

CHAPTER XVI.

DIRECTORY.

Ambara Chauk.—This is a place in Baru police-station and is about four miles south-west of Vaisali. It is commonly believed to be the village home of Ambapali who was the famous Court-dancer at Vaisali.

Bairagnia.—A growing and prosperous village in Sitamarhi subdivision situated on the Nepal frontier on the east bank of Lalbakeya River. Bairagnia is a big trade centre for grain, oil-seed and timber. There are four rice mills. It has got a high school and Gurukul Ashram. Bairagnia is the clearing place for a big merchandise both to and from Nepal. It is a growing township.

Baruraj.—There is a police-station at Baruraj four miles from Motipur and 22 miles from Muzaffarpur. It is a growing township.

Batesar Asthan.—It is situated about 14 to 15 miles north-east of Hajipur on the Hajipur-Jandaha road. A fair is held on the *Basant Panchami* and *Shivaratri* day at Batesar Asthan every year. The *Shivalingam* is placed on a *bar* tree and the *mela* attracts a large number of visitors.

Bela.—A place near Sitamarhi where there were indigo factories. There used to be a *kutchery* of Darbhanga Raj at Bela. There is a middle English school.

Bela Muchpakauni.—A village and police outpost in the north-east of the Sitamarhi subdivision, situated on the frontier about a mile to the west of the Murha, a tributary of the Dhaus river. The original name of the village is said to have been only Bela. The epithet *Muchpakauni* was added on account of the bad quality of the water, as it is said that any one drinking it for some time will have his mustaches (*muchh*) turned grey.

Belsand.—Belsand is the headquarters of a thana by the same name. The population of Belsand police thana according to Census of 1951 is 1,19,877. The thana is frequently inundated.

There were important indigo concerns in this thana some decades back. There are no indigo concerns now.

Chak Ramdas.—The village of Baniya (with the adjacent *tola* Chak Ramdas) is taken to be the remnants of Vaniyagama. The lands of the village contain extensive mounds, and some ten years ago two statues of Jain *Tirthankars*, one seated, the other standing, were discovered about eight feet below the surface and 500 yards west of the village. Vaniyagama is believed to be the birth-place of Mahavira, the twenty-fourth *Tirthankar* or path-finder of the Jains. This theory is, however, not undisputed.

Chaut.—A village close to the eastern boundary of the Sitamarhi subdivision, about 8 miles north-east of Pupri. With a population of

8, 947 souls, it is one of the largest villages in the district. It contains a religious establishment subordinate to the *math* or monastery at Matihani in Nepal, the *mahanth* of which is one of the richest land-owners in the district. The tradition relates that more than two centuries ago a Vaishnava, named Sri Ram Balaji went to Janakpur in Nepal from Jaipur. When returning home, he was struck by the scene and silent grandeur of the forest where the village of Matihani at present stands, and determined to spend the remainder of his days there in religious meditation. He found a holy tank from which King Janaka had taken earth for his sacrificial altars, and on its bank he erected a hut. The fame of his sanctity soon spread, and the rich and powerful flocked to do him service. The Raja of Nepal gave him four villages, a temple dedicated to Janakiji (Sita) was built soon after, and the Vaishnava assumed the title of *mahanth*. The first few incumbents were given extensive grants of land by the Raja of Nepal, and the third Jai Kishun, having received in 1761 a grant of the villages of Charaut and Madhurapur in the district from the Maharaja of Darbhanga, founded a *math* at the former place.

Deokali.—A village in the Sitamarhi subdivision situated on the Belsand-Sitamarhi road, 4 miles east of Sheohar and 11 miles west of Sitamarhi. The village contains a group of temples situated in a large courtyard standing at the top of a great mound; the latter is ascended by a long flight of steps leading from a fine lake stretching for $\frac{1}{4}$ mile below. This mound is called Draupadagarh, and local tradition affirms that it was the fort of Draupada of the *Mahabharata*. The principal temple, which contains a large *lingam* is called Bhubaneshwar. A fair is held here on the *Shivaratri* day.

Goraul.—This village, situated at about 20 miles north of Hajipur town on Hajipur-Muzaffarpur Railway line of North-Eastern Railway, is growing into importance due to the location of a sugar factory in 1952. A police outpost has been opened in August, 1952. The village Goraul has got a large number of middle class families.

Hajipur subdivision.—The area is 786 square miles. Hajipur subdivision was formed in 1865 and is now comprised of 6 thanas, namely, Hajipur, Lalganj, Patepur, Mahua, Mahnar and Raghapur. There are two towns, Hajipur and Lalganj. Hajipur is the headquarters of the subdivision. In 1801 the population of the subdivision was 7,14,079. The population according to 1951 Census is 9,42,472. The density of the population is 1,212 to the square mile.

The subdivision is said to have been the seat of the sages or *Rishis* in ancient times. It is believed that Sri Ramchandra passed through Hajipur on his way to Mithila. Lord Buddha also passed through it. The river Gandak which flows by it is said to have come out of the cheek (Sanskrit '*gand* ') of Lord Shiva and so she is called Gandak or Gandaki.

During the Muslim rule Hajipur was a noted place and there are several old mosques at many places in a dilapidated condition. Hajipur was the revenue centre under the Muslim and Mughal rule.

The subdivision is famous for mangoes, litchies and plantains.

Hajipur town.—Hajipur is the headquarters of the subdivision of the same name. It is situated on the eastern bank of the Gandak at a short distance above its confluence with the Ganga opposite Patna. Its present population according to the Census of 1951 is 25,149. It lies on the main line of the North-Eastern Railway which runs west from Katihar and is also connected by a direct branch line with Muzaffarpur town. Its position on the railway and its command of water traffic in three directions give the town a considerable commercial importance. Hajipur has been connected with Sonepur by a railway bridge on the Gandak constructed in January, 1885. The present Sonepur bridge has been found to be rather unserviceable for the heavy traffic. Another railway bridge at some distance from the present bridge is being built. Hajipur has now been connected with the next station of Sonepur (in Saran district) by a pontoon bridge.

One Haji Ilyas *alias* Shamsuddin Ilyas, king of Bengal, between 1345 and 1358 A. D., is reported to have founded the Hajipur town and strengthened the town with a large fort, of which the ramparts are still visible. Hajipur was the headquarters of the Governor of Bihar in the later Muslim times. At that time the town is said to have extended as far as Mahnar, 20 miles to the east and to a village called Gadai Sarai, 4 miles to the north. It figures conspicuously in the struggles between Akbar and his rebellious Afghan Governor of Bengal, being besieged and captured by the imperial troops in 1572 and again in 1574; but after the transfer of the seat of Government to Patna it lost its former importance. In 1572 the Afghan rebels seized the town, but were driven out of it by Muzaffar Khan, one of Akbar's Generals. Two years afterwards, the news came that Daud Khan, the son of Sulaiman Kirani, had assumed the title of king and destroyed the fort at Patna. A *farman* was sent from Delhi to Khan Khanan, ordering him to punish Daud and to subdue Bihar, and a number of chieftains, who had remained loyal to the Mughals, were ordered to assist him. Meanwhile Daud had taken refuge in the fort at Hajipur to which the imperial forces laid siege. On hearing this, Akbar himself set out for Patna and on his arrival, determined to reduce Hajipur. Awed by the presence of the army under Akbar, Daud sued for peace. Akbar is said to have magnanimously sent an offer to Daud to accept one of the three following means of deciding to whose dominions Bihar should be annexed. He invited Daud to put the matter to the test by a single combat or to depute a wrestler who should meet an imperial wrestler or to send a fighting elephant which should cope with an imperial animal. The idea was that whichever alternative he chose, victory should be declared to belong to the side whose combatant won. The story has it that while this parleying was going on,

Akbar took possession of the Hajipur fort by a sudden move, and at the same time attacked Patna. A force of 3,000 men was sent over and Raja Gajapati, zamindar of Hajipur, was ordered to support the troops.

