMENT.

During the forty years following the Nepal war, nothing particularly interesting happened in the history of the district. The bulk of the correspondence of the period deals with the land revenue administration and the measures taken by the Company's Government to extend the benefits of the Permanent Settlement to the district, an account of which will be given in a separate chapter.²⁶ The records show that there were, in Tirhut, numerous revenue-free jagirs and other classes of lands, most of which dated from Mughal times. During the thirty years from 1819, the Company's revenue officers spared no pains to resume revenue-free tenures on the ground of lapse on the death of the holders, or on suspicion that many of the grants were not genuine, thereby causing great distress to numbers of people. Great difficulties had to be experienced by the revenue officers in prevailing upon the zamindars to accept the Permanent Settlement, and instances of estates being held under *Khas* management were particularly numerous. The zamindars in general were rather litigious in character and frequently declined settlements with the Government. It took decades before the bulk of the estates in the district could be properly and permanently settled.

MOVEMENT OF 1857-58.

The movement of 1857-58 had its repercussions in Muzaffarpur. Even before the outbreak of 1857, there was considerable dissatisfaction

with the existing state of affairs, as is shown by the rising of the prisoners in Muzaffarpur Jail during 1855-56, when, in accordance with a general circular, an attempt was made to deprive the prisoners of their *lotas*²⁷ and to substitute earthenware vessels in their place.²⁸ Owing to the fact that the brass vessel might be used for purposes other than holding of water, e.g., in braining a magistrate or flattening the face of a gaoler, necessary instructions were issued for taking it away.²⁹ In Muzaffarpur, there was a great outburst of popular indignation, and it was described by the Magistrate as "a furious and altogether unexpected attack on the part of the people of the town and district in support and sympathy with the prisoners."³⁰ It was mentioned in his report that the rioters "included almost all the inhabitants of the town, as well as a vast number of ryots, who declared that they would not go away until the *lotas* were restored."³¹ So great was the danger "of prisoners escaping, of their plundering the Treasury and pillaging the town, before the troops which had been sent for could be brought up, that the civil authorities deemed it expedient to pacify the insurgents, by restoring the *lotas* to the people in the gaols."³²

The political upheaval of 1857 caused considerable uneasiness among the European planters and residents in Tirhut, and "there was a loud outcry for protection among the European community throughout the district, who believed that Najibs were not to be trusted and that the Mohomedans at best would rise." A large number of indigo planters from the interior rushed to Muzaffarpur for safety, as the idea was gaining prominence "that a rising of troops at Dinapore might be expected and that such rising would be accompanied by rising in this and other districts." On the 23rd June, Warris Ali, a police jamadar of Tirhut, who claimed connection with the Delhi Royal family, was arrested. He was found with a bundle of papers and letters which implicated one Ali Karim of Patna district. The jamadar was sent to Major Holmes for being hanged, but the latter sent him to Dinapore to take his trial in the Commissioner's court; and he was hanged on the 6th July. By the first week of July steps were taken by the Company's Government to "seize mutineers and deserters who were to be found in Tirhut." Orders were issued for effectively guarding the *ghats* on the Gandak and the Ganga. The landholders were instructed to give information concerning the sepoys and to detain them in their estates, and the European planters were to help them in their work. At the same time promise of rewards was made for the arrest of 'deserters', 'mutineers' and 'seditious persons'.³³

Meanwhile the news of the outbreak in the army at Dinapore and Sagauli and the revolt of Kuar Singh of Jagdishpur caused great excitement and called for protection of the immediate neighbourhood. In September and the following months a large number of persons were committed to the sessions courts on various charges, such as dacoity, plunder, use of seditious expressions, violence, etc. Punishments of a very severe type were inflicted in these cases.³⁴ The European community with the treasure were earlier withdrawn to Patna by

William Tayler, Commissioner of Patna Division having jurisdiction over the Tirhut area.

