

History of Rohilla Rajputs

Written By,

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Compiled for free distribution among Rohilla brothers and sisters for awareness

By,

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Foreword:

The Rajputs of India from times immemorial have been held a unique position in the History of the country. It is, however, unfortunate that their achievements have had no chronological records either here or elsewhere. Of course, glimpses of what they have done and are continuing to do, are found in treatises such as “The Annual and Antiquities of Rajasthan” by the late Colonel James Tod and Pandit Gauri Shankara Ojha, who has written several books on Rajput History in Hindi. My own great grandfather Shri Thakur Bahadur Singh Ji had the good fortune of digging a little into their past, not because he was a Rajput himself but because he felt that some sort of data was essential to show how our clans had to face calamities both within and without the country and how they kept up to their traditions right down to this age. My great grandfathers interest and what he left for his posterity to inherit, has enabled me to study the subject in some detail. Accordingly, whenever I come across a book on Rajput History, my joy knows no bound.

Recently, Mr.Keshav Chandra Sen M.A. HeadMaster Jain High School Panipat, sent me a copy of his book ‘Itihas Rohilla Rajputs’ and asked me for my comments. I read it throughly very minutely and was surprised to find how the Hindu Rohillas came to India as early as the 9th and 10th Centuries A.D. and founded what is known as ‘Rohilkhand’ now merged in the Uttar Pradesh, long before the Muslim Rohillas entered India in the reign of Sher Shah Suri in the 16th Century. The Suffix “Khand” to the name strengthens my belief that if the founders had not been Hindus, they would not have used this word. With what little knowledge I possess of the History of Rajputs, I cannot help appreciating Mr. Sen going so deep into the background of the Rohillas and bringing to light the hidden links that Rajputs in India had with them both in origin and tradition. Mr Sen has quoted at length various authorities on history, both ancient and mediaeval, and I have no doubt if this book goes into the hands of some Historical Society such as exists in the United Kingdom, his work would be taken as a great service to the historical world in the present age.

This short history of the Rohillas as far as I gather, is based on:

- (i) General Cunningham’s Geography Of India.
- (ii) Pandit Jai Chand’s “Bharat Bhumi Aur us Ke Nivasi and Bhartiya Itihas Ki Rup Rekha.

- (iii) Thakur Ajit Singh Parihar's "Khsatriya Vartman."
- (iv) Bhat Bhim Raj's "Rohilla Jati Aur Us Ka Nirnaya".
- (v) Prithvi Raj Rasso.
- (vi) Dey's Geography of India.
- (vii) Colonel James Tod's "Annals & Antiquities of Rajasthan".
- (viii) Pandit Gauri Shankar Ojha's "History of Rajputana".
- (ix) Travels of H. Tsang as edited by Watters.
- (x) Sardar Jhanda Singh Nag's "History of Tak Rajputs".
- (xi) C.V.Vaidyas "Mediaeval India".

According to General Cunningham and Shri Jai Chand, the land from where the Rohillas migrated into India was present Afghanistan which was called "Ruh Desh" in the Middle Ages. When Ruh Desh turned Muslim, the Hindus living there left their motherland and came to India about the 9th or 10th Century A.D. Later, Muslim Rohillas followed them in the 16th century and settled down in the same area, i. e. Rohilkhand, in the reign of Sher Shah Suri, On Page 3 of the Book, stanzas of two poems as extracted from the "Kshatriya Vartman" by Thakur Ajit Singh Parhiar and the inscription on a Shiv Temple in Gujarat (Kathiwar) clearly establish "Rohillas" as Rajputs as also does an extract from the song on Alla and Udal of Mohaba given on page 2. Alla, Udal, and Malkhan of Mohaba appeared to have been soldiers of fortune from Ruk Desh and were crushed by Prithvi Raj, as they were considered by him as foreigners. They belonged to a clan called "Rohil Banafar." The downfall of Rohilla Rajputs started with Prithvi Raj and ended, when Raj Saharan, The Takshak Raja of Thanesar, embraced Islam. After the the downfall the Rohillas with their various branches, including the Takshaks, went into obscurity and were removed from the list of Rajputs.

The above sketch of what is dug into by Mr.Sen will, I have no doubt, rouse the interest of every reader of this book and will make him study it thoroughly to understand how Rajputs have invariably suffered. The upheaval in the Punjab in 1947 under our very eyes, has given a convincing proof of the veracity of what Mr.Sen has written. I am sure he will continue his researches in the Rajput History whereby he would be doing immense service to the cause of the Rajputs.

In conclusion, I once again express my grateful thanks to Mr. Sen for having given me this opportunity to do a little service to the Rajput community by writing a few lines with a view to introducing his book to the scholars of history in general and Rajputs in particular.

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1. Sources of the History of Hindu Rohillas:

For years, the history of the Hindu Rohillas, found in the eastern districts of the Punjab and westerns district of Uttar Pradesh, continued to remain shrouded in mystery and even the educated members of the community failed to explain why they called themselves Rohillas. This was rather disquieting to most, since the “Rohillas” were universally known to be Muslims on having migrated from Afganistan.

Consequent on a general awakening in the country some educated and enterprising members of the Rohilla community set up a Sabha in Delhi and started in earnest the task of regenerating their community and enquiring into its origin and its past. Under its auspices a

short history of the community was produced, but the author of the work "Rohilla Tank Mimansa" reached conclusions which were not convincing and failed to explain the term "Rohilla" attached to the community. This praiseworthy work of the Delhi Sabha did not satisfy the more thoughtful of the community with the result that efforts to trace their true history continued unabated with a singleless of purpose and persistence. Fortunately, a scholar of Uttar Pradesh, Thakur Paul Singh Rathor, wrote a tract entitled "84 Gotras" of the Rohillas, which was based on his unpublished work "Rohilla Vansh Pradeep" where- in he advanced the view that the Hindu Rohillas were originally inhabitants of Roh Desh or the modern Afghanistan. The view, though plausible, was not substantiated by facts and authorities. But the way was shown and it remained for others to prove the fact.

Time passed on and more and more researches in history brought many obscure and unknown facts to light. Enthusiastic members of the Rohilla community did not rest satisfied with what had been done in connection with their history. They accordingly began to contact the Bhats of the Rajputs in Rajputana and their efforts soon bore fruits. One Shri Bhim Raj of Jaipur undertook to compile the history of the community and ultimately rendered a very valuable service to the community and historical research by publishing a book entitled "Rohila Kshatriya Jati Nirnaya."

In writing this book the author took help from the bardic records in his possession as also those of other bards. He advanced the view that the Rohillas were Kshatriyas descended from Sabahu bearing the Gotra "*Chind*". He also wrote that the ancestors of the Rohillas had conquered Kabul, Kandhar and other lands where they had settled down in ancient times. A fort Karkot had been erected by them and later on a Prince of their clan-Megh Vahan came over to Kashmir where he distinguished himself as an apostle of non-violence. Then came to the throne of that country an other Prince Durlabh Vardhan, who laid the foundation of the Karkota dynasty of Kashmir. He was said to be of the Nag Race, and Bhim Raj is of the view that some of the Rohillas Ksatriyas are also descended from his clan. Moreover, Bhim Raj also describes some of the Rohillas to be of the Takshak Race known in ancient times as *Chind or Chindaks*. He also traces their descent from the Yadvas and Gehlots settled down in Afghanistan.

