

**STUDIES  
IN  
HISTORY  
OF INDIAN MUSLIMS**

*A Critical Commentary*  
on  
**Elliot and Dowson's  
History of India**  
by:

As Told by its own Historians  
By  
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Published by  
**Saeed International (Regd)**

E-9, Jangpura Extension, New Delhi-110014 (India)

Phone : 3268632, Resi. 4621354

ANCIENT ARAKAN

with special reference to its cultural  
history between the 5th and 11th centuries

Volume I

TEXT

by

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Thesis submitted in partial fulfillment  
of the requirements for the degree of  
Doctor of Philosophy, in the Australian  
National University. August 1976



42 *arekadeśa vijayān*

inferring that this section is dealing with the conquests of the king, in many countries. We have *māyā* for *mayā*; the meaning of *dāśa* is not clear.

*Arekadeśa* could also be read *Anekadeśa*, *na*(𑀢𑀺𑀭𑀸) and *ra*(𑀢𑀺𑀭𑀸𑀓) being easy to confuse in this script. If it is the former, we may have the name of the country in the 11th century.

In the centre column, between 11.43-4 to the left and 11.45-6 to the right, we have:

----*bhūmi--śya*

*dbhavati yāśa - jātā*

*yākṣapura--rājā*

*Yākṣapura* is the ancient name of the Mon capital of Thatōn,<sup>38</sup> captured by Aniruddha of Pagān in 1057 A.D.<sup>39</sup> This tantalising passage at least indicates a connection between the Mon and Arakanese kingdoms in the middle of the 11th century.

At the head of the right column, which may begin a new sentence as the central column ends with a double *daṇḍa*, we may read:

22 - *-ha māñārāja [śūn]*

23 *gha[yā] Śrī Govindracandra*

perhaps a reference to Govindracandra of the Candra dynasty of East Bengal, which fell about the time the inscription was written. In the same column, slightly lower, there may be a reference to gods or kings:

37 *devataṁ kṛta[m] - - -*

38 *tāttāśya devā - -*

<sup>38</sup> *IB* pl.IV 358<sup>4</sup>, 359<sup>4</sup> (upper inscription), <sup>43</sup> (lower inscr.) Date c. 1050 A.D.

<sup>39</sup> *OBEP* I, p.23



The distance from Baka to Kachh and Bāroi also seems wrong and should be perhaps read as six days, not farsakhs. There is, probably, some corruption or lacuna in the text.

**I. 68, l. 1.** *Beyond them the country of Malibar, which from the boundary of Karoha to Kūlam is 300 parasangs in length..... The people are all Sāmānis (Buddhists) and worship idols.*

As there were no Buddhists anywhere in Malabār, or for the matter of that, anywhere in Southern India, at the time when Rashīdu-d-dīn wrote, *Sāmāni* must stand here, as elsewhere, for the Jainas. At 85 *infra* also, where Dowson makes Idrisi say that in the twelfth century, the people of Kambāya were Buddhists, we must take *Sāmāni*, the word used in the original, to signify the Jainas or followers of Mahāvīra, not of Buddha. During the seventh and eighth centuries, Buddhism was, "slowly declining and suffering gradual supersession by its rivals, Jainism and Brahmanical Hinduism." (V. Smith, E. H. I. 386). Jainism was "specially popular in the Southern Mahrātta country." (*Ib.* 386). "Buddhism finally disappeared from the Dekkan in the twelfth century." (*Ib.* 387). During the reign of Vishnu or Bittiga of the Hoysala dynasty, the Jain religion enjoyed high favour under the protection of his minister, Gangarāja. (*Ib.* 392). Lassen also tells us that, on the Malabār coast, the Kings of Tuluva, the chief of whom ruled at Ikkeri ... greatly loved the doctrines of the Jainas. (*Indische Alterthumskunde*, IV. 771 ff. Tr. Rehatsek in Ind. Ant. II. 263-5).

Karoha was identified by Yule with Gheria or Vijyadrug. (E.D. VIII. App. p. xl), while others have supposed it to be Goa [گوہ]. In either case, the length of coast is greatly overestimated. The distance is only about  $7\frac{1}{2}$  degrees of latitude, approximately 550 miles.