The rebels were defeated. Fateh Khan Barha, the commander of the fort, was slain with many of his soldiers. Five days afterwards Daud fled to Bengal and then to Orissa, where he was defeated and finally obliged to conclude peace.

There are a very few buildings to commemorate but the names of the different *mohallas* or wards recall the days of Muslim rule. The grave of Haji Ilyas himself is still pointed out to the south-east of the Gandak bridge, and is held in great veneration by both the Muhammadans and Hindus of the town. It is visited by pilgrims from all parts of the district and beyond, specially women, who, it is said obtain the fulfilment of their wishes by propitiating the saint. Close to the graveyard of Haji Ilyas is the graveyard of Haji Harman.

The remains of the old fort stand close by on an elevated land lying along the bank of the Gandak and inside the enclosure is an old mosque, the Jama Masjid, which according to an inscription over the stone-gateway, shows to have been built in 1587 by Maksus Shah. Tradition has it that over each doorway there was an inscription in a different language. The inscription in Arabic over the front doorway is now much defaced and almost illegible; one is in Hindi but in the Persian character and it contains allusions to Hindu gods. There have been a certain amount of destruction of these inscriptions. The mosque is crowned with three rounded domes, the centre one being the largest. They are built of horizontally placed rows of stones, each row forming a circle, and each circle being more contracted than the one immediately below it, until the keystone is reached which is circular. The central portion of the mosque was badly damaged during the earthquake of 1934. It was afterwards thoroughly repaired in 1944-45. There is also a *sarai* or rest house within the limits of the fort, which was built for the accommodation of late Sir Rana Jang Bahadur on the occasion of his visits from Nepal. This *sarai* encloses a Buddhist temple, a double-storied building with some carvings of various erotic "*Ashanas*" on wood. There is clear Tantrik influence on them. There is a temple of Ramchandra to the west of the town and the tradition is that Ram stayed here when on his way to Janakpur. Two sites named Ramchaura and Rambhadra are said to mark the places where he stopped on his journey northwards (see also Reports A. S. I., Vol. XVI, and an article "On some names of places in Bihar", by Mr. John Christian, Calcutta Review, Jan. 1891). Every year a *mela* is held at Ramchaura during *Ramnaumi* where large number of people assemble from every corner.

Sonepur fair at Hajipur.—The famous Sonepur fair in Saran district beyond Hajipur was previously held at Hajipur and only oblations were offered to the deity at Sonepur. The fair for elephants, cattle and horses used to be held at Hathisarganj, Dighi and Anwarpur

respectively at Hajipur and the ' Mina Bazar ' was held inside the fort and at Rambhadra. There also used to be horse races and polo meets. In the year 1803 Lord Clive established a stable at Hajipur. Mr. Nox after his return from Nepal as Resident was appointed as Captain of that stud. He built a race course inside the fort. The officers on deputation to the *mela* and the indigo planters used to take part in the horse race and polo meets. After sometime the Manager of the stud built a separate race course just beneath the fort on the bank of the Gandak and furnished it with railings. A bungalow which was built by Mr. Warvel and Mr. Norton (Members of the Patna Council) for trade purposes was converted into a dance club which was a particular feature in the *mela* crowded by European Planters. At the time of Lord Wellesley and Captain Moreeraf in 1800 the horse races started being held at Pusa but the one started by the planters was not discontinued. But in 1837 the race course was submerged by the river Gandak due to a change in the course of the river and the dance club was shifted to Sonepur. Gradually the *mela* also shifted to Sonepur. But a two-day *mela* is still held at Hajipur on the place from Konhara-ghat to the Gandak bridge. The overflow population of Sonepur *mela* stays at Hajipur. The names of the different *mahallas* where the Sonepur *mela* is now held in Saran district on the other side of the river are those that still exist in Hajipur.

The bridge.—The foundation stone for the bridge over Gandak was laid by the then Governor of Bengal in 1885 and was inaugurated by Lord Dufferin. It is a fine specimen for the time when it was built. There will soon be another bridge near the present site. The present railway bridge cannot stand the heavy railway traffic for any long time now. The railways are putting up another bridge (1957). There is a seasonal pontoon bridge since 1957.

Hajuri Math.—It is situated on the east flank of the Gandak and many stories are associated with it. It is said that an European Engineer while arguing with a saint in that *math* met with his anger and became dumb. He was not cured even after treatment in England. He came back to the saint who cured him. The Engineer offered a bell to the *math* which is still to be found.

Temples.—There is a Nepali temple of Lord Mahadeva which was erected by a Subedar of the Maharaja of Nepal. An inn was also attached to it. There are erotic carvings showing *tantrik* influence.

✓ At Ramchaura it is said that Lord Ram together with Laxmana and his *guru* Vishwamitra had rested on their journey and the place came to be known as Rambhadra. A fair is held every year on Ramnaumi day.

The temple of Pataleshwar is famous as it is supposed to give rain when the deity is submerged with Ganga water.

Sonechiranga.—There is a pond at Diggi which is situated two miles north of Hajipur and a legend runs that in *Shivaratri* a certain

bird took *parshad* from Hariharnath temple and while flying became thirsty and came to this pond to quench its thirst. By chance it fell into it and became of gold. Hindus believe that by the grace of Mahaprabu Ballabhacharya whoever takes bath in this pond for three days earns sanctity. It has become the centre of pilgrimage in *malamas* period.

Karbala.—It was constructed 175 years ago by Shah Alam. It attracts a large crowd of Muslims throughout the year.

Tombs.—A tomb known as *Mamu Bhagana ki Kabar* was erected by Shaistha Khan, the maternal uncle of Aurangzeb. It is situated near the pond of Shivai Singh in the *mouza* of Jarwa. The tomb of Makhdoom Shah Abul Fateh Sheikh Shuttari was built in *mouza* Tangaul by Taj Khan. The tomb of Bar Khurdar Aulia Shaheb is near Hatsarganj police outpost. In *mahalla* Khatte Ruknuddin there are two tombs, one of Hafiz Barkhurdar and to the east of it is the tomb of his disciple Ruknuddin Shaheb.