There is another book “Kshatriya Vartman” by Thakur Ajit Singh Parihar of Balaghat, Madhya Pradesh, in which we find a mention of a clan called ‘Rohil’. Two verses by an unknown Hindi Poet have been given therein. They are reproduced

(i) “The Yadavas, Chandels, Jhala, Tomars and Koch Rohil Banafar belong to the Chandra Vansh” Page 97.

(ii) “Yadavas, Chandels, Jhala, Tomar and koh Randhel Banafar are from the Chandra Vansh” – Page 263.

The verses above clearly refer to the existence of Rohilla and Randhel clans in India. Moreover, in the same book on page 250 it is mentioned that the clan “Rudra Randhel or Rohil” had its ancient home in Bans Bareilly (Uttar Pradesh) and was a sub-branch of the Katehar Clan. In this connection it would not be out of place to state that Bhim Raj also refers to a General of Prithvi Raj Chohan of Delhi as Mahas Karan of Randhel Vansh, sprung from Bharat, the brother of Shri Rama. Bhim Raj also asserts that the Hindu Rohillas after leaving Afghanistan settled down in Bans Bereilly and this is in accord with the statement of Ajit Singh that the home of the Rohillas was Bans Bareilly.

The exploits of Alla and Udal of Mahoba are sung all over the western districts of Uttar Pradesh and eastern ones of the Punjab. We have a number of poems by L. Matru Mal Attar of Meerut in which we come across a reference to the brave Rohillas found in the region beyond the Ganges. They had fought side by side with Alla and Udal, the brave warriors in the service of Raja Parmal of Mahoba, who was a contemporary of the famous Prithvi Raj Chohan of Delhi and who had been looked upon as upstarts and Kshatriyas of an inferior origin and against whom he had carried on a relentless war of extermination.

There is another book by Pandit Jai Chand Vidhya Alankar “Bharat Bhumi Aur Use Ke Nivasi” on page 230 of which we read: “Afghanistan was also called “Roh” in the middle ages. It called “Lohit” two hundred years before the birth of Lord Christ. The inscription in Sanskrit of 1445 of the Vikram Era refers to the Rohilla Rajputs who must have come from

Afghanistan”. Besides this, we also read on page 1098 of another book “Bhartiya Itihas Ki Rup Rekha’ By the same author: “Lohit in my view is Roh, i.e. Afghanistan, because later on we read about Balkh and the route to that place could alone be through Roh. The inscription of 1445 of the Vikram Era sings of the achievements and fame of Rohilla Rajputs”.

The above extracts from the works of a famous historian need no comments. They establish beyond doubt the fact that long before the advent of the Rohilla Afghans, there lived in India also Rohilla Rajputs.

There is another article written by the writer quoted above. It is “Mandlik Kavya”, which appeared in the ‘Nagri Pracharni Patrika’ – Part III, Vol. 3, pages 335 to 369. On page 352, Pandit Jai Chand discusses the relations of the Rajas of Gujarat (Kathiawar) with the Muslim Sultans. He writes: ‘The poem refers to Khangar who defeated the Muslims, and carried out the repairs of the famous temple of Somnath. Who were these Muslims?’

There is an inscription in Veraval Pattan near Charvar on a Shiva Temple of 1445 of the Vikram Era in Sanskrit”. It is taken from Bridges Anti-Quarian remains in the Bombay Presidency-page 183, Second Edition, 1897, Pages 250-251. “This inscription gives an illuminating account of the migration of the Rajputs. In the beginning a reference has been made to one Lunig barn in Maru-Asthali or Marwar, i.e. “Dosa Rohini Rahiladu” desh, who came to Saurashtra in the capacity of General of an Army. One Raj Singh was born in his family and was married with a Baghela girl. In this connection an account had been given in the inscription about these Bagheles. There was one hero Khem Raj belonging to Karak Puri of Maru-Asthali who came to Saurashtra. His daughter was married to Raj Singh. The grandson of this Khem Raj, Rohilla Maldeva, his wife, daughter, sons, brother and maternal uncles daughter etc., combined to erect the Shiva Temple in 1445 of the Vikram Era on which the inscription was engraved.

About the Baghela hero, the inscription states that he fought side by side with Khangar, when the proud King Mohammad encircled Rewat Gir and Juna Garh. So if the grandson of the Baghela hero was the contemporary of Rao Mokal Singh, his contemporary could only be

Khangar, the grand father of Mokhal Singh, His contemporary could only be Khangar, the grand father of Mokhal Singh and not any other of his ancestors. The Muslim invader could be only Mohammed Tughlak who invaded Girnar in 1406 of the Vikram Era.

In the history “Tarikh Feroz Shahil” by Zia Uddin Barani, there is a mention of the capture of the fort of *Khankar* and imprisonment of Khanger. Historian Farista expresses the doubt regarding the capture of Girnar, and that no Muslim took Girnar before the time of Mohammad Bigara. It is probable that Mohd. Tughlak surrounded the Jungarh Fort and not Girnar, but the inscription refers to the encirclement of both Junagarh and Rewatgir Forts”.

From the above it will be seen that the Rohilla Rajputs existed in India and had matrimonial alliances with other Rajput tribes, as Rohilla Maldev of the inscription was the son of Raj Singh, a descendant of Rohilla General Lunig of Marwar and Bagela girl.

In his history of Rajputana Volume-1 Dr. Gauri Shankar Ojha refers to some inscriptions which throw a flood of light upon the Rohillas and their home in Marwar. We shall refer to them later.

There is another writer, Sardar Jhanda Singh, who wrote a book entitled “ A History of Tak Kshatriya” in which he tried to trace the history of Tak Kshatriya from the earliest times and bring out the fact that the Taks, one of the 36 clans of the Rajputs were an ancient people who played an important role in the history of India. He describes their advent into India in the time of Mahabharat. Later on, their King Raja Ambhi aided Alxendar the great against Porus. They were the people who ruled over the Punjab when H. Tsang visited India. Shri Nag also gives in his book inscriptions found in Central Provinces & Berar (now Madhya Pradesh), throwing light on the history of Nag Vanshi Rajas, which is another name of the Taks. In these inscriptions the clan of the Nag Rajas has been called Chind or Chindaks. Rai Bhim Raj, the author of the “Rohilla Kshatriya Jati Nirnaya”, has described Rohillas as descendants from Sabahu, a descendant of Shatrugan.

Shri Nag in his book already referred to has tried to bring out the fact that the Rohillas are a branch of the Taks. But his assertion of his not been proved in a conclusive way. The view that the two communities-Rohillas and Tanks or Taks may have come from the side of the North west and may have been closely connected appears to be more Plausible.

A study of the works by General Cunningham and Dey on the ancient historical Geography of India leads us to the conclusion that in the Middle Ages Afghanistan was also called 'Roh'. This is also supported by a mention of 'Roh' in the T. Tsang's Travels by waters.

Manju Shri Mul Kalp also refers to the existence of Nag Vansh.

In the history of Aroras, a caste found in the Punjab, by Hakim Raj Rup Kasur, we read on pages 128 and 129 a reference to 'Relas' or 'Rohilla'.

On page 128, it is stated : "The descendants of Data Ram call themselves with pride 'Ralan' or 'Relas'. It is now a subcaste of the Aroras".

On Page 129, it is mentioned : "Rele or Rela appears to be a branch of Relan caste which appears to be an abbreviation of the word Rohila."