**I. 69, l. 4 from foot.** *1,0000 horses from all the islands of Fārs, such as Katif, Lahsa, Bahrein, Hurmuz, Kilahāt etc.*

Katif lies at about twenty miles distance from Bahrein. It was the principal port of Al-Hasā." (Dames, Barbosa. I. 77. Note). Tavernier says that Katif was noted for its pearl fishery and was situated opposite to Bahrein on the coast of Arabia Felix (Yemen). (Travels, Tr. Ball. II. 108). Lahsa or Al-Hasā is on the eastern coast of Arabia and south of Basra. Lat.  $27^{\circ}$  N; Long.  $49^{\circ}$  E.

**I. 72, l. 2 from foot.** *Beyond that is the country of Ratbān, then Arman, then Zardandān... afterwards comes the country of Rāhān, the people of which eat carrion and the flesh of men.*

'Ratbān' looks like 'Martabān', with the initial *r* dropped. 'Arman' is probably Mrāmyan, the old name of Burma. The variant 'Amān' must be another form of the same name, as Burma is called 'Amien' or 'Mien' by Marco Polo. (Travels, Tr. Yule. II. 109-110). But 'Arman' may be meant for 'Arāman', which was the name given to the capital founded on the site of modern Rangoon by Punnarika who reigned from



740 to 761 A.C. (I.G. XXI. 214). The geographical expression Zardandān has not been satisfactory elucidated. Marco Polo writes that the people of the country of Zardandān, "have their teeth gilt; or rather every man covers his teeth with a sort of golden case made to fit them, both the upper teeth and the under. The men do this, but not the women." (Travels, Book II. Ch. 50; Tr. Yule. II. 84). "The country meant," Yule notes, "seems to be Western Yunnan, but I can learn nothing of the continued existence of the custom among any tribe of the Indo-Chinese continent, though the practice of casing the teeth in gold is followed by some of the people of Sumātrā, as Marsden and Raffles have shown." (Ib. 88-90)

Rāhān, "of which the people ate carrion", must be Mrohaung—the ancient capital of Arākān or Rākhang, as it was called by old Muslim authors. Jahāngir says of the Mugs of Arākān that "they eat everything there is, either on land or in the sea, and nothing is forbidden by their religion." (T.J. 115, l. 19; Tr. I. 236). Rashīdu-d-dīn probably wrote راکان Rākhan. The modern form Arākān is said to be derived from the Arabic 'Al-Rākhang.' Rashīd seems to have made some mistake in regard to the relative situation of Ratbān and Rāhān.

I. 74.

*The Nuzhatu-l-Mushtak of Idrīsī.*

Idrīsī was born at Ceuta in 1099 A. C. and died about 1160 A. C. He tells us that he finished the *Nuzhat al Mushtaq* during the last days of Shawwāl 548, 1154 A. C. (Jaubert. I. xxii). Elliot asserts that "the court of the Anhilvād king, Siddh Rāj Jaysinha, was visited by Idrīsī who distinctly states that at the time of his visit, the chief adhered to the tenets of Buddha." (Races of the North-Western Provinces. Ed. Beames. I. 50), and this statement is repeated in the Cambridge History of India. (III. 517). But no authority for it is cited by either of these writers, and it appears to be founded on error. Moreover, Siddharāj was not a Buddhist, but a devout worshipper of Mahādeva.

Idrīsī's "account of south-eastern Asia, including India" is, in the opinion of Yule, "very meagre and confused". Another defect, according to that acute critic, is that "professing to give the distances between places, he underrates them enormously, in so much that a map of Asia compiled from his distances would assume very contracted proportions." (Cathay, Ed. Cordier, I. 141). Elsewhere also, Yule writes that "Edrisi's information about south-eastern India is a hopeless chaos." (Ibid. I. 242 note). These animadversions are not unjust, but the real offender is Khurdādbih, from whom Idrīsī has copied his account. (Cf. 15-6 ante). Idrīsī aspired to compose a cyclopaedic treatise which was to embrace the entire geographical knowledge of his day. His ambition was to leave out nothing that he had read in the fifty and odd books which he cites, but in thus endeavouring to incorporate everything and pretermitt nothing, he has frequently involved himself in contradiction and confusion. He has been frequently misled also by the apparent similarity or identity