



An Analytical Study of the Kushan Rule in Kashmir

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Abstract: *Kanishka's reign was clearly a time of unprecedented prosperity for Kashmir. There are numerous Kushan art treasures with Buddhist themes scattered throughout the valley, which proves this. The only people who can get to some of these places even now are intrepid explorers. The large number of Kanishka's coins that have been found so far in Kashmir proves this. Vasishka is also known as Vajheshka in records from the time, and it is likely that he was known by this name in Kashmir, which was called Juska until the time of Kalhana. This is another important sign that Kashmir became a famous place in the Kushan empire. In addition to writing about the building projects of the three Kushana rulers and the growth of Buddhism during their time in power, Rajatrangni also mentions Juska's time in power. As the saying goes, "that wise king Jayasvami, who built Juskapura with its Vihara, was also the founder of Jayasvamipura." In this study an attempt has been made to explore and analyse the Kushan rule in Kashmir.*

Keywords: *Kushan, Kanishka, Kashmir, Buddhism, Art.*

1. INTRODUCTION

Even though Kashmir was occupied and ruled by the Kushans, they opened the door to an amalgam of cultures from China to Central Asia to Iran to Greece and India that helped to improve Kashmir's economy and culture as well as its cosmopolitan character. More importantly, the Silk Route, which the Kushans controlled, was opened to Kashmiri traders, allowing the region to become integrated with the global market. Coin hoards unearthed on trade routes between Kashmir and the rest of the world support the claim that trade with the outside world was greatly facilitated by the Kushans.

Objectives

1. To explore the origin of the Kushan civilization.
2. To trace the roots of the Kushan Rule in Kashmir.



2. METHODOLOGY

Analytical and Exploratory research methods are both applicable to the current investigation. The research relies on both primary and secondary sources. A qualitative approach has been used to analyse the secondary data that has been gathered from reputable sources such as books and websites, as well as various international journals and magazines.

A brief overview of the Kushan Civilization

The Yuezhi, led by the Kushana, conquered the Northwest from Central Asia and wiped out the previous dynasties of the region. Central Asia to the eastern Gangetic basin was part of their empire, which lasted for centuries. The chronicles of China's Han dynasty, which lasted until the fifth century AD, contain information on the kingdom's subsequent growth. The Da Yuezhi established the Kushan (Kushana) Kingdom, which united all five states under a single monarchy, either to ensure the kingdom's survival at the time or to satisfy the ego of the Kushan leader. Kushan may have conquered other four states based on the Weilue, which states that Da Yuezhis were both the conquerors and the victims. Kujula Kadphises, the yabgu (Commander) of the Kushan tribe, may have gained prominence over the other Yuezhi tribes and forged a tight confederation with them under his leadership. Although the Chinese continued to refer to the confederation as Yuezhi, the name Kushan was adopted by the West and shortened to Kushana to denote the group. Gandhara, which was traditionally located in Ancient India, and the Northwest Frontier Provinces, but also included Kabul Valley and a portion of Qandahar in Afghanistan, was gradually taken over by the Kushan tribes, who established twin capitals near present-day Kabul and Peshawar, then known as Kapisa and Pushklavati respectively. Bactria's Hellenistic culture was adopted by the Kushans. Greek letters, often corrupted, were adapted to their own language, using the additional development of the letter sh, as in "Kushan," and they soon began minting coinage on the Greek model based on the Greek alphabet. Until the reign of Kanishka, they used Greek legends with Pali legends (in the Kharoshthi script) on their coins. In the years that followed, the legends of the Kushan language (in a Greek script that was adapted) were combined with those of the Greek and Pali languages (Kharoshthi script). The north of Afghanistan had frequent contact with West Asia and the Mediterranean before the arrival of the Tuharans. Cultural influences from the Hellenistic period are likely to have been dominant in the Yuezhi-Kushan region, which was once ruled by Achaemenid Persia. In reality, Hellenistic influence extended far beyond Bactria, all the way down into modern Pakistan's Gandhara region and all the way east to modern Uzbekistan's Samarkand. Archaeological evidence from Charsada, the site of ancient Purushapura, a Kushan capital near modern Peshawar in Pakistan, shows that the city's patron deity, the goddess, was adorned with a city-wall crown that reflects its Hellenistic heritage.. At AiKhanoum, the site south of Amu Darya (the Oxus River in Greek), archaeologists have unearthed the remains of a theatre, gym, temples, and a palace typical of Greek culture. In addition to serving as the ruler's official residence, the palace also served as the country's administrative and financial hub. Simply having a palace in a city denoted its status as the seat of government. Chinese records of the region's political structure indicate that this is one of Daxia's many city states. The Kushans' transformation was aided by their rule in Afghanistan and later in South Asia. As soon as the Kushan army crossed the Hindu Kush and occupied the north Indian plain, they gained control of a