Thus, among the Aroras, a trading and progressive community of the Punjab, who before the partition of the country, were mostly to be found in the NorthWestern districts of the Punjab, we have the Relas, Relans and Relas. It is also fact that some of the Rohilla Kshatriyas also called themselves *Relas*. It follows, therefore, that the Rohillas must have their original home in the regions situated in the NorthWest of India.

Historical words like "Tod's Annals of Rajasthans", "Hindu Medieval India" by C.V.Vaidya, "Ancient India" by Majumdar, "Raj Tarangi", etc. , have been thoroughly gone through to write the history of our community about which very little was hitherto known.

2. Roh Desh or Afganistan, The Original Home of Rohillas:

The original home of the Rohilla Kshatriyas was Afghanistan called Roh in the Middle Ages. The political boundaries of Bharat have varied in different ages; and a study of races, language and civilization, points to the fact that Afghanistan was once a part of India. This view is supported by the French School of Archaeology and researches of Sir Aurel Stein. In ancient times it was called Pakth Kambhoj Desh. In the north of Kabul River was Kapisa and Gandhar, Pamir and Badkhsan can both be considered to have been parts of Kambhoj. This is verified from a study of MahaBharat for Balkh and Kambhoj are mentioned therein together, from which it can be inferred that Balkh was situated on the boundary of Kambhoj. In his Drama, Kallidasa has made a mention of the fact that in the course of his conquest of the north Arjuna received a present of jewels from Kambhoj Desh. Even today in the town of Munjan, there is a mine of precious stones. Kalhana in his "Raj Tarangini" refers to Kambhoj and Tukhar separately: and the Chinese historians tell us that Tatar people lived on the western boundary of the Kham Province. The Tatars have also been called Tokhars who had reached there in second century B.C. and the country in which these people were found was called Tokhar Desh or Turkistan. Under the Mauryas, Kambhoj was apart of the Maurya Empire. In the Sabha Parva of the Mahabharat, we also read of the conquest of the north by Arjuna and it appears that in the first and second centuries A. D. Afghanistan was also called Lohit, because we read that Arjuna conquered Balkh, and he could have reached that place only through Roh or Afganistan. The tribes over whom Arjuna had won a victory were Dard, Kambhoj and Turushk. They were all hardy and fierce warriors and Arjuna had to overcome them. The eastern Afganistan was called Roh. We are tempted to quote here from "Ancient Geography of India" by Cunningham, edited with its introduction and notes by S. N. Majumdar Shastri, M.A. On Pages 100-101, we read: "Opokien or Afghanistan is mentioned only once by Hiuen Tsang in a brief paragraph which places it between Falana and Ghazni, to the west of former and to the southeast of the latter". From this description it would appear to be the same as the Loi of Fa-hien and the Roh of the Indian historians. Perhaps the name Opokien may have some connection with Vorgun or Verghin, which Wilford's Surveyor Moghal Beg, placed near the source of Tunchi or Tochi branch of the Kurram River. In the map attached to "Burnes's Travels" by Arrow Smith, the name is written Borghoon. I am, however, inclined to identify Opokien, or Avakan as it is rendered by M. Julian,

with the name of Afghan, as I find the Chinese syllable Kien represents Ghan in word Ghanta. From the cursory notice of the district by H. Tsang, I infer that it must have formed part of the Province of Falana. It was certainly a part of the mountainous district of Roh called so by Abdul Fazal and Ferishta (Briggs's Ferishta-Volume 1, page 8) or southeastern Afghanistan and part of Biluchistan or country between Ghazni and Khandar and the Indus. The people of this province are called Rohillas to distinguish them from the Ghoris Afghans between Balkh and Merv. There is, however, a slight chronological difficulty about this identification, as the Afghans of Khalij, Ghor and Kabul are stated to have subdued the province of Roh as late as A.H. 63 or A.D. 682, that is about 30 years later than the period of H. Tsang's visit."

From the above it can be concluded that Afghanistan was called Roh about 682 A. D. In the book "Yuan Chwang's Travels in India" by Thomas Watters, published by London Royal Asiatic Society, 1904 Edition: we read in Volume 11 on page 273: "The narrative in the records continues east to the Hohlohu Country." This was also the old Tokhara territory. It had Oxus on its northside. The district was like Kunduz in natural productions and ways of the people.

Yule identifies the Hohlohu, that is perhaps Rahu of this passage, with Ragh, still an important fief of Badkshan between the Kokcha and the Oxus. This district also was apparently not visited by the pilgrim".

Even today Roh is a part of Afghanistan. Khan Mohd. Abdul Slam in his book "Nasabi Agaghana" says on page 18: "Rohillas are those Afghans who came to India and were known as such. Roh is situated in Afghanistan. The Afghans do not call themselves Rohilla. The fact is that they came to be so called in India in the seventeenth century. Moreover, in the book "Guli Rahmat" by Saadat Yarkhan Bin Hafiz Rahmat and in the history of Farukhabad by Syed Wabullah, it is stated that the mountain Roh is a long chain of hills in the east of which is the Kashmir Mountain, and in the west the River Elman, which is near Herat and in the north is the mountain of Kashgar and in the south Sulaiman Mountain & Khandhar, Kabul, Peshwar, Khyber, Hassan Abdal are all included in Roh. The language of this tract contains words of Sanskrit and Persian. The Rohila Pathans entered India in the 17th Century in the time of Sher Shah Suri and continued coming in the subsequent century, and at last settled down in the land comprising of

the districts of Sambhal and Katehar, which later on came to be called Rohil Khand. These people were mostly Yusuf Zais”.

The author of the extract given above is of the opinion that the Afghans are semitic akin to the Jews in race. But this is not a fact, as Afghanistan from very ancient times was inhabited by the Aryans. In a book by Vara Mahira written in the sixth century A. D. Avgan has been used for the people of Afghanistan. H. Tsang entered India through Opokien. The Greeks have referred to the inhabitants of the Kabul Valley as Askein which can be the same as Ashvak of MahaBharat. Hence the view of Mr. Salam does not appear to be correct.

In the Basant Number of the “Daily Milap”, 1930, there appeared an article on the Geography and ancient history of Afghanistan, in which the view of Abdul Salam that the Afghans are semitic in race has been contradicted. Mr. Ahmad Khan states: “The people of Afghanistan are Aryans in race. There was a time when Afghanistan extended over a wide territory, and the Pushtan, Bactrian, Tajik or Dadyak, Yarat, Askai races inhabited it. As time passed on, other races like the Greeks and Indians got mingled with them. Several thousands years ago, all of them were found in Central Asia. In 3000 B.C., the Aryans were found in the valleys of Oxus and Euphrates, and then they colonized Bactria; and as their population expanded they crossed the narrow mountain valley and settled down in Heart, Kurram, Ghor, Kandhar, Biluchistan, Tokhraristan, Badhakshan, Chitral, Gandhar, Kabul, Peshawar, Pakhtia and down up to valley of Indus, Kashmir and the Punjab from where they penetrated in the heart of India. There is a striking similarity and affinity between the people of India and Afghanistan as regards race, language and religion. Long after this the Sakas came and settled down in Afghanistan”. The same writer further on remarks: “ If a close connection between India and Afghanistan is acknowledged as the Cambridge History of India would have us believe, then we shall have to admit that the history of Afghanistan is intimately connected with India. Seven hundred years after the war between the Asura and Devas, the descendants of Rohu or Dhrou, the son of King Yayati, migrated from the valley of Peshwar and Gandhar to Afghanistan. We read in the Vishnu Puran that the Chandra Vanshi Kshatryas had colonized the land of Jalalabad, Kandhar, Kabul and from there