The tomb of Hazrat Mohiuddin *alias* Pir Damaria Shaheb is in Minapur which is built of marble. Other tombs of Kamaluddin Shaheb and Khaja Mahiuddin Chisti, disciple of Baba Fariduddin Gunj Shakar Multani are also here. The tomb of Syed Haji, son of Syed Dost Muhammad, was built by Emperor Jahangir. The tomb of Hazrat Jalaluddin Abdul is to the east of Nepali temple. The tomb of Khaja Bhil is on *mouza* Chakbhil near Bagmati. He was also a disciple of Baba Gunj Shakar.

Hazrat Jandaha.—A village in the Hajipur subdivision, 20 miles east of Hajipur and 9 miles north of Mahnar. It is a local mart of some importance, the principal article of commerce being tobacco. The name of the place is derived from a curious legend, of which the following account is taken from an article "On some names of places in Bihar" by Mr. John Christian, *Calcutta Review*, Vol. XCII, 1891:—

"The revered Musalman saint, whose tomb is still pointed out at Hazrat Jandaha, and who gave the name to the place and the river that flows past it, was known as Diwan Sah Ah. It is said that one hot summer day he felt very thirsty, and asked a by-stander to fetch him some water. The man was rude enough to reply that there was no water to be had close by. At this the Shah got very angry, and in his anger called on the water to flow that way, saying ' *Biah* ' (Persian—'Come'). Immediately a river began to approach the place, cutting away intervening land and causing devastation and ruin to the villages as it advanced. This so terrified the neighbouring people that they came in a body and implored the Shah to have pity on them and cause the river to spare their lands. He then called out *Jandah* (do not drown) and the river stopped encroaching and began to flow quietly in its present channel. Thus the river was called

Baya and the town Jandaha. This Diwan Sah Ali was himself the subject of miracle, performed on him in his infancy by his uncle, who was equally remarkable and he lived in Hajipur where his tomb is still pointed out. His name was Makhdum Shah Abdul Fatah. It is said that, on one occasion, during one of his fits of ecstasy, which lasted for long periods, he threw his nephew Shah Ali who was only six days old into the river Gandak calling on the river saint Khawaja Khizr, to educate him and take care of him. After six years, when he had recovered his mother told him what he had done and what a grievous injury he had caused to his brother and sister-in-law, who had never ceased bewailing the loss of their only child. Thereupon Makhdum Shah told her not to grieve, and going to the river said—"Khawaja Khizr, give me back my nephew, whom I committed to your care six years ago." On this, the river began to roll and out came the boy, robed and jewelled like prince. Though young, he was thoroughly conversant with all the religious laws, and afterwards became the famous Hazrat Shah Ali from whom Hazrat Jandaha got its name."

There is a mosque situated a few steps away from the river appertaining to the 15th Century. Due to the earthquake of 1934 it has been in ruins excepting the main gate. All other structures including the main building had been destroyed. The grave which was also in dilapidated condition, has been repaired in 1952.

Jaintpur.—A village in the headquarters subdivision situated 6½ miles north-east of Paru and 16 miles west of Muzaffarpur. The village contains a large *math* of Hindu monastery, the head (*mahanth*) of which was one of the principal zamindars in Tirhut. The *mahanths* of Jaintpur are *Bairagis*, who are forbidden to marry and succession passes to the head disciple.* The nucleus of the estate was a *mukarari* of Rampur Balli granted by the zamindars of Sain, near Kanti to their *guru* Tribhuan Sain Lal Das. The *guru* speedily began to acquire other property including the extensive Tajpur *taluk* and his growing riches nearly cost him his life. Tradition relates that on one occasion when he went to Sain with a large sum of money, his disciples secretly determined to make away with him and possess themselves of his wealth. One of the Sain ladies informed Lal Das of the plot that had been hatched against him, whereupon he fled towards Hajipur neither halting nor eating day and night. On approaching Hajipur, a voice called to him from the tall grass by the roadside. He paid no heed at first but the voice continued to call, and always from a direction in advance of him. At length, he enquired impatiently, "Who calls me from the grass?" Thereupon the voice complained that he had not been worshipped and fed on the previous day. Lal Das, searching in

*This has been the issue in protracted litigation.

the grass found the idol of Damodarji, the family deity whom he had hitherto worshipped regularly, and took it up and conveyed it to Patna, where he founded a temple for its worship. The temple stands to this day and some villages of the former Jaintpur estate are endowed for its maintenance.

There is a high school, a District Board charitable dispensary and a veterinary hospital. There is a *mela* each year at Jaintpur known as the "Damodar Dashara Mela" which is the biggest *mela* in the Sadar subdivision. The zamindar family of Jaintpur is one of the noted Bhumihar Brahmin lines in the State noted for their patronage of art and culture in the past.

Juridih.—A name meaning the burnt village, given to a large mound in the village of Bithauli, three miles south of Bhagwanpur Railway station, situated close to the main road from Muzaffarpur to Hajipur, on the 23rd mile from the former and 12th mile from the latter place. The legend of the Juridih is that there was a fort and town of the Chero Rajas at this spot long anterior to the Muhammadan conquest: that the country around belonged to the Dosadh people; and that it was still held by them under their own low caste kings, even after the Brahmans had lived among them and taught them. Finally, an enemy appeared from the West and the Chero Chief, sallied forth to battle, leaving word with the people in the fort that if they saw his standard remain erect, they would know he was victorious, but that if they saw it fall, they would know that he was beaten and were then to set fire to the castle in order to escape falling into the hands of the enemy. The standard bearer however let his flag fall when the battle was over and the soldiers in the fort and the women, thinking their chief was dead and the battle lost, shut themselves into the castle, which was three-storied, and in despair flung themselves into the flames and died. It is stated that, after the destruction of the tower the place lapsed into thick jungle for a long time, but that later the surrounding country had been cleared by the forefathers of the present occupants. A Brahman built a small temple at the site of the *pipal* tree now standing at the north-east corner of the mound; no vestige of this temple is now to be seen. Even 100 years ago wild pigs used to frequent the mound, which is now quite bare of jungle. Excavations were carried out here in 1880-81 and the walls of the fort were laid bare and found to have a circumference of 3,000 yards. Among the debris bronze statues of various deities, fragments of sculpture in blue stone, pieces of used metal ore, a calcined gold ring, fragments of votive horses in baked clay, etc., were discovered. Two of the bronze statues had inscriptions showing that they were made during the reign of Mahipala Deva. (See Reports of Archæological Survey of India, Vol. XVI, pp. 34-88.)

Kanti.—Kanti is an important and progressive village about 9 miles from Muzaffarpur to the west on the road between Motihari and Muzaffarpur. It has a railway station. The Kanti Indigo

Concern has now been converted into an agricultural farm. Kanti village is situated on a *man* (water channel). The indigo *kōthi* of Kanti was one of the oldest indigo concerns in North Bihar. The concern is now in the hands of a Bengali family for generations. It is an ideal picnic spot particularly in the winter and offers good shooting and fishing.

Katra.—Katra is the headquarters of Katra Thana and is situated at about 18 miles from Muzaffarpur. There is a Registration office at Katra. This place is connected with Muzaffarpur by road. It is a growing township.