In the second week of September there was an apprehension of an attack from Gorakhpur side. Accordingly a house was fortified at Muzaffarpur to which Europeans could resort "in case of an unexpected attack." Stringent measures were taken by Government for the apprehension of the rebels. Meanwhile many of the rebels had moved towards the Nepal Terrai, and it was feared that they might descend on Tirhut. On the 25th December a parwana was sent to the Commander of Yeomanry Cavalry, "addressed by the Maharaja Jung Bahadur (of Nepal) to all his soobahs and subordinates in the Terrai directing them to give every facility and assistance", to the troops, which "may cross into the Nepal territory in pursuit of the mutineers." In January, 1858, a joint attempt was made by Richardson, George Yule and Ratan Man Singh, the Nepalese general, to capture the rebels near Chatra in the Terrai; but they were unsuccessful. In April 1858, there was again a fear among the Englishmen that bands of rebels were coming towards Tirhut from Azamgarh side. The Government authorities betrayed serious fear and nervousness on the occasion; and all possible precautionary measures were taken to guard against the danger. The danger from the Gandak side was, however, averted by July, 1858, but in August intelligence was received that a body of sepoys "600 or 1,000 were coming down the stream with the intention of landing in Chapra." Accordingly the Muzaffarpur Collectorate was again put in a state of defence. The defensive preparations were, however, never called into use, and Muzaffarpur remained on the whole undisturbed. No doubt the possibility of rebels entering was feared as late as April, 1859. But the Magistrate finally wrote to the Commissioner of Circuit, Patna, on 19th April for his sanction to re-open the Gandak for traffic.³⁵

INDIGO MANUFACTURE.

The subsequent history of Muzaffarpur from 1858 to 1875 is interesting from the point of view of the development of the European indigo industry in the district. Mindon Wilson in his *History of Behar*, published in 1881, has mentioned the number of European indigo concerns in the district, together with a short history of their origin. There were then about two dozen indigo factories, some of which had formerly been sugar factories, but had later on taken to indigo. The more important of these factories were Daudpur, Motipur, Shahpur Patori, Belsand, Sahibganj, Kanti, Dalsing Sarai, Dholi and Pipra. Most of these had been established at the end of the eighteenth century or the beginning of the nineteenth. At Motipur the Dutch had originally established a sugar factory as early as 1789. But later on, in 1816, it became an indigo concern under Noel and Co. The Mokurrari patta of the Daudpur factory is dated 1798. The equalization of duties on East India and West India sugar by the British Parliament in 1836 had for a time given an impetus to the establishment, and extension of European sugar plantations in Tirhut.³⁶ Tirhut soil was

well-suited for sugarcane cultivation. But, sugar required much greater initial outlay than indigo. Hence its manufacture was not found so profitable as that of indigo. Accordingly, many of the planters converted their sugar factories to indigo concerns. Muzaffarpur, however, continued to be the centre of the planters' activities in North Bihar. Later on it was chosen as the headquarters station of the Bihar Planters' Association. And the European planters exercised tremendous power and influence in this part of the country down to the early years of the present century. The Bihar Light Horse, an ancillary volunteer corps consisting of the planters and Anglo-Indians, was a great factor in North Bihar.^{36A}

Tirhut was at first linked up to Bhagalpur Division. After the Santhal revolt the district of Santhal Parganas was carved out and it was felt that the Commissioner of Bhagalpur should be given lighter work and also that Tirhut needed closer control. For all this by Gazette Notification, dated the 15th October 1856, Tirhut was transferred to the Commissionership of Patna. At that time Tirhut consisted of the present Muzaffarpur and Darbhanga districts. The decision of the transfer of Tirhut from Bhagalpur Commissionership to Patna Commissionership was communicated in letter no. 731, dated the 15th October, 1856, by W. Grey, to the Officiating Secretary, Board of Revenue. The Collector of Tirhut used to address the Commissioner of Bhagalpur as his superior officer till this transfer in 1856. The records in the archives of West Bengal Government bear this out.