they reached Iran and then went towards Mesopotamia. Our traditions point to the fact that Kshatriyas of Russia, Turkistan and also China were the Kshatriyas of Russia, Turkistan and also China were the Kshatriyas of India. The Swedish Research Scholar Count Bahrein Stein, states that the records carried by Sir William Jones with him to Europe refer to a genealogical table of the Rajas of Mahabadrni dynasty from which it is learnt that the Rajas of this dynasty existed 5600 years before Alexander. The famous scholar Wilson writes that before the invasion of Alexander Afghanistan had a Hindu population. It should also not be forgotten that the Chandra Vanshi Rajas found in the northwest regarded it an act in the interior of India, known then as Devas. Hence it was that they left the districts of Sindh, Multan, Dera Ghazi Khan to Afghans belong to this race". It is a fact that the people found living on the northwestern frontier of India have all along been regarded as war like and uncivilized by the people of India. Pandit Gauri Shankar Ojha, in his history of Rajputana, Volume1, calls the Sakas, Huns and Turushks as Aryan Tribes. Moreover, according to Colonel Tod, the descendants of Shri Krishan and his Yadav Clan and that of Bapa Rawal had settled down in Afghanistan or Roh Desh.

3. Ancient History of Roh Desh:

The original home of the Rohillas is Roh Desh; and after their advent into India they became known Rohilla Rajputs. About five thousand years ago, the Aryans entered India and, in course of time, set up their settlements and establishment kingdoms all over Northern India. Tradition begins with a myth how, after the ebbing away of the flood, the Pramaeval King Vai Vasvant Manu established his kingdom with its capital at Ayodhia. He had nine sons and a daughter, among whom the whole of India was divided Ikshvaku, the Eldest, became the progenitor of the “Solar Race”.

His daughter Ila had a son called Pururavas who became the progenitor of the “Lunar” dynasty. Manu’s seventh son was Narsheyant who established his kingdom between the river Indus and the Hindu Kush Mountain.

The descendants of the Solar Prince Narsheyant were enterprising. They crossed the Hindu Kush and established their settlements in Central Asia, Iran and even as far as the Western Asia. After leaving India, these people came to be known as *Sakas*. According to *Manu Smriti*, these people were divided into four main branches.

- (i) The Parvajans who came to be called Parthians;
- (ii) The Kambhoj;
- (iii) Pahlvi from whom have descended the *Iranians*,. And.
- (iv) the Yavanas or the Greeks:

Roh Desh and Chandra Vanshi Kshatriyas:

For a very long time the Kshatriyas of the Solar Race exercised their sway over Roh Desh and the land beyond. The descendants of *Pururava* were in possession of the tract between the Vindhya and the Jumna River. Yayati, the great grandson of Pururava was a mighty and famous conqueror. He succeeded in establishing an extensive empire. He had five remarkable sons among whom his vast empire was divided. Of these the youngest Puru got the ancestral

property. Another son Yadu had remarkable descendants who extended their sway over the neighbouring countries by defeating the Pauravas, and driving out the Druhyas into the Punjab. Later, the last named, i. e. Druhyas, were made to migrate into the regions of QUetta and Gandhar by Shashi Bandhu, the Yadav King.

These Druhyas has a famous King Prachuyata who had one hundred sons, who extended their empire and overran the countries of the *Malchhas* (Barbarians) ruling over the regions in the North-west. It is said that when the Kshatriyas in Afghanistan and Central Asia called the Chandra Vanshis as Devas the later related and started calling them *Malechhas* (Barbarians).

For a long time Afghanistan continued to be ruled by the Druhyas; and it is reasonable to conclude that the mountainous tract over which they had their sway, came to be known as Roh. The view of the author of “Nasabi-Afghans” that Afghanistan came to be called Roh after the name of the wife of Jewish Prophet *Rahall* does not seem to be correct and based on facts.

Then came the period when Shri Rama ruled over Ayodhia. At that Roh was ruled by the Lunar Kings. The conquest of Ceylon being over, Shri Ram divided India among his brothers. The Bharat was allotted the region of the North-west where flows the river Jhelum and to which was also attached the Southern Valley of Indus. Bharat had two sons *Taksh* and *Pushkar*, both of whom were mightly warriors and conquerors. They conquered Gandhar Takshi is said to have founded the town of Takshila, which later on became the centre of trade, art and learning Pushkar founded the city of Pushkalvati, which is identified today with Charsada and Parang in the land of the Yusuf-Zias, situated today with miles to the north of Peshawar. The descendants of Bharat in course of time for mingled with the *Druhyas*.

Descended from Pushkar was one Raja Hans Dhaj whose descendant Daulat Rao founded Kanauj.

Bhim Raj the author of “Rohilla Kshatriyas Jati Nirnaya”, writes that Shatrughan, the younger brother of Rama, had two sons Sruti Sen and Sabahu. The descendant of the latter settled down in the region of the North-west. From Sabahu originated the famous Rajput clan of

Chindaks or Chind. As already remarked elsewhere, these Kshatriyas conquered lands beyond Hindu Kush and founded the Karkot Fort in Turkistan, where it still exists.

In the descriptive found of inscriptions found in the Central Provinces & Berar (now Madhya Bharat) we read about certain kingdoms existing during the 11th and 12th centuries of the Christian Era, the rulers of which had with their names attached the clan-name viz. Nag Vansh and CHindak. It appears that these Kshatriyas kings must have come from Roh Desh.

In the Sabha Parv of the Mahabharat we read that Arjun in the course of his campaigns in the North-west, had to fight hard against warlike races such as Trurusks, Kambhojas and Dards.

Colonel Tod in his "Annals of Rajasthan" Volume-I makes a mention of Taks and writes: "A new race entered Hindustan led by conqueror termed Shehes Nag, from Sehes Nag Desh, who ascended the Pandu's throne and whose line terminates in the descents with Maha Nada of spurious birth". Sehes Nag Desh is explained by him as the country of the 'head of the snakes' Nag or Tak or Takshak being synonymous. This was the abode of the ancient Scythic Tochari of Strabo, the Takurks of the Chinese, the Tajuks of the present-day Turkestan. This race appears to be the same as the *Toorshks* of the *Puranas* who rules on *Arsvesina* (the Araxes) in Sacadwip or Scythia.

"Tak or Takshak" in the words of Col. Tod appears to be the generic term of the race from which the various Scythic tribes, the early invaders of India, branched off.

Some ancient inscription in the *Pali* characters discovered in some parts of Rajasthan throw light upon the history of a race called Tusta, Takshak and Tak relating to the tribes known as the Mori, Pramara and their descendants.

In view of the observations of Col. Tod above, we can safely conclude that the Agnikul Rajput clans were immigrants into India, and were inhabitants of

Sacadwip and hence it is not a matter for wonder that the Rohilla Rajputs contain *gotras* and branches not only of Takshaks but of the four Agnikul royal houses.

