



LEGACY OF UTPALA DYANSTY IN KASHMIR WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO AVANTIVERMAN FROM (855-883 A.D) A HISTORICAL STUDY

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Abstract

Most people consider Jammu and Kashmir to be heaven on earth. If there is heaven on earth, it is this, this, and this, according to the Farsi couplet (Amir Khusrau). The couplet encouraged numerous kings to exercise control over Kashmir. In the metrical chronicle known as Rajatarangni, dynasties in ancient Kashmir that dated from the time of the Mahabhartha epic to the reign of Sangrama Deva are vividly portrayed. Of all the kings of ancient Kashmir, Avantivarman, who established the Utpalas dynasty in 1855 A.D., was the most magnificent. He didn't start any battles, not even to retake the areas that his forefathers had recently lost. In terms of prosperity, he ruled during the rippling times of peace and plenty, which coincided with Kashmir reaching its pinnacle around a quarter of a century into his rule. The people had never been happier than they were in his day, nor had they been for generations. Therefore, Avantivarman rule represents a very wonderful era in Kashmir's history. A new period in that nation's history began with Avantivarman taking control of events in the valley. His rule not only provided respite to Kashmir's suffering people, but it also significantly restored the Karkota's former luster, as will be seen. Avantivarman, a descendant of the Kalyapala family and the grandson of Utpalas, who had played a crucial role in the final years of the Karkota monarchy, was previously mentioned. Avantivarman has the traits of intellect and heart that allow him to be recognised as one of the valley's most capable kings, while not being by any means a member of some aristocratic and distinguished family. The study's goal is to explain and analyze Avantivarman legacy and reign during the Utpalas Dynasty in Jammu and Kashmir. It also highlights his contributions during his time in power there.

Keywords: *Dynasty, Legacy & Achievements.*

1. INTRODUCTION

In the years 855-883 AD, Avantivarman was a great administrator who formed the Utpalas dynasty. In addition to that, he established the dynasty. He instituted reforms in an effort to bring law and order back to the state and regain control of the administration. He was successful in curbing the influence of the rural aristocrats known as Damaras, who were to blame for the civil wars that were raging within the country. Because of this, an emphasis was placed on irrigation, and in order to safeguard the state against flooding, the channel of the river that is now called the Jhelum River was modified. As a consequence of this, the economic well-being of the entire region improved, and his popularity as emperor grew as a result. Temples were built during this time of history, and Brahmans were given the right to practice their religion without restriction. Damaras, rural aristocracy who were the cause of internal difficulties, were under his influence, and he utilized this to his benefit. He used this to his advantage because Damaras were the cause of internal troubles. He took action in an effort to bring order back to the chaotic circumstance. In the subject of irrigation, he was responsible for a number of works that were considered to be groundbreaking. For example, he was able to control the floodwaters that were brought on by Wular (Mahapadma) by implementing the appropriate safety measures and keeping the water from reaching the crops. The cities of Avantipura and Suyapur were both founded by him during this time. During his rule, temples and monasteries dedicated to the Hindu gods Shiva and Vishnu, as well as Buddhist monasteries, were built. The Avantiswara and Avantiswami temples are two good

examples of buildings that fall within this category. In addition, the discussion portion contains an explanation of the achievements, in addition to contributions to administration.

RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

To explain and assess the history and significance of the Utpalas Dynasty, with particular emphasis placed on Avantivarman, the dynasty's founder.

2. METHODOLOGY

For the purposes of this paper, primary and secondary sources were mostly used to gather the data for the present study. The information was gathered with the objective goal of reaching an unbiased conclusion. It was intended to be used to analyze the origins and accomplishments of the Utpalas administration with a particular focus on Avantivarman, the founder of the dynasty. The framework of the study was developed using the objectivity of historical and contemporary works, and an unbiased result was reached.