Khudiram Bose memorial.—A memorial tablet has been raised almost opposite the Muzaffarpur Club at Muzaffarpur in the memory of Khudiram Bose. Khudiram Bose was born on 3rd December 1889 at village Bahubani in the district of Midnapur. As a boy he took active interest in the *Swadeshi* Movement of Bengal from 1905.

Mr. Kingsford was transferred to Muzaffarpur as the District and Sessions Judge after holding the charge of the Chief Presidency Magistrate in Calcutta in which capacity he had to convict many revolutionaries in connection with the *Swadeshi* Movement.

Khudiram Bose and Profulla Chaki, two young boys, were sent by the Revolutionary Party from Calcutta to do away with Mr. Kingsford. On 30th April, 1908 these two young boys threw bombs on the phaeton which they thought was carrying Mr. Kingsford to the club. The occupants were one Mrs. Kennedy and her daughter. The bomb explosion resulted in the death of both the occupants and the syce.

Khudiram was arrested on the 1st May, 1908 at village Waini and was tried. He was sentenced to death by the Judge Mr. Carnduff. He was executed at the Muzaffarpur Jail on 11th August, 1908.

The memorial tablet was unveiled at Muzaffarpur in 1948.

Kolhua.—At Kolhua 3 miles to the north-west of Basarh there are some old relics situated on a low mound one mile to the south-east of the village of Bakhra. They consist of a stone pillar surmounted by a lion, a ruined *stupa* of solid brick, an old tank, other finds marking the site of ancient buildings. The remains correspond with the description of Vaisali by Hiuen Tsang.

The pillar is one of Asoka pillars to mark the different stages of the journey to Nepal which Asoka undertook (249 B. C.). It bears no inscription. The pillar consists of a monolith supporting a square pedestal on which is a lion carved in stone; the shaft, which is a single block of polished sandstone, now stands about 22 feet high and the remainder is below ground. At the top of the pillar there is a lion seated facing the north with his mouth open as if snarling and his tongue slightly protruding.

On the low mound close by there are some Buddhist statues, the best of which is the large image of Buddha seated and wearing a crown.

and necklace. Near this pillar there are two mounds called Bhim Sen's Baskets, while the pillar itself is known as Bhim Sen's *lathi* or club. There are some other mounds in the neighbourhood and the extensive remains represent the ruins of Vaisali.

Konharaghat.—South to the Gandak bridge is an ancient place of importance where it is said, that there was a great fight between the '*Gajendra*', the chief of the elephants and '*Garh*', the chief of the crocodiles. The *Grah* had almost defeated the *Gajendra*, who when about to be killed began to call pathetically God Krishna from the core of his heart for help and ultimately God (Lord Krishna) appeared and saved the *Gajendra* from the clutches of the *Grah*. Since then the place began to be called '*Konhara*' (who was defeated). Konharaghat has an easy crossing for Patna. It controls a certain amount of river traffic both in passengers, goods and livestock.

Lalganj.—A town in the Hajipur subdivision, situated on the eastern bank of the Gandak, 12 miles north-west of Hajipur town. The population in 1901 was 11,502 which fell down to about 7,000 in 1921 chiefly due to the severe outbreak of plague. The population in 1951 is 12,394. Lalganj is an important river mart, the principal exports being hides, oil-seeds, sweet potatoes, mangoes, bamboos, fuel wood, and wooden sandals. The carpenters are skilful. *Hookahs*, made of cocoanuts imported from Cochin are exported in large quantities. The "*Nalki-palki*" (a kind of light palanquin) is cheap but strong. The importance of saltpetre as an article of export has diminished since the Great World War of 1914—18. There were about 118 large godowns for the manufacture and storage of saltpetre out of which the remains of about ten are still found. The imports are foodgrains (chiefly rice and wheat), salt, iron and piece-goods. The bazar lies on the low land adjoining the river, but is protected from inundation by the Gandak embankments. The shipping ghat, called Basanta, lies a mile to the south of the town, which is connected by road with Sahibganj, Muzaffarpur and Hajipur. A motor bus plies between Hajipur and Lalganj and another from Hajipur to Vaisali via Lalganj.

A little to the south of the town is the Singia Indigo Factory, situated close to the embankment. Singia was the site of the first English Factory in Bihar, which was established in the latter half of the 17th century for the sake of the trade in saltpetre. It is said that after the name of Shringi Rishi, whose tomb lies about 200 yards north from the factory just on the western side of the embankment the place was named as Singia. This factory is frequently mentioned in the early records of the East India Company. There was also a settlement of the Dutch East India Company, which was similarly started for the manufacture of saltpetre. In 1791 it was put up for sale by order of the Hon'ble Isac Jitzsingh, member of the Supreme Council of Eastavia and Director at Hoogly Antoine de Maffe and John George Van Ambungla, members of the Hon'ble Court of Judicature, Hoogly and

was bought by a Bengali merchant for Rs. 100. The latter resold it in 1795 to Mr. John Collis for Rs. 435. In 1831 it again changed hands passing to Mr. James Nasmyth for Rs. 750, and it was then used for the manufacture of saltpetre. The protection of this factory from flood appears to have been the motive for constructing the Gandak embankment; and so important was its preservation considered that a special Embankment Committee was formed for the purpose in 1809.

The last remains of the ancient building of the Singia Factory were destroyed during the earthquake of 1934. Swami Satyadeva Parivrajak, the renowned tourist of India, stayed in the building of the factory in 1914, soon after his return from America and laid the foundation stone of the Hindi Hitaishini Sabha and Sarda Sadan Pustakalaya in the heart of Lalganj town. This place was visited by Gandhiji on the 14th March, 1934. Gandhiji had paid an earlier visit to the town on the 16th December, 1917 and presided over the annual function of the Hindi Hitaishini Sabha in commemoration of which the Gandhi Vachnalaya is functioning in the Sarda Sadan Pustakalaya. The site of the factory has been acquired by the Government and an inspection bungalow of the Public Works Department (Embankment Section) is located there.

Lalganj Municipality owed its origin in 1869, and is thus one of the oldest municipalities in the rural area. Its area is $7\frac{1}{2}$ square miles, divided in four wards and twenty-five *mahallas*. The Sarda Sadan Pustakalaya has a double-storied building with a valuable collection of old manuscripts. Near the Town Outpost No. 2 is the tomb of Udarma Pir.

Half a mile west of the town, near the one milestone on the Bettia Road lies the "Pathalka-Pokhar" where stands a Shiva temple built about two hundred years back. This tank was the main halting place up to 1885 before the advent of the Railways, for travellers and pilgrims by road and river between Nepal and Pataliputra.

Mahnar Bazar.—A village in the Hajipur subdivision situated at a distance of 20 miles from Hajipur on the bank of the river Ganga on the road from Hajipur to Mohaddinagar. The population according to the Census of 1951 is 9,214. It is an important trade centre for linseed, foodgrains, tobacco, etc.