The North-west Frontier of India and regions beyond have, from very ancient times, been a storm centre and a source of trouble for the kings of India and, therefore, it was why Arjun had to a vigorous and bloody war against the tribes of Afghanistan. As a result of this, his grandson Parikshit had to face an invasion from the North-west made by the Takshaks. The *Mahabharat* describes the war in its usual allegorical style between the Kings of *Indrapast* and *Nags* of the North. King Parikshit was murdered by the Nag leader, and his son Janmeja escaped and carried on a devastating warfare against the enemies of his house, as a result of which the Takshaks must have retired to the hills of the North-west.

By a reference to Kautliya Arth Shastra, we learn that there were tribal republics in India. If the Puranas are to be believed, India was invaded by this very Tak race in the sixth century before Christ under their leader Sehes Nag who succeeded in setting up a royal dynasty, which remained in existence for three hundred and sixty years. Of this dynasty Kala Soka was assassinated by a man of low origin barber according to some accounts named Maha Padma Nanda, who succeeded in establishing an empire over the ruins of ancient Kshatriya Kingdoms ruled by the Puruavas, Aikshvaks and the Pradyotas extending over a large part of Northern India, excluding the Punjab, Kashmir and Sindh.

Then came the invasion of Alexander the Great, which opened a free intercourse between India and Western countries. It also resulted in the Greek domination of the Punjab and in less than five years the last vestige of Greek rule in the Punjab was done away with. The hero to whom belong the credit of accomplishing this task was Chandra Gupta Maurya, whose name is surrounded with a host of legends. He said to have been the son of Mura, a low born woman from whom the dynastic name of Maurya is supposed to have been derived. It is probable, however, that Chandra Gupta belonged to the Kshatriya clan of that name, which is referred to as *Maryas of Pippahalivana*.

This Maurya clan to which Chandra Gupta belonged can also be treated as akin to the clan of the founder of Sehes Nag dynasty who came to India during the sixth century B C. from Sehes Nag Desh. On pages 45 and 46 of Tod's "Rajasthan", Popular Edition, we read: "A fourth dynasty commenced with Chandra Gupta Mori of the same Takshak race. The Mori dynasty consisted of ten princes, who are started to have passed away in one hundred and thirty-seven years". In another place-page 87-Col. Tod observes "Enough of the ancient history of the Tak. We will now descent to more modern times on which we shall be brief. We have already mentioned the Takshak Moris as being Lords of Chitor from a very early period . But few generations after the *Gehlots* supplanted the Moris, this Palladium of Hindu liberty was assailed by the arms of Islam. We find among the numerous defenders who appeared to Asirgarh'. "The heroic leader of the Gehlots who supplanted the Tak Moris of Chitor was Bappa Rawal, who figures so prominently as the founder of the dynasty in bardic chronicles and later records dating from the 13th Century A. D. Different versions are current of his early history, according to some of which he obtained royalty through the grace of a sage and captured Chitor by defeating the *Mlechhas* or the Nori King according to sovereignty there by a Bappa Rawal, Dr Majumdar in his book "Ancient India", states: "It is likely that the Mauryas (Moris) who were ruling at Chitor fell before the Great Onslaught of the Arabs which overwhelmed nearly the whole of Western India about 725 A. D. and that Bappa like Nag Bhatta was one of those Indian rulers who distinguished themselves by brave resistance against the Arabs and secured some cities and strongholds which they were able to wrest from the foreign invaders. The heroic part which Bappa played at this critical moment of India's history probably raised his power and fame to such an extent that posterity regarded him as the real founder of the family".

The above shows that the Morris of Chitor were Taks who, after their defeat, migrated to Asirgarh over which they ruled for several centuries and were known as Taks when they appeared again for the assistance of Khuman Rawal of Chitor to stop the advance of the muslim invaders and beat them back to their country. These Taks Moris re-appeared from Asirgarh to fight against the Ghori Sultan when Prithvi Raj Chohan of Delhi met him on the field of tarawari. It appears that in later times the ancient Maurya Kshatriya clan of Chandra Gupta came to be known as Taks. Hence we would not much wrong if we state that Chandra Gupta Maurya must

have been of the same Nag Vanshi Takshak Clan to which Sehes Nag, the founder of the Magadha Kngdom, had belonged.

After the downfall of the Maurya Empire its North-Western Provinces were conquered by Demetrius, the Greek King of Bactria about the beginning of the Second Century B. C. This king also led an expedition into India, which was successful but after this he was supplanted by another Greek who could not enjoy his ill gotten power for long.

For sometime the Greeks had internal dissensions and when they were quarrelling among themselves, they were overwhelmed by The Seythians who exterminated their rule in the Valley of Oxus. From where the Greeks came to Afghanistan and the Western Punjab which they held for more than two hundred years. Of the Greek kings who made themselves famous was Menander or king Milinda so famous in Buddhist literature. The Indian frontier was also harassed by other tribes, the most famous among them being the Parthians, Sakas and Kushans. The Sakas established their rule in some parts of Northern India, Malwa and Kathiar. The Kushans belonged to nomadic Turusks who conquered Afghanistan ruled by the Greek Kings. A vast empire was established by them and their emperor Kanishka rose to become the most familiar figure in ancient India after Ashoka. The successors of Kanishka continued to rule in Kabul and a part of Punjab for a long time. Some of the Kushans entered India and came to be Known as Rohilla Rajputs with Kushan Wal as their Gotra.

4. Roh Desh and the Yadavas:

In remote ages the various communities from the Caspian Sea to the Ganges were members of grand family having a common language and common Faith. A study of the *Puranas and Manu Sahinta* affords abundant evidence of an intimate intercourse between the countries from the Oxus to the Ganges. But as time passed on the people living in *Sacadhpur*, though akin in race and culture to those in India, became known as *Mlechhas* or Barbarians, because they ceased to recognize Brahims. To this land beyond India migrated the Yadu tribe of Shri Krishna. A Prince by the name Raj was born in this clan, and his son Gaj rose to be a powerful and famous warrior. It was he who erected a fort and called it Gajni. Soon after, however, he met a defeat at the hands of the Kings of Khorasan.

This Raja Gaj had a son of remarkable ability. He left Afghanistan and came to Punjab where he laid the foundation of a city which he called after his name as *Salbahanpur*. He conquered the Punjab. Salbahan had fifteen sons, all of whom rose to be mighty warriors and extended the sway of their clan. Salbahan took revenge of defeat Jallal. He appointed his son *Balunda* as Viceroy of Gujni and returned to Punjab where he breathed his last soon after. *Balund* succeeded his father to the throne. Danger from the Turks, however, soon loomed large and lands round about Gujni fell into Muslim hands once again.

Balund had seven sons, of whom Bhupat had a son named Chakito, whose descendants formed into a tribe known after him as "Chakito" (or Chagitai). Chakito was the viceroy of Gujni and married the daughter of a Muslim from the Uzbek race and also embraced Islam. He then became the master of Balkh to the Punjab. From him also descended the tribe known as *Chakito Moghuls*. The descendants of another son of Balund increased in number, but all of them became Muslims. Colonel Tod in a foot note in his history states that some of the Afghan tribes are not the descendants of Joseph. The great division of the Afghans called Euzofze (or the sons of Joseph), whose original home was Kabul and Gazni, retain the name of Jadon, the vulgar Yadu. They still occupy a position in the hill tracts east of the Indus which had been conquered by the sons of Balund.

The Rohilla Afghans who entered India in the Seventeenth Century and after, were mostly from the Eusafzai tribe. The Rohilla Rajputs have also claim to belong to Yadavcln, and originally came from Afghanistan or *Roh Desh*.

