

**A SHORT SKETCH OF THE
EARLY HISTORY OF THE
TOWN AND ISLAND OF
BOMBAY, HINDU PERIOD**

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A Short Sketch of the Early History of the Town and Island of Bombay, Hindu Period by
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TOWN & ISLAND OF BOMBAY.

HINDU PERIOD.

BY
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1902.

PREFACE.

THE following short sketch was written at the suggestion of S. M. Edwardes, Esq., I.C.S., about a year ago, and a portion of it has appeared in that officer's Census Report, Volume X, Part IV, History of Bombay. But as Mr. Edwardes has utilized only as much portion of it as was needful for the purposes of his Census Report, and as copies of the Census Report containing the History of Bombay are not available for the general public, at the suggestion of certain friends, it is considered advisable to publish the sketch in its present shape. It is mostly intended for private circulation, and the writer has no desire to make any profits out of the sale-proceeds of the book.

Hitherto, most of the writers of the history of Bombay have confined their labours to describing the events that occurred from the date of the occupation and possession of this island, by the Portuguese and the British Governments. The history prior to these periods was considered a sealed letter. The reason for this is not far to seek. Most of these writers, being Europeans or

foreigners, had no direct knowledge of, or access to, the rare and valuable materials and information that could be gathered from the descendants of the followers of Bhimadev or from other ancient families. But, when we find that even the story of the advent of Bhima Raja, was, in certain quarters, disbelieved or considered as a myth, we can easily account for the apathy shown by these writers, in this direction.

Since the following sketch was written, some interesting and valuable information has come to hand from different sources regarding Bhima Raja and his successors, the most important piece of information being the discovery of the site of the ancient city of Pratappur in the village of Parjapur near Marol. According to Marathi accounts and local traditions, it is believed that Pratapdev built a new city near Marol, in Salsette, and called it Pratappur after his own name. With a view to obtaining some traces of this ancient city near Marol, Mr. S. M. Edwardes and the writer of this sketch went on the 29th of December, 1901, to Parjapur, and there, after a most careful and lengthy search, were discovered three images of Hindu goddesses (buried under ground), and traces of

about six temples and an equal number of ponds. A full account of this has already appeared in the *Times of India* of the 16th of April, 1902.*

The identity of the Bhima Raja of Bombay is still in dispute. Dr. G. DaCunha and others hold that he was a Gujarat monarch, and in his "Origin of Bombay," Dr. Cunha has tried to identify him with the Bhimadev of the Chalukya dynasty, who flourished at Anahilwada about the year 1024, and who, on his being defeated by the notorious Mahomed of Ghazni, fled to Baglan. But, this theory is not borne out by any authentic historical evidence; and how the learned writer has failed in this attempt has been clearly shown at pages 15-18 of this treatise. On the other hand, the language, dress, names and localities of family deities, names and surnames, and traditions† and records of the followers of the Bhima

* *Vide* Appendix B.

† A. M. T. Jackson, Esq., M.A., I.C.S., has given special attention to the study of the available literature and traditions about Bhima Raja, and his special proficiency in Sanskrit and Marathi has afforded him great facilities in his investigations. A special interest, therefore, attaches to his opinion on this subject. In a letter dated London, 3rd July, 1901, Mr. Jackson says:—"Your information about Bhima Raja is interesting and valuable. The traditions of the Madhyandina Brahmans of Thana are all in favour of a Deccan home and confirm the connection of Bhima Raja with Mungi Paithan."

Raja of Bombay all tend to prove, that he and his followers, originally belonged to the Dekkan, and that they came to the North Konkan, by the way of Gujarat. I do not claim finality for the views expressed by me on this point. I am open to correction, and any suggestions or fresh evidence in support of, or against, the views expressed in this treatise will be welcome. We have set the ball in motion; and the field for fresh research and final success is wide open for any one who wishes to work and win the laurels.

P. B. JOSHI.

BOMBAY, *1st June* 1902.

EARLY HISTORY
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HINDU PERIOD.

CHAPTER I.



OF the early history of the town and island of Bombay very little is known. None of the writers, who have written works on Bombay, has attempted to give to the public a connected narrative of the history of the island from the earliest times. This is, to some extent, due to want of materials, as some of these which are now available were not then known or procurable; and even now, one in search of materials for writing the early history of the Konkan or of Bombay (the early history of Bombay being closely connected with that of the Northern Konkan), must content himself with what little information he can gather from old docu-

ments, coins, inscriptions in cave-temples, copperplate grants, patents, and similar other antiquarian relics.

The earliest mention (by European writers) of the town and island of Bombay appears to have been by Ptolemy, (A.D. 150), who calls the islands of Bombay and Salsette under the name of *Heptanesia*, or the Seven Islands. Ptolemy calls the Konkan "Ariaka," and according to this writer, the whole of the province of Ariaka was under the sovereignty of the lord of Tagar. By the early Sanskrit writers of the Puranic period the Konkan is called "Aparanta" or "Aparantak," and the name Ariaka given by Ptolemy can, thus, be easily identified with the Sanskrit name "Aparantaka." From the rock inscriptions of the famous King Asoka which are now found at Girnar in Kathiawar, **The Mauryas.** at Khalsi in the Himalayas, and at Shahabazgarhi in the Afghan territory, we find that in the middle of the third century before Christ, Asoka sent his ministers of the religion of Buddha, to Rastikas, Pethanikas, and Aparantas.¹ In the Mahavanso² (a Ceylonese chronicle), it is stated that the Buddhist high-priest, Moggaliputto, under the direction of King Asoka, sent preachers of Buddhism to Maharatta, Aparanta and Banavasi. King Asoka was the grandson of the celebrated Chandragupta

¹ Inscriptions of Ashoka, Vol. II, 84.

² Turnour's Mahavanso, pp. 71-73.