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HANSI-A HISTORICAL TOWN (A BRIEF HISTORY OF HANSI REGION-EARLIEST TIMES TO 12TH C. A.D.)

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Abstract:-Hansi is the tehsil headquarter of Hisar district in Haryana. It is situated in 290 06' north latitude and 760 58' east longitudes at a distance of about 26 kms. East of Hisar and 138 kms. West of Delhi, on Delhi- Sirsa National Highway. The tehsil has been further divided into two blocks, i.e. Hansi-1 and Hansi- 2. Both, the tehsil and the blocks derive their names from the headquarter town Hansi. The nomenclature of Hansi has been variously explained in local traditions. A tradition still prevalent among the people of the town ascribes that at the time of construction of the fort of Hansi, its wall collapsed again and again. An astronomer was consulted who advised human sacrifice. A man from nearby village Pali, named Assa, offered himself for the purpose. He was cemented alive in the wall of the fort and the ruler of the region gives him full royal honors for his supreme sacrifice. The fort-town when constructed was named after him. This version is supported by another folk-tale that "Assi Assa Jata ki Killa Pithora Ray ka" It recognizes the contribution of Assa Jata to the foundation of the town while the contribution of the fort it attributes to Prithviraja. According to Conningham Asa, the Jata, conquered and proclaimed himself king of citadel. Calling it after his name Asa, which, by the dialectic modifications of succeeding ages, has become Hansi.

 $\textbf{Keywords:} Historical\ Town\ , nomenclature\ , advised\ human\ sacrifice.$

INTRODUCTION

A third popular tradition connects the name Hansi with laughter of smile, which came over the face of Amba, an ailing daughter of king Anangapala, who, after coming to the place recouped her vigour and vitality. The king thus named the city as Hansi (laughter). According to Dwivedi the town of Hansi was founded by Drupada, son of King Anangapala Tomera, on the periphery of the Tomer territory while in the contemporary inscriptions it has been mentioned as Asika. The Hansi and Bijolia inscriptions of the Chauhana dynasty of the years 1164 and 1168 respectively mantion it as Asika. The local people still call it Ansi not Hansi, which latter appellation was given to the town by the Muslim writers. The local people still call it Ansi not Hansi, which latter appellation was given to the town by the Muslim writers.

The antiquity of Hansi region is traced back to the prehistoric times as is attested by the discovery of sites of this period. Archeological explorations have revealed that the earliest inhabitants of this region belonged to pre Harappan culture whose remains have been discovered five sites. A number of similarities in decorated designs, color and types of pottery of this culture with those of central and northern Baluchitan, probably suggest that these agricultural communities migrated from that area to Indian plains and the Haryana region was occupied by them about the middle of the third millennium B.C. As none of the sites have been excavated it would not be possible to say anything precisely on the cultures of this region. In the context of the pre Harappan culture, some idea can, however, be gathered from the excavated evidence of the neighboring sites like Kalibangan, Siswal, Banawali, Mitathal and Balu¹².

The evidence obtained from these excavated sites show that the pre Harappans built their houses of mud or sun-dried bricks with thatched roofs or huts of reeds plastered with clay. Their habitation at Banawali was a fortified settlement. The discovery of a ploughed field at Kalibangan and terracotta plough from Banawali suggests that agriculture and cattle rearing formed the economic base of this earliest farming culture. Bullock carts were their source of traveling and transportation. They used querns and mullers of stone for grinding corn which also suggests

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their cultivation of cereals. Graffiti marks found on the pots indicate their efforts to learn writing towards the later phase.¹³

The second phase of in the history of the region is marked by the advent of the Harappans who's most significant settlements are those discovered at Banawali¹⁴ and Rakhigarhi¹⁵. These people were versatile in building planned and fortified townships in the classical &hess-board pattern &hose striking features were streets, defense walls and sanitary arrangements. They used well fired painted pottery and their food included barely, meat and fish. Their seals are an indication of expert craftsmanship. Their cubical and gamesman types of weights made of stone and ivory show a high degree of precision. Their skill in metallurgy is evident from their copper and gold ornaments while their terracotta figurines speak of their interest in folk art. The general features of the culture show closer affinities with those of the Harappans residing in northern Rajasthan then with the people Indus valley suggesting that the settlers migrated to Haryana as colonizers probably from Rajasthan.¹⁶