significant portion of the Silk Road, which allowed them to profit greatly from trade. The wealth of the ancient city of Kapisa, which was excavated in Begram, was even more diverse than previously thought. Modern-day Kabul is not far from Begram, a summer palace of the Kushan Empire before the court relocated to India in the early 1200s. Artworks from the Mediterranean, South Asia, and East Asia were kept in the palace treasury, which was occupied for 150 years beginning in the first century CE. The Yuezhi-Kushan people's trading prowess had finally been rewarded after centuries of wandering the steppe.

Rise and fall of Kushan Rule in Kashmir

Kujala Kadphises, the illustrious founder of the Kushan Empire, incorporated Kashmir into the empire after conquering Kabul, parts of western Bactria, and North-West India. The Hiung-nu conquered the Yue-chih, moved them to Ta-hia, and divided the kingdom among five hi-hou [minor chiefs], namely those of Hiu-mi, Shuang-mi, Kuei-shang, Hi-tun, and Tu-mi. When Chiu-chu-chuch (also known as K 'iu-doo) invaded the other four hi-how more than a hundred years later, he proclaimed himself king and named his kingdom Kuei-shang. Furthermore, he conquered Pu-ta and Kipin and seized control of their kingdoms, as well as An-Kao-fu si's territory. Chiu-chu-chuch/Kiu-tsiu-k'io is always referred to as Kujala Kadphises, and the Chinese treatise says that he not only started the Kushana kingdom but also took over Kao-fu (Kabul) after defeating An-his (Aracids), Pu-t'a (sometimes called Bactra, sometimes called Pushkalavati), and Chi. According to the experts, Chi-pin is synonymous with Kashmir. However, it is important to note that at the time in question, the Kashmir empire encompassed a portion of northwestern India, as indicated by the data provided by Chien Han-Shu and Hou Han-Shu. This fact should be brought to your attention. In all probability, the Buddhist records discuss Kashmir and Gandhara as though they were one and the same political entity. As a result, the assertion made by some academics that Ch'ipin is located in Gandhara rather than Kashmir reveals nothing more than their ignorance of a well-established historical fact. The numismatic evidence offers a level of backing that is adequate for the written evidence. Recently, a hoard of copper coins of Kujala Kadphises was discovered from the ancient site of Tarakpura on the link road that connects Sopore and Bandipore. The coins date back to the Kujala dynasty. The ancient city of Tarakpura yielded these coins when it was excavated. It is important to note that one of the primary routes that connected Kashmir with Astor, Gilgit, Chitral, Yasin, Badakshan, and Tibet, and then further on to Central Asia and China was the Bandipur route, which went through Gurais. This route was important because it went through Gurais. This is something that needs to be borne in mind at all times. In addition, the Sri Pratab Singh Museum in Srinagar is home to a collection of one hundred and three coins of Kujala Kadphises, making it the second largest collection of these coins in the world after Kanishka's. There are also three coins that were once a part of Kujala Kadphises' collection that can be found in the Central Asian Museum at Kashmir University, which was only recently established. Non-traditional sources, such as philology and surnames, may be able to shed more light on the role Kujala Kadphises played in establishing Kushan rule over Kashmir in the first place. Among Kujala's many titles were: Kadphises, Kara, Kaasa, Kavsa, and Kausa, all of which he held simultaneously. The Kashmiri word for authority, Khadphench, is similar to the Greek word Kadphises. A ruler's name is commonly used in Kashmir to describe someone who acts in an authoritative manner. Even in our own time, we've heard people disparagingly refer to their opponents as



Mahraja Hari Singh, Shaikh Sahab, Indra Gandhi, and Bakshi Sahib, among others. For a long time, the name Kadphis was synonymous with power and authority, passing down from generation to generation without being affected by the influx of substitute words like "Kadphis" or "Kadphis." Kujula Kadphises ruled between 45 and 78 A.D., according to B.N. Puri. As a king (Maharaja), he landed in North-West India and consolidated and expanded his territory for fourteen years, as evidenced by the use of higher titles. According to this chronology, Kujula was able to conquer Kashmir after the year 64 A.D. According to proponents of using the year 78 AD as the New Saka year, the Kushana conquest of Kashmir took place around the year 50 AD.