Matala.—Four miles away from Lalganj there is a village Matala. There is a 'mahua' tree which produces 'bahera' fruit. The legend goes that this peculiar feature is due to a saint who asked for *mahua* and was refused on the pretext that it was 'bahera'. Upon which the saint cursed that henceforth it would grow only 'bahera'.

A site named Sati Chaura is situated in a field south-west of the *math* of Surjudas. The shrine under a *pipal* and *ashok* tree attracts a lot of visitors.

Motipur.—Motipur has a railway station on the Muzaffarpur-Narkatiaganj line of North Eastern Railway. It is connected with Muzaffarpur and Motihari by a Public Works Department road connecting the two district headquarters.

Previously there was a flourishing Indigo Factory at Motipur. With the decline of indigo industry, the concern was converted into a sugar factory. This sugar factory is one of the largest sugar factories in North Bihar. There is a high school, a middle school and a number of primary schools at Motipur. There is also a District Board Charitable Dispensary. A *hat* is held twice a week. Motipur has a population of 1,722 according to the Census of 1951, but this population fluctuates at the time of the actual crushing of sugarcane. It is now a township and is destined to develop.

Muzaffarpur town.—This town is situated on the southern bank of the Burhi Gandak and is the administrative headquarters of both Muzaffarpur district and Tirhut Division. The total population of the town in 1951 was 73,504. Muzaffarpur has good roads connecting the place with Hajipur and Sitamarhi, the two subdivisional headquarters of the district, and Darbhanga and Motihari, the two other district headquarters.

The town was founded sometime in 18th Century by one Muzaffar Khan, a farmer of Chakla Nai Pargana who appropriated for the purpose 75 bighas from the four villages of Sikandarpur in the north, Kanhauli on the east, Saidpur on the south and Saraiganj on the west. The town has an area of about 6 square miles. The town is protected from floods by an embankment known as Daudpur embankment. Muzaffarpur is an important regional railway headquarters. It has a regional office controlling a vast area of the North Eastern Railway. The railway station is a junction and railway lines radiate from here to Sonapur, Samastipur, Narkatiaganj and onwards. The town has been growing into commercial importance and with the linking up of the North Bihar with South Bihar through the rail-cum-road bridge at Mokameh, Muzaffarpur is bound to become the most important town in North Bihar. Being the headquarters of the administrative division of the district, a large number of Government offices are located here. They include the offices of the Divisional Commissioner, District Magistrate, Superintending Engineers, Executive Engineers, Assistant Director of Public Health, Deputy Director of Veterinary Services, Deputy Director of Agriculture, Income-tax Assistant Commissioner, Income-tax Officers, Commercial Taxes Superintendents, Assistant Commissioner of Labour, Employment Exchange, etc. There are three first grade Colleges, namely, Langat Singh College, formerly known as the Greer Bhumiher Brahman College, Ramdayalu Singh College and Mahanth Darshan Das Mahila (Girls') College. The Tirhut College of Engineering is a new institution while the old School of Engineering still functions. A Law College has been started recently. There are also a large number of high and other

standard schools for both boys and girls. There is a municipality looking after the sanitation and water supply of the town. The Electric Supply Company has made expansion owing to the development of the town. There are cinema houses and daily markets at various parts of the town. There is a very big cloth and grain market in the town. There is a big hospital maintained by Government. The Post Office along with the Telegraph and Telephone Offices have had great expansion recently.

Muzaffarpur has all the features of being the centre for an assembling industry. There are some excellent Engineering firms, the most important being Arthur Butlers who have had an existence of a century and ten years. Muzaffarpur has a large turn-over of various types of commodities and fruits. There are clubs, libraries and other cultural institutions. The "Prabhat-Tara" School started by the Roman Catholic Mission recently has become very popular.

Nanpur.—A village near the eastern boundary of the Sitamarhi subdivision which has stories associated with it. One story is that Nanpai who was in charge of the Emperor's horse brought the favourite charger of the emperor to this place for a change of air. Nanpai saw that the country east of the Baghmata river was very fertile and founded a small zamindari after reclaiming the area. Nanpai sent back the charger without returning himself. The emperor was angry and sent men to bring Nanpai to him. Nanpai gave out that he was acquiring the property for the emperor himself. This reply satisfied the emperor who made over the whole of the *pargana* to Nanpai. The other story is that on the emperor's going to hunt in Nepal, a tiger was met which Nanpai killed single-handed with his sword. The emperor rewarded him with the *pargana* round Nanpur. At Nanpur there is a big tank called *Bagh Pokhar* (tiger tank) in commemoration to this event.

Palmaul.—A village at the southern border of the headquarters subdivision, situated 11 miles south of Muzaffarpur. Markets are held twice a week, but the place is best known for the cattle market. There is an old fortress at the village.

Parihar.—A flourishing village of Sitamarhi subdivision which has an office of the Sub-Registrar and also a school.

Parsauni.—A village in the Sitamarhi subdivision, situated 9 miles south-west of Sitamarhi on the road from that place to Sheohar and 5 miles north-west of Belsand. Parsauni is the headquarters of the Parsauni Raj, which was founded in the 17th Century by a military adventurer named Pardil Singh. Later Pardil Singh was converted to Islam and became Pardil Khan. The emperor gave him the title of Raja in 1615 and the adventurer came to be known as Raja Pardil Khan, the founder of Parsauni Raj. He died in 1686 and his grave is at Saraiya, close to Belsand. One of his descendants Basawan Khan attached a large portion of the Nepal *tarai* and paid the East India Company over half a lakh of rupees as revenue for the Turki *pargana*.

During the time of his son, Ghulam Murtaza, Khan, the boundary between Nepal and British India was demarcated resulting in a loss to him of 1,400 villages which, it was decided, lay in Nepal. It is said that compensation was offered, but refused, the Raja being content with the promise that if these villages ever came to the British territory, the claims of the descendants would be considered.

Patepur Asthan.—The monastery was founded by Swami Jagarnath Das who was widely known for his practice of asceticism in 1128 Fasli. A grant of an extensive landed property was made to him by the then Emperor named Abdul Sah in 1138 Fasli. It is one of the big *mahanthships* in the district of Muzaffarpur. It maintains a Sanskrit *Pathsala* where students are given free board and lodge and also maintains an impressive *Thakurbari* (temple).

Rajpara.—A village in Sitamarhi subdivision which has remnants of an old fort. Another old site is *Barahi math*.

Sadar subdivision.—The area is 1,222 square miles. Its population in 1951 Census was 13,77,181. There are 10 thanas, namely, Town, Sadar, Kanti, Kurhani, Sakra, Minapur, Katra, Baruraj, Sahebganj and Paru. The density of the population now is 1,127 per square mile. The important town in Sadar subdivision is Muzaffarpur which is also the district headquarters. Motipur at a distance of 18 miles with a sugar mill is steadily growing into a township. With the development of communication and trade almost all the headquarters of the thanas are growing into small townships.

Sahebganj.—Situated at a distance of about 25 miles west of Muzaffarpur, Sahebganj is one of the important villages of the Sadar Subdivision. It has a thana which is the smallest in the Sadar Subdivision with a population of 67,346. Sahebganj police-station is on the border of Saran district, the natural boundary being the river Gandak. Sahebganj is connected from Muzaffarpur by road on two sides, i.e., *via* Deoria and *via* Motipur. Sahebganj has a small market place and *hats*.