The people belonging to phase of the late Harappan culture are known as Late Harappans (1700-11500 B.C.). The cultural remains of these people have been discovered at Banawali, Mitathal, Balu, Mirjapur, Daulatpur and other explored sites on the old course of the Drshdvati. This phase of cultural complex revealed disintegration of the urban life in the favor of smaller settlements concentrated on the fertile belts. The degradation in the standard of living can be seen in the inferior pottery, rarity of art forms, conspicuous absence of the script, seals, clay-bangles, steatite beads and weights. The decline of the Harappan culture in the region may be brought about the various causes-desiccation and spread of desert, rise in the underground water level, salinity, decrease in the fertility of the soil or natural decay and agricultural inefficiency. Perhaps decay of agriculture was also accentuated by chance in climate conditions.

The next phase of Hansi region is attested by the advent of the Painted Grey Ware people generally identified with the Aryans who settled on the bank of the Saraswati and the Drshadvati. In the region of Hansi the PGW people probably settled about 1000 B.C. or little earlier. The remains of the PGW culture have so far been recovered form only one site, i.e. Bir Hansi.

The region was closely associated with the political and cultural life of the Bharatas, the Kurus and the Purus, the prominent tribes of the Aryans. The area was probably included in the kingdom of the Pandavas and their successors. The Jain Uttaradhyana Sutra mentions a town Isukara in the Kuru country. Panini mentions a few town of the region like Aisukari, Taushayana and Roni which have been identified with Hisar, Tohana and Rori respectively. Since according to the Puranas, the Kuru Janapada was included in the Nanda Empire, the region of the present study seem to have formed a part of it.

In the absence of any excavation in the region of the present study we have to depend on other PGW sites lying in the neighboring areas for an understanding of the material life of the people representing the PGW culture. The PGW is made on wheel and painted in black with simple liner or dotted designs. It is grey in appearance with a core of well levigated clay and fine thin well burnt fabric. The existence of fever PGW sites on the course of the Drshadvati in the region of Hansi seems to be very much connected with the ancient hydrograph of the region. Suraj Bhan²¹ has suggested that the Saraswati and the Drshadvati were possibly cut by the Yamuna in their upper courses which also contributed to the decline of the Harappan and later on also the PGW culture, forcing the people to move to north-east across the Yamuna in search of better living conditions.

The region was possibly under the domination of the Mauryas also as is the attested by the discovery of Asokan pillar at Hissar, ²² Fatehabad ²³ and Topra²⁴ (Ambala distt.). Chaderagupta Maurya was the first Mauryan ruler who brought this region under the Mauryan domination as Bindusara and Asoka made no conquest in this part but region formed a part of Mauryan Empire during the region of Asoka and his successors also.

After the fall of the Mauryas and the Sungas, the Agras along with Yaudheyas asserted independence and settled in the region covering Agroha, Barwala (Hisar district) and Naurangabad (Bhiwani district). They issued their coins, mostly of copper and a few of silver during the 2^{nd} century B.C. which have been recovered from Naurangabad and Hansi.²⁵

Towards the end of the 2nd century B.C. or in the beginning of the first century B.C., the Yaudheya rule in the area was replaced by that of the Indo-Greeks, a number of whose coins have been discovered from Agroha and their coin-moulds from Naurangabad. According to Tarn The territories of the Audambaras, Kunindas. The Indo-Greek coins are noting a mere chance discovery. The coins belonging to more than 14 Indo-Greek kings have been found at Khokhrakot, among coins and coin-moulds from Naurangabad and Agroha. All the kings whose coins have been found at various places might not have ruled in the region but the discovery of their coins and coin-moulds from the region is of wide significance. It is probable that after the death of Pusyamitra Sunga the Greeks might have attacked the republics and subdued them and ruled the region till their rule was supplanted by the Scythians, also known as the Sakas. The absence of the coins of the Sakas in the region is an indication that the Saka over lordship was nominal in the region. No doubt a lion capital belonging to the Saka period has been discovered from the ruins of Khokharakot (Rohtak) similar to the Mathura lion-capital of the time of Rajuvula and therefore, Khokhrakot specimen may be placed in the same period. This possibly indicates indirect Saka domination over the region.