Muzaffarpur was separated from Darbhanga and part of the Begusarai subdivision with which it had been linked up, and constituted a separate district in 1875 under the Commissionership of Patna. Shortly thereafter, the Government's attention was drawn to the relations between the European indigo planters and the ryots in Tirhut. As early as 1867-68 there had been a strong demonstration against indigo in North Bihar, accompanied in some instances by acts of violence.³⁷ The Commissioner of Patna reported that the system of indigo cultivation then prevailing involved an amount of lawlessness and oppression, principally in the shape of exacted agreements to cultivate, and of seizure of plough and cattle, which could not be tolerated. It was with a view to initiate reform in the system of indigo cultivation that the Bihar Indigo Planters' Association was formally constituted in 1877. There is no doubt that the European planters helped a great deal in advancing the development and prosperity of Muzaffarpur and adjoining districts. But frictions between the planters and the ryots continued more or less down to the end of the nineteenth century and even afterwards.

ADMINISTRATION REPORT OF 1876-77.

Turning again to the old correspondence in the Record Room, we find that a letter dated the 29th June, 1877, from C. F. Worsley, Magistrate of Muzaffarpur, to the Commissioner of Patna Division, furnishes the Commissioner with the General Administration Report of

Muzaffarpur district for the year 1876-77. Muzaffarpur had three subdivisions, namely, Muzaffarpur, Hajipur and Sitamarhi. The district, the report mentions, "is situated between the parallels of $25^{\circ}30'$ and $26^{\circ}52\frac{1}{2}'$ north latitude and the meridians of $84^{\circ}54\frac{1}{2}'$ and $85^{\circ}57\frac{1}{2}'$ east longitude. Its greatest length from north to south is 96 miles. It contains a superficial area of 2,969 square miles, with a population of 2,188,382 souls. The population comprises 1,916,422 Hindoos, 271,445 Mussalmans, 124 Europeans and East Indians and 391 persons of other classes."

"The principal rivers in the district were Bagmuttee,* Boorgunduck and Bya. The principal roads were Hajipur *via* Muzaffarpur and Sitamarhi to Sonbursa on the frontier, and one continuous line of 92 miles in length. Next in importance come the roads which connect Muzaffarpur with Durbhanga and Motihari and Muzaffarpur with Sarun *via* Rewaghat."

"In respect of soil the district could be divided into three tracts; (1) the southern tract embracing Hajeepore subdivision and so much of Muzaffarpur subdivision as lies on the right bank of the Boorgunduck river. In this tract the land is for the most part high and slightly undulating, and the soil, which consists of rich mould and sand, produces most of the opium, indigo and tobacco grown in the district. Of the cultivated area two-fifths is rice land and three-fifths is under rubee, bhadoi, and non-edible crops; (2) the central tract, lying between the Boorgunduck and Bagmuttee rivers, where the land is low and subject to inundation. In this tract the soil consists of alluvial matter mixed with rich mould; of the cultivated area three-fifths is rice land and two-fifths is under mixed crops; (3) the northern tract between the Bagmuttee river and the frontier, where the country is low and in many places marshy. In this tract the soil consists of sand and clay with an admixture of iron. Of the cultivated area three-fifths is rice land and two-fifths is under mixed crops."

On the average the total rainfall during the year was 47.35 inches. The highest rainfall was in August, recorded 13.44 inches, while in September it was 12.59 inches.

Regarding the material condition of the people, it was observed that for the most part the condition was poor, partly by reason of over-population and consequent low wages, and partly through the prevalence of the thikadari system and the insufficient protection which the rent-law afforded to the ryots. The supply of labour* was much greater than the demand and the natural consequences of this state of things could only be mitigated by emigration on a large scale, or by temporary emigrations to thinly peopled districts at times of harvest.

The wages of field labourers remained stationary in respect of the increased facilities of travelling afforded by the Tirhut State Railway.

*The spellings of the names have been retained.

It was between 1 anna and $1\frac{1}{2}$ anna per diem, to able-bodied labourers. Emigration continued to be abnormal, and immigration was quite unknown.

The chief manufactures were indigo, saltpetre, opium and tobacco. The extent of indigo cultivation in this district was 74,719 bighas of which 43,202 bighas were cultivated as zerat, 26,901 under the asamiwar, and 4,616 under the khusgi systems. Besides indigo, the manufacture of saltpetre was important in the district, and it had increased during the last two years. Saltpetre business was very profitable to the refiners, but not so to the Noonahs or manufactures of the crude article. Crop cultivation was very popular. Some tobacco was grown in each of three subdivisions.