Ghazni and the rule of the Surya vanshi Kshatriyas and Bappa Rawal:

Maha Padma Nanda of Magadha was a great military genius. He waged war against the Kshatriya families of old and exterminated the rule of Akshvaks and forcing the Surya Princes Kanak Sen to migrate into the Punjab, where, he founded *Loh Kot* which later on came to be known as Lahore. Some time afterwards Kanak Sen migrated to Birnagar in Saurashtra and set up as small kingdom. This event happened in A.D.144. Four generations later Vijapur was founded. Kanak Sen and his descendants, however, could not acquire sovereignty. They appeared to have been *Senapatis* or sub-lords under the Guptas. After the fall of the Guptas, these princes made themselves independent, but for some time to come they continued to call themselves *Senapatis*. Sen I

Then arose one prince Goha Sen (539-569) . A descendant of this Prince was *Druha Sen II*, who was a contemporary of Harsha and who had been subdued by him. But Harsha allowed him to retain his kingdom and gave away his daughter to him in marriage.

Years rolled on and the descendants of Kanak Sen continued to rule *Vallabhipur* and it was in the year 766 that its last ruler *Sitaditya* was on the throne. Colonel Tod, on the authority of the bardic traditions, regards *Guha* as the founder of the Gehlot clan of the Rajputs. But Dr. Majumdar places him in the second half of the 6th Century A.D.

In this famous dynasty was also born that great warrior known by the name *Bapa Rawal*, who played a prominent and heroic role in saving Chitor and stemming the tide of muslim advance in India. *Bapa* was the son of *Naga Dil*, who had lost his life at the hands of a Bhil (nomad tribe), when *Bapa* was only three years old. The early life of *Bapa* was full of troubles. He was surrounded by enemies and it was only through the wisdom and motherly care of Brahmin woman that he could survive. Later, a Bhil took charge of him and brought him up. It is

perhaps better to quote her what Colonel Tod says about this in his "Annals of Rajasthan" Volume 1: pages 182-3:-

"Tradition has preserved numerous details of Bappa's (Bappa is not a proper name, it signifies merely a child. He is frequently styled "syeel", and in inscriptions "Syeel Ahdes", 'the mountain lord') infancy, which resembles the adventures of every hero or founder of a race. The young prince attended the sacred kine, an occupation which was honourable even to the 'children of the Sun; and which they still pursue: possibly a remnant of their "primitive Scythic habits". The pranks of the royals heperd are the theme of many a tale. On the JUDJHOLNI, when swinging is the amusement of the youth of both sexes, the daughter of the Solanki chief Nagda and the village maidens had gone to the groves to enjoy this festivity, but they were unprovided with ropes. Bappa happened to be at hand, and was called by the Rajpoot damsels to forward their support.

He promises to procure a rope if they would first have a game at marriage. One frolic was as good as another, and the scarf of the Solanki was united to the garments of Bappa, the whole of the village lassies joining hands with his as the connecting link, and thus they performed the mystical number of revolutions round an aged tree. This frolic caused his flight from Nagda, and originated his greatness, but at the same time burdened him with all these damsels, and hence a hererogenous issue, whose descendants still ascribe their origin to the prank of Bappa round the old mangotree of Nagda."

"A suitable offer being shortly after made for the young Solankini's hand, the family priest of the bridegroom whose duty it was, by his knowledge of palmistry, to investigate the fortunes of the bride, discovered that she was already married : intelligence which threw the family into the greatest consternation. Thought Bappa's power over his brother shepherds was too strong to create any dread of disclosure as to his being the principal in this affair, yet was it " too much to except that a secret, in which no less than six hundred of the daughters of Eve were concerned, could remain such ? Bappa's mode of swearing his companions to secrecy is preserved..... The Solanki chief, however, heard that Bappa was the offender, who, reciveing from his faithful scouts intimation of his danger, sought refuge in one of the retreats which

abound in these mountains, and which in aftertimes proved the preservation of his race. The companions of his flight were two Bhils: one of Oondree in the valley of the present capital, the other of Solanki descent, from Oguna Panora, in the western wilds. Their names, Baleo and Dewa, have been handed down with Bappas: and the former had the honour of drawing the *teeka* of sovereignty with his own blood on the forehead of the prince, on the occasion of his taking the crown from the Mori.”

“It is pleasing to trace, through a series of age, the knowledge of a custom still ‘honoured in the observance’ The descendants of Baleo of Oguna and the Oondree Bhil still claim the privilege of performing the *teeka* on the inauguration of the descendants of Bappa.”

Colonel Tod further states on page 184 of the history :-

“Bappa, who was the founder of a line of a ‘hundred kings’, feared as a monarch, adored as more than mortal, and, according to the legend, ‘still living (Chenjiva)’, deserves to have “the source of his preeminent fortune disclosed, which, in Marwar, it were sacrilege to doubt. While he pastured the sacred kine in the valleys of Nagindra, the princely shepherd was suspected of appropriating the milk of a favourite cow to his own use. He was distrusted and watched, and although indignant, the youth admitted that they had reason to suspect him, from the habitual dryness of the brown cow when she entered the pens at even-(Gaodaluk, the time when the cows come home). He watched and traced her to a narrow dell, when he beheld the udder spontaneously pouring its stores amidst the shrubs. Under a thicket of cane a hermit was reposing in a state of abstraction, from which the impetuosity of the shepherd soon roused him. The mystery was revealed in the phallic symbol of the ‘great God’, which daily received the lacteal shower, and raised such doubts of the veracity of Bappa.....”

“Bappa related to the sage all knew of himself, receiving his blessings, and retired: but he went daily to visit him, to wash his feet, carry milk to him, and gather such wild flowers as were acceptable offerings to the deity. In return he received lessons of morality, and was initiated into the mysterious rites of Siva: and at length he was invested with the triple cordon of faith (teen puwa zinar) by the hands of the sage, who became his spiritual guide and bestowed on his pupil the title of “Regent (Dewan) of Ekitnga.”.....he (Bappa) met with another hermit

in the forest of the Tiger Mount, the famed *Goruknath*, who presented to him the doubleedged sword, which, with the proper incantation, could 'sever rocks.' With this he opened the road to fortune leading to the throne of Chetore."

"Chetore was at this period held by the Mori prince of the pramar race, the ancient lords of Malwa, then paramount sovereigns of Hindustan: but whether this city was then the chief seat of power is not known. Various public works, reservoirs, and bastions, yet retain the name of this race."

"Bappa's connection with Mori Bappa's mother was a pramar, probably from Aboo or Chandrawati, near to Edur; and consequently Bappa was nephew of every pramar in existenceobtained him a good reception; he was enrolled amongst the samunts or leaders, and suitable estate conferred upon him. The inscription of the Mori prince's reign, so often alluded to, affords a good idea of his power, and of the feudal manners of his court. He was surrounded by a numerous nobility, holding estates on the tenure of military service, but whom he had disgusted by his neglect, and whose jealousy he had provoked by the superior regard shown to Bappa. A foreign foe appearing at this time, instead of obeying the summons to attend, they threw up their grants, and tauntingly desired him to call on his favourite."