The region also formed a part of the empire of the Kaniska as is attested from the discovery of coin-moulds and terracotta from Naurangabad and coins from Hansi. 32 The Yaudheyas who had already appeared on the political scene by striking their coins towered the end of the 2nd century B.C., re-appeared on the scene challenging the Kusana-hold over the region, which might not have been possible for them during the times of Kaniska and Huviska (A.D.78-138). According to A.S. Alteker³³ the Yaudheyas who made a second bid for independence towered the end of the 2nd century A.D., came out successfully in their venture and succeeded in freeing their homeland and ousting the Kusanas beyond the Sutlej. This finds support in the discovery of some of their coins in conjugation with those of the Kusanas at Hansi and of the Agroha seal which mentions the titles- Maharaja Mahakshatiapa Mahasenapati assumed by the head of their republic.³⁴ The ultimate victory of the Yaudheyas in their struggle against the Kusanas is also evident from the types of coins showing the standing figure of war-god Kartikeya with spear in his right hand, the left hand placed on the hip, a peacock nearby and on the reverse the figure of a goddess with right hand raised, and specially their seals testifying to their reputation as invincible warriors. Omanand Saraswati³⁵ holds the view that the Yaudhevas defeated the Kusanas thrice. After the first victory they issued the coins with legend- Yaudheva ganasya jaya While after the second victory they added the word Itvi at the end of the legend and subsequently the word 'tri' was added instead of 'dvi'. A.S. Altekar regarded the word 'dvi' as mysterious and suggested that the Yaudheyas may have founded some 'loose confederation' with the Arjunayans and the Kunindas, and the word 'dvi' and 'tri' indicate the second and third member of confederation.

About the middle of the 4th century A.D. the Yaudheyas submitted to the expansionist policy of Samunderagupta, but were perhaps allowed to maintain their existence as tax-paying autonomous people and after that very little is known about them. Very little direct evidence of the Guptas are met within this region. The coins of Samundragupta are the only direct evidence regarding the Gupta rule over the region. A hoard of 86 gold coins contained in earthen pot was found from Mitathal, (district Bhiwani), ³⁶ which is the neighboring part of the Hansi region. On the bases of Tosham (district Bhiwani) inscription, ³⁷ it can be suggested that the region was under the hold of Visnugupta, the last of the imperial Guptas.

During the region of the Skandgaupta the Hunas invaded India. As no Huna coin has been recovered from the region it would be difficult to say that is was also subjected to their rule.

In the 7th century A.D. the region formed a part of the Srikantha Janapada ruled by the Puspabhutis and thereafter it passed under the rule of Bhandi, the cousin of Harsa, who probably succeeded to the latter's personal kingdom at Thanesar after the transfer of capital to Kannaus.³⁸ Bhandi was perhaps made in charge of the kingdom of Sthanisvara because he was most trustworthy companion of Harsavardhana. Neither Bana nor Hieun-Tsang provides any specific detail of what happened in the Hansi region after sifting of the capital to Kannauj. It is not unlikely that Krisna, who has been mentioned by Bana as Harsha's distant brother, possibly a cousin or step-brother, born of one of the subordinate wives of Parbhakaravardhana, might possibly have been left in charge of Hansi. It may be pointed out that this is nothing more than a conjecture and may be accepted as such till any concrete evidence comes to our hands. Bhandi was also associated with Harsha's military campaigns. When after the death of Harsha confusion and anarchy spread over a considerable portion of north India. Bhandi established himself over the Haryana Region and his family continued to rule there till the time of Vatsaraja, ³⁹ the Pratihara king. The Gwalior inscription of Mihirabhoja informs us that his great grandfather Vatsaraja forcibly wrested the empire from the famous Bhandi clan. We know of no other Bhandi except the one referred to in the Harsacharita.

Yasovarman, the king of Kannauj, during the first half of the 8th century A.D. brought the Hansi region under his sway. The poet Vakpatiraja describes Yasovarman's march through Maru (Rajasthan desert), Srikantha and Kurukshetra and places connected with the Bharata war. ⁴⁰ But Yasovarman's rule over this region was short lived, for the king of Kashmir, Lalityaditya Muktapid, inflicted a smashing defect on him and hence the whole Haryana from the Yamuna to Kalika(Kalka) came under the control of the king of Kashmir. ⁴¹