There was a movement known as Moonshree Pearee Lall's Movement for reducing marriage expenditure particularly amongst the Kayasths.

The report dealt on the good effects of the division of Tirhut in January, 1875, which made possible increased supervision and intimate knowledge on the part of the district officers, and materially strengthened the general administration.

CRIMES AND JUSTICE.

There was a great expansion of the police outpost system in controlling crimes. The prevailing crimes in the district were thefts and burglaries. There was a continued reduction of burglaries. The bad characters of the district were kept under strong control. Civil justice was administered by the Civil Judges. The Judges were highly respected for their abilities and were assisted by pleaders.

The relations between the landlords and tenants were, by no means, cordial especially so far as indigo cultivation was concerned. Indigo was grown under either zerat or asami-war khusgi. Under the zerat system the planter used to take a terminable lease of proprietary rights and employ the powers hired from the zamindar for the purpose of confiscating ryots' tenures and converting them into zerat lands. Under the asami-war system, which was an offshoot of the zerat system, the ryots of an estate which had been leased to a factory, in whole or part, were required to execute agreements for the cultivation of indigo throughout three-twentieths of their lands in terms of lease. The khusgi system was the voluntary cultivation of indigo by ryots in villages over which the planter did not exercise proprietary authority.

The report mentions that the indigo cultivators had quiet behaviour. Stringent were the terms of the contract under which a ryot was bound by one of the best factories of the district to cultivate indigo.

Meanwhile, the introduction of the German synthetic dye into the market at the end of the century led to an unusual drop in indigo cultivation. However, the Indigo Planters' Association was reconstituted in 1905 and was christened as the Bihar Planters' Association. The outbreak of the First World War in 1914 led to a revival of the demand

for Indian indigo; and some of the factories in Muzaffarpur and Champaran, which had abandoned indigo cultivation, started it afresh. There was soon a great agitation against indigo cultivation on the part of the Champaran ryots which eventually brought Mahatma Gandhi to the field.* His visit and stay in Champaran in 1917 and his unofficial enquiry into the relations between the planters and the ryots, had their due repercussions in Muzaffarpur. Mahatma Gandhi also paid a short visit to Muzaffarpur. His demand at last compelled Government to appoint a Commission to enquire into the whole question of indigo cultivation in Champaran. In accordance with the report of the Commission, an Agrarian Act was passed which abolished the Tinkathia system,³⁸ then prevailing in the indigo factories.

BOMB CASE OF 1908.

Perhaps the most notable event of Muzaffarpur at the beginning of the present century was the Bomb case of 1908. Khudiram Bose and Prafulla Chandra Chaki, two Bengali young boys came over to Muzaffarpur with the object of murdering Mr. Kingsford, the District Judge, who, as Chief Presidency Magistrate of Calcutta, had ordered a number of young Bengalis to be flogged for singing the "Bande Mataram", a national song in a novel of Bankim Chandra Chatterji. Those were the days when the revolutionary movement was at its full fervour in Bengal, and the singing of "Bande Mataram" was considered seditious in the eyes of the British authorities. Khudiram and Prafulla stayed in a local hotel, and one day threw bombs on a carriage near the European club. The carriage, which was supposed to be Mr. Kingsford's had occupants other than Mr. Kingsford with the result that Mrs. and Miss Kennedy, the wife and daughter of a local counsel, were killed. The incident sent a thrill of consternation all over the province. Prafulla was caught by a police officer at Mokamah Ghat and shot himself dead. Khudiram, too, was arrested near Dholi Railway Station, tried and hanged. The episode created a sensation all over Bengal and Bihar. The execution of the nineteen-year old Khudiram, who confessed his guilt in the dock, *Gita* in hand, became almost a theme, which was sung from door to door. Muzaffarpur town has preserved Khudiram's memory by a tablet and a statue near about the place where the bomb was thrown.

POLITICAL MOVEMENTS.

The Tirhut division had been created in 1907 as Patna division was considered to be too unwieldy. Prior to this as mentioned before parts of Tirhut division were administered from Bhagalpur in the 19th century. But administrative details went on multiplying and in 1907 a separate Commissionership for Tirhut comprising Muzaffarpur, Darbhanga, Champaran and Saran districts were created.