"Bappa undertook the conduct of the war, and the chiefs, though dispossessed of their estates, accompanied him from a feeling of shame. The foe was defeated and driven out of the country; but instead of returning to Chetore, Bappa continued his course to the ancient seat of his family, Gajni, expelled the 'barbarian' called Selim, placed on the throne a chief of the Chawura tribe and returned with the discontented nobles. Bappa, on this occasion, is said to have married the daughter of his enemy, The nobles quitted Chetore, leaving their defiance with their prince. In vain were the spiritual preceptor (Gooru) and fosterbrother (Dabhe) sent as ambassadors; their only reply was that as they had 'eaten his salt', they would forbear their vengeance for twelve months, The noble department of Bappa won their esteem, and they transferred to him their service and homage. With the temptation of a crown, the gratitude of the Grohilote was given to the winds. On return they assaulted and carried Chetore, and in the words of chronicle, "Bappa took Chetore from the Mori and became himself the Mor (Crown)

of the land". He obtained by universal consent the title of "Sun of the Hindus (Hindua Sooraj), preceptor of princes (Raj Gooru), and universal lord (Chukwa)."

"He had a numerous progeny, some of whom returned to their ancient seats in Saurashtra, whose descendants were powerful chieftains in that tract so late as Akbar's reign. Five sons went to Marwar and the ancient Gohils 'of the land of Kheir', expelled and driven to Gohilwal, have lost sight of their ancestry and by a singular fatality are in possession of the wreck of "Balabhipoora, ignorant of its history and their connection with it, mixing with Arabs and following marine and mercantile pursuits; and office of the bard having fallen into disrepute, they cannot trace their forefathers beyond kheirdhur."

"The close of Bappa's career is the strangest part of the legend and which it might be expected they would be solititos to suppress. Advanced in years, he abandoned his children and his country, carried his arms west to Korasan, and there established himself and married new wives from among the 'barbarians' by whom he had numerous offspring."

Bappa had reached the patriarchal age of one hundred when he died. An old volume of historical anecdotes, belonging to the chief of Dailwara, states that he became an ascetic at the foot of Meru, where he was buried alive after having overcome all the kings of west, as in Ispahan, Kandahar, Kashmere, Irak, Iran, Tooran, and Cafferisthan; all of whose daughters he married, and by whom he had one hundred and thirty sons, called the Nosheyra Pathans. Each of these founded a tribe, bearing the name of the mother. His hindu children were ninetyeight in number, and were called Agnioopasi Sooryavansi, or 'sunborn fireworshippers'. The chronicles also record that (in like manner as did the subject of the Bactrian king Menander, though from a different motive) the subjects of Bappa quarreled for the disposal of his remains. The Hindu wished the "fire to consume them; the barbarian to commit them to earth; but on raising the pall while the dispute was raging, innumerable flowers of the lotus were found in the place of the remains of morality. These were conveyed and planted in the lake. This is precisely what is related of the end of the Persian Noshirwan."

In connection with the death of Bappa in the land of the Muslims, Colonel Tod in a footnote on page 186 of his history states: "The reigning prince told the author that there was no doubt of Bappa having ended his days among 'the Toorks': a term now applied to all Mahomedans by the Hindu, but at that time confined to the inhabitants of Toorushka of the Poorans, and the Takshac of early inscriptions,"

From this account we may conclude :-

- (i) That Bappa and his ancestors had a dominion over Ghazni;
- (ii) That Bappa had conquered Afghanistan and other lands;
- (iii) That Bappa had with him his Hindu children who accompanied him in that expedition; and
- (iv) That in Ghazni his descendants grew in number and were challenged by Muslims about the manner in which his body was to be disposed of when he was dead.

Rai Bhim Raj in his work "Rohilla Kshatriya Jati Nirnaya" states that Bappa had numerous children and also makes a mention of sixteen from whom sprang up sixteen Gotras found among the Rohilla Rajputs such as Gaddon Nachharak, Sanamar, Sanoeh, Sanadh, Sanjha, Vanshut, Tatwal, Kupat, Musal, Newal, Charakhwal, Nepali, Pataliya, Garg, Panisuff and Pichhar. It was nowhere been stated by Bhim Raj, however, that Bappa had been accompanied by any one of these sixteen sons of Afghanistan when he invaded that country. But it may be assumed that the great hero did have with him some of these sixteen sons along with others whose number Colonel Tod has stated as ninetyeight, and some of whom must have quarreled with the Muslims over the disposal of his remains after his death referred to in the previous paragraph.

Moreover , some of the Rollia Rajputs also claim that their forefathers were from amongst the *Gelhlots* of Ghazni who had returned to India to assist their kinsman, the heroic Khuman Rawal, when his territory of Chitor was invaded by Almamum, the son of Harun-Rashid.

In this connection we quote Colonal Tod again, who states at page 202 of his history: "Let us now proceed to nexterruption of the Islamite invaders in the region of khoman from A.D.

812-836. Though this leader of this attack is styled 'Mahmood Khorasan Put' it is evident from the catalogue of Hindu Princes who came to defend Chitor, that is 'Lord of Khorasan' was atleast two centuries before the son of Subaktigin; and as the period is in perfect accord with the partition of the Caliphate by Haroon amongst his sons, we can have no hesitation in assigning such invasion to Mahmood, to whose share was allotted Khorasan, Sind and the Indian dependencies."

Colonel Tod further states that the names of the clans which had come to the rescue of Khuman against the Muslim invader. "Gehlots arrived from Ghazni or Gajni, The tanks of Asir, the Chohans of Nador, Chalukyas from Reshgarh and other tribes to the rescue of Chitor."

The above clearly establishes the fact that for the defence of Chitor had come the Tanks of Asirgarh and Gehlots of Ghazni. The Gehlots referred to could not have been other than the descendants of Bappa, who had settled down in Afghanistan; and a tradition among some Rohilla Families still persists that the Gehlots of Ghazni were led by Kupat Rawal, a military leader, whose exploits against the Muslims made him so renowned at the time that the clan named after him as Karpat came to be counted among the thirtysix royal houses.

5. Advent of Rohilla Rajputs in India:

In the Sixth Century A.D. there was born in Arabia a remarkable man, Prophet Muhammad, who is considered by some as the greatest nation-maker that ever lived. The new religion that he founded and preached, created a national consciousness and a war-like spirit in his countrymen. The enthusiastic and energetic nature of the Arabs was so thoroughly awakened that they started on a career of military conquest all over the world, which was matched by their religious zeal. No wonder that in a short time after the Prophet's death, the Muslim empire extended from the banks of Loire in the centre of France to the Oxus and Kabul Rivers.

Such was the formidable nation which had approached the frontiers of India, the untold wealth, fair plains and rich cities of which had attracted their longing eyes. In the beginning of the Seventh Century there was an Arab invasion of Sindh and its conquest. But why the conquerors of the world stopped at the gates of India has been fully explained. Moreover, it is not also true to say that the Arabs had no desire to extend their dominion into the interiors of India, because they continued to lead expeditions after expeditions for the purpose. The most formidable was the one which was led against the Kathiawar Peninsula, northern Gujrat and Southern Rajputana. But the Northern India was saved by the Prithvi Chief, and the Deccan were successfully defended by the Chalukya King of Badami. Moreover, as already referred to in a previous chapter, the Muslims advanced against Chitor, the Mori ruler of which could not stand the on-slaughter and Bappa Rawal, the famous progenitor of Udaipur house, not only hurled back the invaders, but also carried war into their country and retrieved the honour of India and saved it from disaster, and preserved its independence.