The successors of Lalitaditya probably could not maintain their rule over Haryana and a prince of Bhandi clan sums to have come into power. But very soon the territory under the Bhandi clan was wrested forcibly by Vatsaraja (775-792 A.D.), the Pratihara king. Unfortunately, Vatsaraja too could not keep this region under him for long. He was defeated by the Rastrakuta king Dhruva. Then the pala king Dharmapala (770-810 A.D.), a rival of Vatsaraja, got an opportunity to attack Kannauj. The Pala king overthrew Vatsaraja's nominal representative Indrayudha, and installed his own nominee Chakrayudha on the throne of Kannauj. The king of Kuru attended the royal darbar held at Kannauj by Dharmapala. Since the king of the Kurus attended the royal darbar it shows that the Hansi region continued to owe allegiance to the kingdom of Kannauj and it come under the imperial sway of the Palas. Nagabhatta-2nd (792-833 A.D.), the successor of Vatsaraja, defeated Dharmapala along with his protégé Chakrayudha and occupied Kannauj. After this the region continued to remain under the sway of the Pratiharas and this is attested by literary, epigraphic and numismatics evidences.

The Skandapurana inform us that Bramavarta (the region between the Saraswati and the Drisadvati) was under the influence of Nagabhatta-2nd and incidentally the region of Hansi fall in Brahmavarta. The inscription of Sirsa42 of the time of Maharaja Bhojadeva suggests that Hansi region continued to be a part of the Pratihara rule. The

inscription is in Sanskrit and the character belongs to the 9th century A.D. Bhojadeva of the inscription has been identified with Mihira Bhoja of Kannauj. This finds support in the discovery of Adivaraha type of Bhojadeva's coins by Omanand Saraswati from Hansi, ⁴³ which are preserved in the Gurukul museum Jhajjar. Besides, the coins and coin-moulds of Bhojadeva also found from Khokhrakot⁴⁴ The Varaha sculpture from Hansi⁴⁵ belonging to this period also confirmed Mihira Bhoja's hold over Hansi region and that it continued to be so under the other rulers namely Mahendrapala (890-910 A.D.) and Mahipala (912-944 A.D.) finds confirmation in epigraphic⁴⁶ and literary evidence.

After the decline of the Pratiharas the region come under the domination of the Tomaras whose seat of power was Delhi, and thereafter under the Chahamanas.

The beginning of the 11th century saw the Ghaznavid inroads into the region of Hansi. In 1030 A.D. Hansi was captured by Masud, son of Mahamud of Ghazni. Soon Masud's son Majdaud was appointed Governor of Hansi but later, his brother Maudud the Governer of Ghazni managed to kill him and brought the region under his direct administrative control. ⁴⁷ The tradition attribute the foundation of Hansi to Anangapala, a Tomer ruler of Delhi and the discovery of Tomera coins from Hansi and other places from the adjoining district probably is an indication of their capture of Hansi from the Ghaznavids which they soon lost to the Chahamanas. The Ajmer Museum Inscription 48 makes special mention of Arnoraja's expedition to Haritanka (Haryana), while the Bijolia inscription⁴⁹ refers to the capture of Delhi and Hansi by Vigraharaja 4th. The Chahamanas seem to have taken special measure for protecting the area against Muslim incursions. The Hansi Inscription of Prithviraja 2nd refers to the appointment of Kilhana (Prithviraja's maternal uncle) of the Guhila family, as the guardian of the Hansi fort and his building thereof a strong high gateway having majestic towers with painted flags appearing as it were a challenge to the valour of Hammir (Amir of Ghazni). Hansi region was also under the control of Prithviraja 3rd, the most illustrious ruler of the Chahamana family, whose victory over the Bhadanakas of Haryana is well known. The fort of Hansi, Sarsuti and Agroha finally passed on to the Muslim rule after the defeat of Prithviraja Chahamana in the second battle of Tarain (1192 A.D.). Further, the Muslim conquest of Hansi is attested to by the Mausoleum of Shah Niamat Ullah who, although successfully led the attack in conquering the fort, was himself killed in the action. Two Persian inscription of the region of Sultan Muizzudin Muhammad Bin Sam (dated 1192-93 and 1197 A.D.) have also been recovered from the fort of Hansi. With the death and defeat of Prithviraja 3rd and Hariraja (younger brother of Prithviraja) at the hands of the Ghaznavids, the Chahamana rule over Haryana finally came to an end.

After the battle of Tarain the region come under the domination of the rulers of Slave dynasty, Khalji dynesty and finally under the sultans of the Lodhi dynasty, the last of whom was defeated and killed by Babur in the first battle of panipat (1526 A.D.) and thus was laid the foundation of Mughal dynasty in India.

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