*There was an earlier movement by the cultivators against indigo cultivation in Bettiah subdivision of Champaran district in 1907-08. Please see *Gandhiji's First Struggle in India* by P. C. Roy Chaudhury.

Muzaffarpur continued to be centre of revolutionary activity after 1908. Some of the local young men, mostly Bengalis, were actively associated with it and carried on secret correspondence with the revolutionary party of Bengal. The police were constantly after them. When, however, the Non-co-operation Movement was launched in 1920-21, they mostly threw in their lot with the leaders and supporters of this movement. During the Non-co-operation Movement, and later on during the Civil Disobedience Movement of 1930-31, the district responded widely to the call of Mahatma Gandhi. Indeed it soon became the most prominent area of Congress activities in North Bihar. During the August Movement in 1942, the district was in full fury. In the town the movement was sponsored mostly by students, but in rural areas the masses spontaneously rose. For days together communications were dislocated, railway wagons looted and station buildings damaged by fire. At Sitamarhi, the infuriated mob killed a magistrate, and at Hajipur and several other places the situation went out of control. At last the movement was stifled with the aid of military forces. Many of the participants were sent to jail after trial, and heavy punitive fines were imposed on rural areas. But the people had shaken off the fear of the gun and had realised the tremendous power they could wield if only they united. In the story of the freedom movement in Bihar, the contribution of this district is indeed very great. The Congress is now the largest political party in this district.

EARTHQUAKE, 1934.

The greatest natural calamity which befell Muzaffarpur during the first half of the present century was the earthquake of 1934. While some of the other districts of Bihar, such as Monghyr, Champaran, Patna and Darbhanga, were badly affected by it, perhaps the heaviest casualties took place in this district. The earthquake was, however, in a sense a blessing in disguise for Muzaffarpur town, because it made a clean sweep of unhygienic congestion and helped the building up of a cleaner and healthier town. Details of the earthquake will be found in a different chapter.

The two decades or so following the great earthquake of 1934 and particularly the Post-Independence period (from 1947 onwards) have witnessed considerable improvement and progress in the district in several respects. Education has made rapid strides. Apart from the great progress of primary and secondary education in the district, Muzaffarpur town has become practically the nucleus of a future university, with two Arts colleges (one with Post-graduate teaching), a Girls' college, a Law college and an Engineering college. Technical and industrial education has received considerable attention. At the same time there has been a revival of antiquarian studies and an archaeological museum has been established at Basarh (old Vaisali), communications have improved though much remains to be done in this field. The importance of Muzaffarpur has increased of late on account

of the fact that it has become the regional headquarters of N. E. Railways. It will increase further after the Kosi and Gandak projects and the Mokamah Bridge are completed.

ARCHAEOLOGICAL REMAINS.

The earliest archaeological remains so far recovered from the district is a pillar of Asoka (C. 269 to 236 B. C.) inside a private house at Kolhua, a village 24 miles south-west of Muzaffarpur and two miles to the north-west of a more well known village, Banya Basarh.

ASOKA PILLAR AT KOLHUA.

The pillar is situated on the southern part of a large mound 6 to 8 feet high above the neighbouring fields. The pillar consists of a monolith of highly polished sandstone surmounted by a capital on which is a life-size figure of a single lion facing the north. The shaft is 21 feet 9 inches above the present ground level; the remaining portion has gone underground as a result of the accumulation of debris round it. The diameter of the tapering shaft was noted by Cunningham as 38.7 inches at the top and 49.8 inches at the water level where he had dug around the pillar to a depth of a further 14 feet and was still unable to reach its base. The capital of the pillar is usual bell shaped, 2 feet 10 inches in height, on which stands a plain abacus to serve as the pedestal of a lion, 4 feet 6 inches in height. Below the conventional lotus decorating the bell are a bead and reel design and a fine cable ornament. Above it a heavy cable necking divides the bell from the abacus. There are two steps in the abacus itself; the lower one is smaller than the upper.