Sarkhandi Bhita.—This village 2 miles to the east of the Murha river, has a considerable trade in grain, cloth and salt particularly with Nepal. This is one of the largest villages in the district, having a population of 7,035.

Sifakra.—It is situated at a distance of 18 miles from Muzaffarpur town. Shakra has a railway station, a police-station, a sub-registry office, a high school, a middle school and a number of primary schools.

Sitamarhi subdivision.—The area is 1,007 square miles. Its population was 9,86,582 in 1901 against 9,24,396 in 1891. In spite of the fact that it is particularly liable to suffer from famine and bore the brunt of the distress in 1896-97 this is the most progressive part of the district. Its population has been growing steadily since the first

Census in 1872; it attracts settlers both from Nepal and from the south of the district. The subdivision is divided into 4 police circles, namely, Sitamarhi, Belsand, Pupri and Sheohar. It has one town, Sitamarhi, its headquarters and 996 villages. Bairagnia on a branch of the North Eastern Railway has an important market for the frontier trade with Nepal. Of the total number of inhabitants, 8,42,280 are Hindus, 1,44,250 are Muhammadans, and 52 are Christians. The density of the population is as high as 971 per square mile. The average number of villages and houses per square mile is 1 and 173 respectively and the average population of each village is 981. The population according to 1951 Census is 12,01,086.

The subdivision is divided into 4 Revenue Thanas, viz., Sitamarhi, Pupri, Sheohar and Belsand and 10 police-stations, viz., Bela, Belsand, Bairagnia, Majorganj, Pupri, Runisaidpur, Sheohar, Sursand, Sonebarsa and Sitamarhi.

Sitamarhi town.—Headquarters town of the subdivision of the same name. It is situated on the west bank of the Lakhandei river, which is spanned here by a fine brick bridge. The population according to 1951 Census is 13,267. The town is situated on a branch of the North Eastern Railway. It is also connected by road with the Nepal frontier, Darbhanga and Muzaffarpur. The town is of great commercial importance and has a large turn-over in rice, timber, oil-seeds, hides and various kinds of produce from Nepal. A large fair, celebrating the *Ramnavāmi*, i.e., the day of Rama's birth, is held here in Chait (March-April). It lasts for a fortnight and is attended by thousands from very great distances. Pottery, spices, brass utensils and cotton cloth form the staple articles of commerce; but the fair is especially noted for the large number of bullocks brought to it.

Sitamarhi is a sacred place in Hindu mythology as tradition relates that here Sita sprang to life out of an earthen pot, into which King Janak drove his ploughshare. The tank, called the *Janki-kund*, from which she is said to have arisen, is still pointed out, but Panaura, a village three miles to the south-west, also claims the honour. The town, however, contains no relics of any archaeological interest. The temple of Janki, i.e., Sita, the daughter of Janak, is apparently modern and not more than 70 or 80 years old; it contains three stone figures with mother-of-pearl eyes which represent Rama, Sita and Lakshmana. The legend connected with the temple shows, however, that it occupies an old site. It is said that King Janak excavated a tank at the place where Sita sprang to life, and after her marriage set up the figures of Rama, Sita and Lakshmana to mark the site; this tank is the *Janki kund* just to the south of the temple. In course of time, the land lapsed into jungle, till about 500 years ago, when a Hindu ascetic, named Birbal Das, came to know the site by divine inspiration where Sita was born. He came down from Ajodhya and cleared the jungle. Here he found the images set up by Janak, and having built a temple over them, commenced the worship of Janki or Sita. The income of

the temple which is large, is derived mainly from the offerings of pilgrims, but the *mahanth*, who is responsible for its preservation, also enjoyed the revenues of an endowment, called the *taluka* Sitamarhi, which was set aside for its maintenance. In the same compound there are three other temples sacred to Hanuman, Mahadeo and Ganesh, which are quite modern; and to the south stands a mausoleum erected over the ashes of the first three *mahanths* Birbal Das and his two successors. Sitamarhi being the headquarters of the subdivision bearing that name has the subdivisional courts and other administrative and revenue offices.

Subhegarh.—An old ruined fort, 18 miles to the north-west of Muzaffarpur, is situated in a bend of the Joga river, an old branch of the Baghmata. The fort is 1,300 feet long by 400 feet, and according to the local tradition, marks the site of the residence of Raja Suhel Deb. The Raja, it is said, was the last of his race and had only one daughter Suhel Devi who rejected all the suitors and at last consented to marry a man who should be able to count the myriads of palm trees in the fort. This task was accomplished by a Dusadh and the princess in order to escape the shame of being married to a man of a low caste prayed that the earth would open and swallow her up. Her prayer was heard and the earth at once opened under her.

The only remains of the sculpture in the fort consist of a broken pedestal of stone with some small figures carved on it. General Cunningham found two copper coins of Tughlak Shah at Subhegarh. There are some Muhammadan tombs near about, two of which are of Ghulam Mohiuddin and Muhammad Jaffar.

Tirhut.—The ancient name for the tract of country bounded on the north by the Himalayas, on the south by the Ganga, on the west by the river Gandak and on the east by the river Kosi. Tirhut comprised the districts of Champaran, Muzaffarpur and Darbhanga, as well as the strip of Nepal *tarai* which runs between these districts and the lower ranges of the Himalayas. The name is a corruption of *Tirabhukti*, or the river side land; and General Cunningham considers that the term referred to the lands lying in the valleys of the Little Gandak and Baghmata rivers. He points out that all the chief places in the country are found upon the banks of the former river, which, he says, must have been the channel of the Great Gandak until the 7th Century A. D. Mahamahopadhyaya Hara Prasad Sastri thought that the term meant a province bordering on the Ganga and that the word *bhukti* is often used in the Sena inscriptions in the sense of the province during the 10th, 11th and 12th centuries.

According to tradition, Tirhut is the land in which the three great mythical *homas* (sacrificial fires) were performed—one at the birth of Sita in or near Sitamarhi, the second at Dhanukha at the foot of the Himalayas, where the great celestial bow of Hara was broken by Rama, and the third at Janakpur, the capital of Mithila (now in Nepal) at the marriage of Sita.

Under the Mughal Empire, Tirhut formed an important *sarkar* or division of the *subah* or province of Bihar. It comprised a very large tract of country which included the present districts of Muzaffarpur and Darbhanga, nearly the whole of Bhagalpur and Saharsa, and a small portion of Monghyr. In the early days of British administration, *sarkar* Tirhut was a very large district, covering the present districts of Muzaffarpur and Darbhanga, a portion of Bhagalpur, *pargana* Kashmar in the south-east corner of Saran, and *pargana* Bhadi Bhusari in the south-western corner of Monghyr. The headquarters of the district remained at Muzaffarpur, but various transfers of territory were made until the area of Tirhut coincided with that of Muzaffarpur and Darbhanga. It was divided into two in 1875, the eastern and the larger portion being formed into the district of Darbhanga, and the western portion being constituted into the district of Muzaffarpur.