Previously, it was thought that Vima Kadphises, also known as Yen-Kao-Chen in Chinese sources, would succeed Kujula Khadphises. However, the Rabatak inscription, which was discovered by chance, clearly shows that Kujula Kadphises' son Vima Tak succeeded him. Rabatak inscription was also useful in resolving the Soter Megas problem. Vima Tak appears to have issued the coins with Soter Megas titles, based on the Rabatak inscription. S.P.S. Museum Srinagar has one coin with Soter Megas titles, indicating his presence in Kashmir. A town was named after him and temples and Chaityas were erected in the Valley, according to Kalhana's account. As far as we can tell, this is Kanishka, the great Buddhist benefactor who has been mentioned numerous times in history. Kashmiri folklore about Kanishka's rule was still very much alive and well when Hieun Tsang came to visit the region in the early seventh century. Also, Kanishka's holding of the third great Buddhist Council appeared to the Chinese pilgrim to be so true that he faithfully recorded them in his travel account of his journey to India. In Baramulla district of Kashmir, there is a place called Kanishkapur, which is described as a foundation of Kanishka's rule. Huvishka, who may have been Vasishka's brother, succeeded Vasishka. One of Kushana's most prosperous periods was under his leadership during this period. For 34 years, he served as the country's head of state (between 28 and 62 of the Kanishka Era). Coins from Kapisa, Bihar, show that he inherited a Kushan empire from his father, which he faithfully kept up. Coins minted in gold and copper during his reign show off the abundance of the time.

Rajatarangini mentions Huvishka as one of Kashmir's three Kushana rulers. Huvishura (Huvishura) was also named after him by the author. Three kilometres south of Baramulla, in the village of modern Ushkur on the Vitasta River's left bank, the town's ruins can still be found (Jehlum). In addition, he and the other two Kushana rulers are credited with the construction of stupas and mathas at Susakletra. A gold coin discovered by accident in the valley lends credence to Huvishka's rule in Kashmir. New Brahmanical deities appear to have been more prevalent in the Indian environment compared to those depicted by his father (Kanishka), who depicted deities from various pantheons. In addition to the sun god Ankusa and the Mioro legend, the lone gold coin of Huvishka discovered in Kashmir depicts these images as well. This is a clear reference to Kanishka's and his successors' promotion of a syncretic religious system.



3. CONCLUSION

Vasudeva I, the last great ruler of the Kanishka group of rulers, succeeded Huvishka. Later, Kanishka II, Kanishka and Vasudeva II joined him in the throne room. The Kushana dynasty ruled Kashmir, but we know nothing about it. While Kushana-ruled territory encompassed much of what is now Pakistan and Afghanistan, it is reasonable to assume that Kashmir Valley would have been included in the Kushan empire until around A.D. 262, when Kushana-ruled territory in northern India was conquered by the Sassanid Empire. One Vasudeva gold coin has been discovered in Kashmir so far. The question of whether it belongs to Vasudeva I or Vasudeva II is still unanswered. There is also the fact that Ratarangini refers to the name of an independent ruler Abhimanyu, which by all means appears to be a Kushana affiliation. As he was a Buddhist, Kalhana sees him as a true heir to the Kushan dynasty. If we assume that the Kushanas stopped ruling Kashmir after Abhimanyu based on Gonanda's revival of Naga worship, then Kushana rule in Peshawar, which fell to the Sassanians in 262 A.D., ended at most a few years later. Between the death of Abhimanyu and the accession of Kinnare to power, Kalhana mentions five local rulers (Kidara). In all likelihood, these five emperors did not hold power for an extended period of time. As the Kidarites occupied Kashmir in 410 A.D., Kushana rule in Kashmir probably ended around 300 A.D.

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