The lion of Basarh-Baskhira pillar (the name Baskhira, an adjoining village of Kolhua was used by Mr. Stephenson who first attracted the notice of the scholarly world to the Mauryan column in 1835, and since then the name has assumed a certain degree of popularity) is seated on its hind legs with his mouth open as if snarling and its tongue slightly protruding. Though perfectly preserved, artistically the lion is comparatively somewhat crude in execution.

The Kolhua pillar does not bear any inscription of Asoka and it is not possible to assign it to any particular year of Asoka's reign. But from the form of the lion cap not yet fully developed, the heaviness of the shaft and the position of the abacus which has yet no integral relation with the ball capital it can be inferred that it was one of the earliest of Asokan columns.

STUPA-MOUND AT KOLHUA.

About 60 feet to the north of the Kolhua pillar, there lies an ancient Stupa-mound about 15 feet high. It has a diameter of about 65 feet at the bottom with an old tank called Ramkund nearby. Attempts have been made on the basis of Hiuen Tsang's evidence that here was a stupa built by Asoka and the old tank is of Buddha's time. "To the north-west (of Vaisali)," says Hiuen Tsang, "there was a stupa built

by Asoka; and a stone pillar, 50 or 60 feet in height, crowned by a lion. To the south of the pillar there was a tank, which had been dug for the use of Buddha, when he dwelt in this place. At a short distance to the west of the tank there was a second stupa, on the spot where the monkeys had offered honey to Buddha. At the north-west corner of the tank, there was a statue of a monkey." (Walters on Hiuen Tsang, II, pp. 65-66.) While the suggestion that the ruined stupa is of Asokan date cannot be totally rejected, there is no positive evidence that supports the claim. As for the position of the monkey tank, it is interesting to note that Fa-Hien who mentions the Great Wood and its two storey monastery in his list of the sights of Vaisali, says nothing about the monkey tank at its side.

The only other sculptural object of archaeological interest recovered from the district of Muzaffarpur which probably bears a Mauryan date is the fragment of a capital of Chunar sand-stone with Mauryan polish which was found at the village of Salempur. The piece consists of four semi-bulls seated back to back on a plain square abacus, the animals themselves being superimposed by a square block decorated with honey-suckle ornaments. (The antiquity is now housed in the Patna Museum.)

BASARH MOUND.

The present village of Basarh, situated in 25°59' North and 85°8' East and at a distance of 20 miles north-west from Hajipur, has been identified, on the basis of literary evidence, as the ancient city of Vaisali, the capital of the oligarchical Licchavis of North Bihar. Vaisali is intimately connected with the life and achievements of the Buddha and Mahavira. The imposing brick covered mound of Basarh (locally known as Raja Vaisal Ki Garh), somewhat oblong in shape, measures 1,700 feet long from north to south and 800 feet from east to west. With round towers at the four corners, the mound, once probably a fort, is surrounded by a ditch, about 125 feet broad. The interior of the mound has a general elevation of 6 to 8 feet above the surrounding country. The only building within the area of the mound is a modern brick temple.

Explorations started since the days of Cunningham followed by excavations carried on by the Department of Archaeology, Government of India, in the years 1903-4 and 1913-14, however, have not been able to unearth from the site any relic of the age of the Buddha and Mahavira. Though structural remains excavated, belonging to two or three periods are poor and fragmentary, the mound is rich in antiquities. The earliest phase is indicated by punch-marked and cast copper coins followed by a stone matrix in which occurs the name of an individual "Srijatarshasa", in Mauryan Brahmi character. Another seal which has as its device a Kalasa with one flower and two tiny crescents to left and right contains a three line legend written in Brahmi character of the Mauryan period and runs as "Vesali Anusamyana Takare". But the most important finds from Vaisali are a large

number of seals of the Gupta period (about the end of the 4th century A. D.). They were originally attached to documents and some of them belonged to officials of Gupta kings and some to private persons, mostly bankers and traders, many of whom were members of mercantile guilds. Two of the seals contain the name "Tirabhukti", the ancient appellation of Tirhut. Besides, the Basarh mound has yielded a large number of terracotta figures, decorated stone tablets, pottery and metal pieces. The site was occupied even in the Muslim period as is evidenced from the find of Alauddin Khalji's silver coin and copper coin of Ibrahim Shah Sultan. Most of the finds have been kept in Patna Museum and some are in a small Museum at Vaisali itself.