3. DISCUSSION AND RESULT

Achievements of Avantivarman

The subsequent rulers of the Karkotas not only exploited the people and stole all of their money, but they also abandoned the people to the mercy of their self-centered and exacting officials, who took advantage of the masses for their own financial benefit by stealing from them. At the same time, there was neither a well-organized force nor an army that was sufficiently armed to pursue territorial expansion. In light of these circumstances, the first and most important task for Avantivarman was to win the confidence of the people by establishing an organized machinery of government that was capable of restoring normalcy in the valley and looking out for the interests of the masses. This was a task that the previous rulers had neglected for many decades, so Avantivarman had to make up for lost time. Kalhana devotes a number of verses (ten to be exact) to clarifying his position in relation to his subjects.

The lack of arable land was having significant repercussions for the economics of the nation, so the first assignment given to Avantivarman was to look for more of it. The waters of Mahapadma Lake had previously been drained out through proper channels back in the days of Lalitaditya, which had also offered some ground that was ideal for farming. Additionally, the valley had been ravaged by the floods that were caused by Mahapadma Lake. These passageways had been ignored during the reigns of the later Karkotas rulers, and for years, they had remained obstructed by boulders that had not been removed from the area. In addition to all of these unfortunate events, the nation had been hit hard by a severe hunger.

To everyone's good fortune, the attention of the king was drawn to a Suyya whose family history was unknown and who had been raised by a Sudra lady. This Suyya was able to save the people from their predicament. Suyya was adamant that he could alleviate the plight of the people if he were granted the opportunity and resources necessary to put his plan into action. As a result of Avantivarman admiration for his self-assurance, the latter gave him unrestricted authority to carry out his strategy of removing the boulders from the Vitasta. The Chronicler has provided a detailed description of his plots and machinations. Soon after, the river bed was cleaned up, and a dam was built so that the river's waters could be stored and used for agricultural reasons. Suyya also designed the confluence of the Sindhu (Indus) and the Vitasta (Jhelum) in Srinagar, which had its junction near the temple of Vainyasvami. Both rivers empty into the Indus River at this point. The river's gathered waters were sent to a number of villages for use in irrigation through a network of smaller streams; these streams were made secure by the construction of embankments at appropriate distances from one another. These as well as food-grain storehouses (Kundalas), which were created at a number of different locations, gave immediate help to the peasants, who now had more land at their disposal to cultivate with guaranteed supplies of water. Due to the tireless work he has put out, Suyya absolutely merits the high plaudits that are bestowed upon him in the



Chronicle. The price of food grains, which had skyrocketed to as high as 1,050 dinars per Khari during the days of the famine, dropped to a stunning low of 36 dinars per Khari, from its previous staggeringly high of 200 dinars'. As a result, all of Suyya's ingenuity and ability in the field of engineering were put to good use by Avantivarman, and the valley was on its road to prosperity once more.

The fact that Avantivarman placed several of his close kin in positions of power is evidence of the political acumen he possessed. This action, to a greater or lesser extent, reduced the likelihood of rebellions on the part of his own blood relatives. His step-brother Suravarman was given the title of Yuvaraja, and his two nephews, Dhira and Vinnapa, were given important jobs in the finances division. Dhira was also given the title of Yuvaraja. After that, he gave Sura and his sons a number of royal prerogatives to take care of themselves.

It would appear that the reign of Avantivarman brought a time of stabilization and prosperity to the kingdom, which had suffered significantly from internal conflicts during the reigns that came before it. He did not waste resources on pointless journeys outside of the Valley, as his predecessor, Jayapida, had done, which had depleted the kingdom's resources. There is no indication of him even seeking to reclaim control of the areas that are near to his empire, and neither of these things are mentioned. It was undeniably a prudent course of action. During his reign, Kashmir attained remarkable heights in the fields of philosophy, art, and letters as a direct result of the peace and prosperity that this policy brought about.