Turki.—This village is situated at a distance of 8 miles from Muzaffarpur town. Turki is growing into importance as a Basic College which is the main centre of training in the art of Basic education, a training college for the teachers and a centre for training social workers, have been set up. It is both connected by rail and road with Muzaffarpur and Hajipur.

Vaisali (Modern Basarh).—Vaisali or modern Basarh is a village in the north-west corner of the Hajipur subdivision, situated 20 miles north-west of Hajipur. It has been identified as the birth-place of Mahabir, the 24th *Tirthankar* of Jainism (traditional dates 599-527 B. C.). It was also the capital of the powerful confederacy of the Lichchhavis. It was thrice visited by Buddha. It was the scene of the second great Buddhist Council and it long remained a stronghold of Buddhism. It was at Vaisali that Buddha permitted the order of nuns against his own wish at the instance of Anand and his foster-mother Maha Prajapati who became the first Buddhist nun at Vaisali.

Although Vaisali came into prominence in 6th Century B. C., it is said to have been founded by King Vishala of the solar dynasty. The splendour of the city is described in the *Ramayan* of Valmiki according to which Rama on his way to Janakpur passed one night here as the guest of the King of Vaisali. Later on, Vaisali turned into a Republic and became a stronghold of democratic and progressive ideas under the rule of the Lichchhavis. It had trade relations with distant countries. It became a part of the Maurya Empire (4th-3rd centuries B. C.). The coins of Kadphises II, Kanishka and Huvishka (1st-2nd centuries A. D.) found here prove that the Kushans had ruled over it for a considerable period. Vaisali rose again in the 4th century A. D. It played an important part in the foundation and consolidation of the Gupta Empire. Many coins and seals of that period have been found here. It attracted the notice of Islam as well and contains a mausoleum of a famous Muslim Saint Shah Qazin (1485-1495 A. D.), who came from Maner (Panna district) and devoted his life to the preaching of Islam in North Bihar.

Not much is left to recall its ancient greatness. The principal remains consist of a huge mound known locally as the fort (*garh*) of Raja Visal: the close correspondence of the name of this eponymous local chieftain with the name of the city is obvious. The following description of the remains, as they existed in 1871 is slightly condensed from General Cunningham's account:—

“ The remains consist of a large deserted fort and a ruined brick *stupa*. The fort is a large brick-covered mound of earth, with round towers at the four corners; and the whole is surrounded by a ditch. The ruined ramparts along the edge, and four towers at the corners, are somewhat higher than the mass of the mound, which has a general elevation from 6 to 8 feet above the country. The main entrance was in the middle of the south face where there still exists a broad embankment across the ditch as well as a passage through the rampart. In the northern face there was probably only a postern gate, as there is no passage through the rampart and no trace of any embankment across the ditch, excepting the fact that the only dry part of the ditch is on this face. The only building within the fort is a small brick temple of modern date.

“ Outside the south-west angle of the fort, and about 1,000 feet distant, there is a ruined mound of solid brickwork, 23 feet 8 inches in height above the fields. The whole of the top has been levelled for the reception of Musalman tombs of which the largest, ascribed to Mir Abdal, is said to be 500 years old. On the south edge of the mound there is a magnificent wide-spreading banyan tree, supported on numerous trunks, which shades the whole of the tombs. On the same side also a flight of steps leads down to the village Basarh. This brick mound is the ruin of one of the *stupas* or solid towers of Vaisali, of which so many are described by Hiuen Tsang. Both within and without and all round the town of Vaisali, says he, ‘ the sacred monuments are so many that it would be difficult to enumerate them ’. It is much to be regretted that the presence of the Musalman tombs on the top of this ancient *stupa* effectually precludes any attempt at excavation. An annual fair is held at the Basarh *stupa* in the month of Chait, when many thousands of people assemble at the shrine of Mir Abdal. As the occurrence of this fair is regulated by the solar reckoning of the Hindus and not by the lunar year of the Muhammadans, I conclude that the festival was established long before the time of the Musalman saint. I would, therefore, as the fair is held beside the ruined *stupa*, connect the festival with some celebrations in the honour of Buddha, or one of his disciples. ”

Nineteen years later General Cunningham found that the walls had entirely disappeared, but the ramparts and ditches still remained. The fort now forms an elevated piece of land of oblong shape, almost one mile in circumference. The longest sides run from north to south, about 1,700 feet long, and the shorter ones from east to west, about 800 feet in length. It is surrounded by a ditch 125 feet broad, where water still exists in some places, but the land is almost entirely under cultivation. The height of the plateau from the bottom of the ditch is 15 feet on the average. The surface of the fort is undulating, with a well-marked deep depression a little north of the centre, and with two smaller depressions running through the centre, from north to south and from east to west. To the south, an embankment still exists, evidently the remains of the high road leading to the fort. There are many holes in the surface made by the villagers digging for bricks or seeking treasure but there are no surface indications of any structural remains. In the south-western corner stands a modern temple containing some curious brass images, and the ground round it has been fenced off and is cultivated by the priests. A modern temple west of the village near the tank called the Bawan Pokhar, contains some mediæval statues said to have been dug out of the tank. In the neighbourhood are several fine sheets of water and a large number of small tanks. Local tradition states that there were 52 tanks, and that Basarh was the residence of the Puranic Bali Raja. Vishnu appeared here in his fourth incarnation in the shape of a dwarf, and asked Bali Raja for as much ground as he could cover with his three feet. Two feet covered the heaven and earth, and the third he placed on the head of Bali Raja and sent him to hell as punishment for his overweening pride. The natives of the place say that the ' Bawan Pokhar ' or 52 tanks mark the scene of this occurrence. General Cunningham however points out that the abundance of tanks is a common feature of Buddhist sites.

Excavations were carried out in the fort by Doctor Bloch, Archaeological Surveyor, Bengal Circle, in 1904 and remains of masonry buildings were found in every place explored. Some of them were just below the surface and did not go further than a few feet. These buildings cannot have been very old, and afford some evidence of the place having been inhabited only a few centuries ago. Others, which were found at a depth of about 5 feet reaching generally as far as 9 or 10 feet down, probably represent the remains of the ruined buildings seen by Hiuen Tsang in the 7th Century A. D. There is evidence that they go back to at least 300 A. D., but they may have been still older. The foundations of the old buildings only have remained, and they show that as a rule the rooms and chambers were remarkably small. The floors were of concrete with a layer of bricks; the houses themselves were tiled; and the top of the roof must have been crowned by small pinnacles. All the buildings discovered were secular and no remains of temples were found. Ashes and small fragments of burnt wood were found on all sides and there is every probability that the

plate was sacked and plundered. The most interesting discovery was a large quantity of inscribed seals, over 700 in number. Nearly all were discovered in a room which was in all probability used for the deposit of refuse, as they were found mixed up with broken pottery, bones, burnt rice, ashes and other rubbish. These seals were originally attached to letters or other literary documents which must have decayed quickly in the damp soil. They belonged partly to officials, partly to private persons, generally bankers and merchants many of whom belonged to mercantile guilds; and they were entirely secular with the exception of one bearing the mark of a *linga* with a *trisul* on each side, which is clearly the seal of the temple. Probably this seal bears the oldest figure of a *linga* which has as yet been found in India. Like the rest of the seals, it dates back to the 4th or 5th Century A. D. It is a matter of some local interest that the ancient name of Tirhut, Tirabhukti, occurs on two of the seals.