A SECOND MOUND.

About 300 yards south-west of the main mound, there is another mound of solid bricks, 23 feet 8 inches in height above the fields. The top has been levelled to receive comparatively later Muslim tombs, the largest and most important of which is known as Miranji Ki Dargah but really contains the relics of a well known saint of this country named Shaikh Muhammad Qazin who died in 1495 A. D. There is no doubt that this mound is a much earlier one, but about even its approximate age nothing definite can be said at present. It is not unlikely to be of the same age as the bigger mound by its side.

With the disappearance of the rich mercantile community of Tirabhukti, this area ceased to be a political unit of any decisive importance. The Pala Kings were more interested in the central and southern regions of Bihar. The archaeological remains of the post-Gupta period are scanty and poor. A few Buddhist and Brahminical images at Deokali, Jauri-dih and Basarh (found in a temple known as Bavan Pokhar Ka Mandir) belonging to the 9th and 10th centuries A. D. and a ruined Buddhist temple at Hajipur, probably of the same chronological horizon are all that the district has inherited from the Palas in the form of archaeological remains.

The Hajipur subdivision of the district abounds in Muslim remains, mostly of a comparatively modern date. The town of Hajipur was founded by Sham-suddin Ilyas Shah Haji, an independent King of Bengal (1345—58 A. D.). His tomb is situated close to the Gandak bridge, on a raised and enclosed platform. A notable monument of the town of a somewhat early date is the Jama Masjid built by Mokhsus Khan, a brother of Said Khan Chaghta, who was twice the Governor of Bihar in the time of Akbar. This mosque as the Hindi chronogram denotes was erected in 995 A. H., i.e., 1587 A. D. The front verandah of the mosque measures 89' 6" by 26'. The wall of the prayer chamber is 7' 3" thick. The mosque is an imposing building with three domes. It has a big prayer hall divided into three compartments supported by vaulted arches and lateral walls.

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5. A. S. Altekar, The Const. Hist. of Vaisali (Homage to Vaisali, p. 70).
6. H. Jacobi, Sacred Books of the East, Vol. 22, pp. X-XIII.
7. *Ibid.*
8. H. C. Roy Chaudhury, Political History of India.
9. Major General Cunningham writes that the alms bowl must have been carried off either by Kanishka or by Huvishka early in the second century A. D. (Homage to Vaisali, p. 146).
10. This would be about 20 miles—Walters on Hiuen Tsang, Vol. II, p. 63.
11. J. R. A. S., 1905, p. 566.
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13. S. N. Singh, History of Tirhut, pp. 59-69.
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19. I. A. S. B., Vol. XI, pp. 430-31.
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22. *Ibid.*
23. *Ibid.*
24. *Ibid.* Also see "The Infancy of Sarkar Tirhut" by P. C. Roy Chaudhury in J. B. R. S.
25. Muzaffarpur Old Records. (Under publication.)
26. See Chapter on Land Revenue Administration.
27. Metal drinking vessels.

28. J. B. R. S., March, 1954, p. 55.
29. *Ibid.*
30. *Ibid.*
31. *Ibid.* pp. 55-56.
32. *Ibid.* p. 56.
33. *Ibid.* P. 57.
34. *Ibid.* pp. 60-61.
35. See in this connection J. B. R. S., March-June, 1953, pp. 86-105.
36. First Report from Select Committee on Sugar and Coffee-Planting (1848), pp. 12-84; see also H. R. Ghosal, Economic Transition in the Beng. Presidency, pp. 77-78.
- 36A. Gandhiji's First Struggle in India by P. C. Roy Chaudhury (Navajivan Trust, Ahmedabad).
37. S. N. Singh, History of Tirhut, pp. 241-42.
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[The original papers in the National Archives, New Delhi, Old Records Division, W. B. Government Secretariat, and old records in Muzaffarpur and other places in Bihar are rich sources. Some of these papers are being separately published as Muzaffarpur Old Records—P. C. R. C.]