It is a testament to how selfless and devoted he was that despite the fact that he had a son of his own, he appointed his stepbrother Suravarman to the post of Yuvaraja, also known as the heir presumptive. Sura, who served as his prime minister, was a shrewd administrator who was directed in the performance of his responsibilities by a Sanskrit poem that meant:

Now is the moment to be charitable because good fortune is fleeting by its very definition and it is still around. How can there ever be another opportunity to do good when bad luck is constantly just around the corner?

The fact that Kalhana mentions the numerous temples built and towns founded by the king and his court sheds light on the prosperous circumstances that the people lived in. Sura built a temple of Siva and His consort at Suresvariksetra at Ishabar, on the eastern bank of the Dal Lake, and also a mathu calling it, after his own name, Suramatha. Kalhana mentions these facts, which shed light on the prosperous circumstances that the people lived in. He established Surapura, which is now known as Hurapor and is located close to Shopyan. Within Surapura, he placed the watch post that had previously been located on the Pir Panjal pass. His family, including his wife and kids, replicated his achievements by constructing a number of temples and mathas.

The town of Avantipura, which was founded by Avantivarman, may be found at a location known as Vivaikasara on the right bank of the Vitasta. This location is located 27 kilometers away from Srinagar along the highway that connects Srinagar and Jammu. Before he ascended to the kingdom, he erected the temple of Visnu Avantivarman at this location; afterwards, he built the temple of Siva Avantesvara there in its place. Their remains, despite the fact that they are not as large as Lalitaditya's constructions, are nonetheless among the most impressive examples of ancient Kashmir architecture and are adequate evidence that their builder had significant means. At the sanctuaries of Tripuresvara, Bhutesa, and Vijayesa, he commissioned the creation of pedestals fitted with silver conduits.

The king and his prime minister continued to maintain friendly relations with one another. The king held his minister in high regard because of his minister's unwavering devotion to the king. The minister was always one step ahead of the king's desires, and without the king's knowledge, he was fulfilling those desires as rapidly as possible and at whatever cost. When Avantivarman went to worship at Bhutesa one time, he discovered that the priests had placed an offering of utpala-shakha (a wild growing vegetable known as Kashmir supal-hak) at the base of the god's idols. This utpala-shakha was placed there by the priests. The king inquired as to the reason for such a meager

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offering, and the priests informed him that a Damara by the name of Dhanava, who was a friend of the minister Sura, had taken away the villages that belonged to the shrine, and as a result, they were unable to afford to make any offering to the god that was more significant than this one. The king was angered by this, but out of respect for the minister, he refrained from expressing his disapproval and instead pretended to be ill before leaving the worship service. When the minister saw the real reason for the king's sudden departure from the devotion, he immediately called Dhanava into his presence and severed his head. The rage of the monarch was eventually calmed down, and when the minister asked how he was doing, the king responded by saying that he was OK and then went back to worshipping. At that time, a man who went by the name Suyya showed up.

The details of his birth are shrouded in secrecy. When he was a newborn, he had been abandoned by some unhappy woman in a covered earthen pot on the roadside. He was found by a Chandala woman named Suyya as she was sweeping there. Suyya took him in and raised him as her own. She took him to the home of a Sudra woman, who raised him and gave him the name that was similar to that of his biological mother. He matured into a bright young man and, after completing his schooling, started working as a tutor in private homes. Due to the fact that he possessed a keen brain, there was never a shortage of astute individuals in his immediate vicinity. Whenever there was a discussion about starvation, he would assert that he was well capable of eradicating this beast, provided that he was given the resources to do so. When King Avantivarman learned of Suyya's observation, he called the man into his court and questioned him about it. When Suyya was questioned about what he was saying, he continued to use the same words. However, the king decided to put him to the test, so he opened up his treasury to him and told him to do whatever he pleased with them. He refused to explain his plan, so the courtiers thought he was insane. Suyya placed a number of pots containing money on a board and then headed in the direction of Madavarajya, which is the southern area of the valley. After hastily returning, he went to yakshadara (Dyara—gul meaning the palace of money, near Khandanyar below Baramulla) and there threw handfuls of money into the river. He then threw a pot of money at a village called nandaka (Nandion the veshau river), which was submerged with flood water. He then returned to the village called nandaka. Who could possibly not question the man's unstable mental state? The king, on the other hand, expressed a desire to observe the outcome of his actions. People who were monitoring Suyya's operations immediately dove into the river close to the dyara gul, and in order to find the valuable coins, they cleared the bed of boulders that had slid down into the river from the hill side and had clogged up the channel. This was done in order to find the monies. The river bed was cleaned up as a result in around two or three days. Suyya then increased the height of the embankments on both sides of the river. The river bed was widened and rocky debris was removed to make it deeper. Because of this, the flow of water picked up speed, and it quickly drained out. The land that had been submerged was restored. The money pot, which he had previously thrown into the deep sea at Nandka, was now visible in its entirety.