The second series of excavations was started in 1912 by Dr. Spooner, Superintendent of Archaeological Survey in the Eastern Circle. He went down to a depth of 16 to 18 feet. Several large square bricks of an antiquity and a large number of seals and pieces of pottery were, however, discovered. A few of the seals are ascribable to about the 3rd Century B. C. Seals and a few coins and some well-preserved terracottas were indeed the only important finds of the season's work. In spite of the best efforts of Cunningham, Dr. Bloch and Dr. Spooner the enclosing walls of the fortress and also of the Royal palace of ancient Vaisali yet remain to be excavated. The finds made by Dr. Spooner are kept in the Patna Museum.

In 1945 Sri J. C. Mathur, I.C.S., Subdivisional Officer, Hajipur took the initiative and with the help of others founded the Vaisali Sangh with a view to bring into prominence the ruins of Vaisali and to redeem it from the neglect. Every year on the birth-day of Mahabir (i.e., *Chait Sudi 13*) the Vaisali festival is held under the auspices of the Vaisali Sangh. The Sangh also intended to establish the Vaisali Institute of Post-Graduate Studies and Research in Prakrit and Jainology, to provide facilities for higher studies and original researches in Prakrit and Jain learning in all their branches and to prepare and publish critical editions and translations of the hitherto unpublished Prakrit and Jain literature.* The Superintendent, Archaeological Department, Bihar Circle, had made excavations in 1950 which led to important finds. Sri S. A. Shere, Curator of Patna Museum, writes as follows :—

“ The vessels found at Vaisali are mostly red wares with red slip. Fragments having leaf design showing admixture of mica flakes and decorated with “ rain drop ” pattern are interesting specimens of this collection. The use of mica in earthenwares to impart lustrous surface may be

*The State has since sponsored an Institute for these objects at Vaisali.

common in those days as articles found in Pataliputra and Patna also show the same characteristic. Some of the fragments have been found to be ornamented and decorated in high relief. There are specimens which are decorated with incised lines and geometrical design. There are also some yellow, green, brown, grey and black polished potsherds such as the beautiful fragment of glazed dish the upper surface of which shows pattern of radiating rays with border. Its colour is yellow ground with green and brown lines having plain light yellow colour for the outer surface. There are fragments which have blue, black glaze. Some of the grave wares have black slip and are highly polished. There are dishes which have a painted base and rim". (*Homage to Vaisali*, p. 82.)

While repairing the road at Kharauna Pokhar an ancient concrete road has been exposed to view and it was probably the royal road connecting Vanijgram and the Garh.

Vaisali Museum has been built by the Vaisali Sangh at Chak Ramdas. There is a valuable collection of the local finds made through community efforts.

MELAS*

Birahama.—Held during the rains on *Nagpanchmi* day to commemorate the worship of snakes. There is a large congregation of men. A large sale of pigs is held. The income of the *mela* is appropriated by a high school in the same village.

Bisahar.—This *mela* is held at Bharopur on *Sravan Sudi Panchmi* day in honour of the worship of snakes. It is said that a number of wizards assemble at the *mela* and chant hymns. The congregation consists mostly of women.

Charaut.—Occurs twice a year, on the occasion of *Basant Panchmi* day of Falgun and in the month of Baisakh or April.

Hardi.—Held on *Basant Panchmi* day and continues for about two or three weeks and is noted for a cattle fair.

Jaintpur.—A big cattle fair on *Dashahara* day is held at Jaintpur and continues for about a fortnight. It is noted for the sale of cattle and consumers goods. The *mela* is well attended.

Jajuar.—There is nothing particular about this *mela*, held during the *Dashahara* festival excepting that there is a huge congregation of people and good business of ordinary goods is done.

Kamtaul Jagdish.—This *mela* is held during the *Nagpanchmi* day in the month of Sravan. It is meant for the worship of snakes and the

*If not specifically mentioned the *mela* has taken its name from the place where it is held.

very large congregation of people during the *mela* indicates that serpent worship has still a very big hold on the mind of the people.

Konharaghat.—People attending this *mela* on *Kartik Purnima* have a dip into the holy water of the river Gandak. The local tradition mentions that there was a duel fight between an elephant and a crocodile which has been referred to under Konharaghat separately. The *mela* lasts only for two days and has a religious sanctity.

Khajuri.—There is a big turn-over in cattle in this *mela* in the month of January.

Kokilwarah.—This *mela* is held on *Phalgun Shivaratri* and has a big turn-over in cattle.

Mahua.—Cattle and wooden furniture are largely sold in this *mela* during *Dashahara* festival.

Panapur.—Thousands of persons visit this *mela* lasting a week, in the month of October. The principal feature of it is the sacrifice of a large number of he-goats before the Goddess Durga (Vashmi Devi). After sacrifice the goats are consigned to flames. It is understood that even 18,000 goats had been sacrificed in 1952.

Parsauni.—This is also a cattle fair and starts in the wake of Sheohar *mela*.

Ramchaura.—This *mela* is held every year on *Ramnavami* day. The local tradition is that Shri Ramchandra had halted here for a bath on his way to Janakpur. There are some marks on stone which are said to be his foot-prints.

Rautinia.—It occurs twice a year in October and in April. This *mela* in Kanti police-station is particularly noted for the sale and purchase of bullocks.

Rewah.—Held at village Rewa, police-station Paru, during *Kartik Purnima* and all the eclipses. It is essentially a religious *mela* and is attended by a large assembly of men.

Sheohar.—It is a cattle *mela* lasting for ten days which is held every year in the month of Baisakh. There is no religious background.

Sitamarhi Bibah Panchmi.—Held at Sitamarhi and starts on the *Bibah Panchmi* day of Aghan and continues for ten days. It is a fair mainly for sale and purchase of elephants, horses, bullocks and miscellaneous articles.

Sitamarhi Ramnavami.—This is a very old *mela* and there is a great turn-over in cattle. It is said that this is the largest cattle fair in North Bihar. It starts on the *Chait Ramnavami* day and lasts for a fortnight. Besides cattle, timber and miscellaneous articles are also sold here. This is one of the biggest *melas* in the district and attracts a very large number of persons.

Susta.—Also known as Susta *Bibah Panchmi mela*. It is held during *Aghan Bibah Panchmi* day. An important cattle fair is held in this *mela*.

Turki.—This *mela* is held at village Turki, police-station Kurhani. This is commonly known as Sri Mahadeva *mela*. It is held in early May and although religious in character it is marked by a large sale of cattle.

(Some purely cattle fairs are also held among which Madhurapur, Sonebarsa, Barharwa, Babhangama, Bagaha and Manikchak *melas* are more important.)