In the past, the vitasta and the sind met close to the Trigam (which is known as the Trigom in the Pargana), which turned a wide region into a swamp. But Suyya intended for their confluence to take place in the current location, and he rerouted the vitasta so that it ran directly through the Wular Lake. This allowed him to control the flow of water. In a way not dissimilar to that described above, the courses of tributaries were likewise governed. The water was diverted through channels for the purpose of irrigation, and each community was assigned the amount of water that was required for the cultivation of their crops. Money villages were reclaimed by Suyya from marshy plains by having circular embankments erected all around them to keep water out. As a result, the villages took on the appearance of round bowls (Kunda) and were given the name Kundala as a result of this appearance. Even now, the appellation "Kundal" is still used for some of the settlements in the area, including Utsa-Kundal and Mara-Kundal. Because of these activities, hundreds of towns were reclaimed, which resulted in bumper forest growth on an unparalleled



scale. One kharwar of paddy, which during the years of plenty sold for a total of 200 dinars', has recently begun to sell for a total of 36 dinars'.

Memory of Suyya is preserved in the town of present-day Sopore, which he established on the bank of the Vitasta River at the point where it emerges from the Basin of Wular Lake. In addition, he placed a ban on hunting in the Wular Lake, both for fish and waterfowl. In memory of his mother, Suyya, he bestows upon the Brahmins the village of Suyya Kundala, and he names the bridge he builds over the river Suyya-Setu after his mother.

4. CONCLUSION

The period of time that Avantivarman was in charge of the country was marked by relative prosperity and internal tranquilly. The arts of peace blossomed throughout his reign, and he ensured that the rights of all people were honored. He was meticulous in his attention to detail about everything that could improve the general welfare of the populace. During his rule, Kashmir was spared the devastation caused by both natural disasters and those caused by humans. This kind-hearted prince passed away while listening to the conclusion of the Bhagavad-recitation Gita's on the third day of the bright half of the Asada in the year 3959 Laukika, which corresponds to the month of June 883 A.D. He was buried close to the shrine of Jayetheswara in Triphar. During the later Karkota era, the kingdom endured significant political and economic difficulties, both of which contributed significantly to the kingdom's decline. Every effort that could be mustered went into making the kingdom powerful and unified. In later stages, the situation was brought under control. In addition to the building of new temples, specific privileges were bestowed upon the Brahman caste. After the death of Gopalavarman in the year 939 A.D., the dynasty was soon brought to an end.

DECLARATION OF CONFLICTING INTERESTS

Regarding the research, authorship, and/or publication of this paper, the author has stated that there is not a possibility of a conflict of interest occurring.

FUNDING

The author did not get any financial support in any form for the research they conducted, the writing of this paper, or the publication of it.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I am grateful to everyone that assisted me with my article. I would want to express my appreciation to everyone who contributed their thoughts and words of encouragement while I was writing this post. I would also like to extend my gratitude to the experts and authors who have published works on a topic that is pertinent; I was able to successfully finish my essay with the assistance of their references.

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