Later on, the Muslims in the Ninth Century again invaded India and this time they did it under the command of A E Mamun, the son of Caliph Harun Rashid. This time also the Rajputs rose to the occasion and under the leadership of Khuman Rawal of Chitor, faced the Muslims, assisted by other Rajput clans which had included among them Gehlots of Gazni and taks of Asirgarh, and succeeded in beating them off. The leader of the Gehlots of Gazni, as already stated, was a military genius, Kupat 'Rawal' whose descendants, later on, true to the traditions of their race, took part in the wars of Prithvi Raj Chohan against the Ghori invader.

General Govind Rai and Mahas Karan:

We now turn to give an account of that clan of the Rohillas which claims descent from Bharat, the brother of Shri Rama. An outline has already been given of how the descendants of Bharat and Shatrughan had settled down in Roh Desh and came to be known as Rohali or Rahakwal. Their Gotra was Kasab. In the Hoshiarpur District are found Rajputs of this gotra and are known as Purkham Rahkwal.

According to Bhim Raj, the descendants of Bharat were called Rahakwals and they were the founders of Rawalpindi. To this clan belonged that mighty warrior Govind Rai who had attacked Mohammad Ghori at the battle of Tarawari and would have made an end of him if the Ghori warrior had not miraculously escaped death through the Providential help rendered to him by a Muslim soldier. The descendants of this hero are found among the Rohillas with Kasab as their gotra.

Bhim Raj has also referred to another hero Mahas Karan, who held a very high military rank under Prithvi Raj Chohan. His title was Rahakwal Rawal Ghani Samral Chhand. It is said that his clan had migrated to the interior of India when the north-western frontier fell into the Muslim hands. Mahas Karan, along with his followers, sacrificed his life at the altar of Mother India to the eternal glory of his race in his struggle against the Muslim invaders. The Rohillas bearing Kasab Gotra were said to have kingdoms with their capitals at Ram Nagar, Nawab Ganj, Malapur, Rampur and Haripur; but they lost their all in their struggle against the Muslims.

(1) THE ADVENT OF RADHEL OR RAHAIL CLAN INTO THE BAREILLY DISTRICT OF UTTAR PRADESH.

In the Rohilkhand Division of Uttar Pradesh there lived people who were known by the clan name Randhel or Rahail. They apparently came from Roh Desh. In his "Hindu Medieval India" page 79-Mr C.V. Vaidya writes: "It will not be out of place to consider how far the conclusions about every clan arrived at by Mohan Lal in his Edition of " Prithvi Raj Rasay" are

correct. According to him the same as Chandel. In “Rasau”, the word Chhind bears the same meanings”. According to both Mohan Lal and Bhim Raj, Randhels or Chhinds are of one and the same clan. We have already mentioned that a Chief named Mahas Karan had borne the same title.

In the descriptive lists of inscriptions in the Central provinces & Berar (now Madhya Bharat), we find an inscription on page 150- No; 207 – which states: “ In this plate it is given that on Wednesday, 5th October 1065, there was Madhu Rantik Dev, Nag Vansh Chhindaks were Nags. These people have also been called “Taks” by Sardar Jhanda Singh, the author of “The History of Tak Kshatriyas”.

On page 250 of the book “Kshatriya Vartman” by Thakur Ajit Singh, it is stated: “The ancient home of Rudra-Randhel or Rohail is Bans Bareilly. It is sub-branch of Katehartiyas of the Nikumbh Vans descended from Bharat”.

Bhim Raj describes the Rohillas as migrating to this tract and founding the State of Rampur, where they held their sway for eleven generations. During the reign of Naurang Dev, the country was invaded by the Muslims. At first the attempt failed, but later on during the reign of Ranvir Singh the Muslims appeared again. The Army of Ranvir Singh faced the attack successfully and the Muslims leader was captured and taken as a prisoner. He was however, set at liberty after he had made rich presents to the Raja. After some time the Muslims made another attack and took the Raja by surprise at a time when he and his men were long engaged in festivities. The Raja called his brave soldiers to arms, but the wily Muslim General outwitted the Raja and was allowed to escape unscathed. Unfortunately, the Rohilla Raja Ranvir Singh was betrayed and the Muslims again attacked the Fort when the Raja and his men were busy with their celebration of festivities once again. The fighting was heavy and the heroic Rohilla soldiers fought to the last. Rampur, however fell and after the terrible jauhar (burning alive) the city was reduced to ashes. Even now can be seen the ruins of the Fort and the Temple raised in honour of the Rani and her womenfolk who performed the terrible rite of jauhar to safeguard their honour.

After their defeat Ranvir Singh’s brother Surat Singh and his Rohilla Kinsmen left Rampur for good. They were accompanied by a family priest, who had all along stood by them

even in those dark hours when some of these heroes had to face the enmity of Jai Chand of Kanauj. These refugees from Rampure at first came over at Charkhi Dadri (now in the Jind State) from where they dispersed and spread themselves in various parts of the country. The Kathora clan of these Rohilla Rajputs is proud of their fore-father who had lost their all in the defence of their country and religion, and even after their ruin preferred a life of obscurity and poverty to that of gilded slavery.

Also to the fate of the descendants of Raja Ranvir Singh, an article by Dr. Sant Singh Chohan appeared in the "Rajput Gazette" of Lahore dated the 4th June 1940. He wrote " A few days ago I wrote to Shri Kishan Datt Purohit, Hardwar, for further information in the matter. The Pandit supplied me the following details. After the defeat of Raja Ranvir Singh, his clan separated itself from the Rajput brotherhood. The Raja had two Ranis. One of them was Sondha Devi of the Yadu Clan. Her descendants came to be divided into 34 gotras like arval, Lond, etc. The second Rani was Dhil Masti belonging to the Tanwar Clan and her descendants came to be known as Bekani, Laderya, etc. All of them later on came together and became known as Chohans".

6. Alla and Udal of the Rohil Banafar clan:

The exploits of three Rajput heroes, Alla, Usal and Malkhan, are sung in the rural areas of Uttar Pradesh and Punjab even today, and mention is made therein of the brave Rohillas having fought shoulder to shoulder with them. These warriors were the contemporaries of Prithvi Raj Chohan, and were soldiers of fortune. It is said that at first they were in the army of Raja Parmal of Bundel Khand, but later on they took service with Raja Jai Chand of Karruj, where they held high positions in his army. When Raja Parmal was attacked by Prithvi Raj Chohan, they were persuaded to return to Mohaba, one of the headquarters of the Government of Parmal. They fought to the last against Prithvi Raj Chohan and it is a pity that the Rajputs could not combine at a time when Mohammad Ghori was thundering at the gates of India.

Who were these three heroes and which clan did they come from? We have mentioned elsewhere that the Rohilla Rajputs were found across the Ganges. Moreover, the clan to which Alla and his brothers belonged has been called by a Hindi Poet as "Rohail Banafars". Prithvi Raj Chohan always regarded them as an inferior kind of Rajputs. It is reasonable, therefore, to conclude that these Rohail Banafars Alla and Udal and their kinsmen must have been immigrants from Roh Desh.

Entry of the Rohillas into Marwar and Gujarat:

Elsewhere we have referred to an inscription in Sanskrit on a Shiv Temple in Kathiawar (Gujrat), which mentions a General named Lunig. He was a Rohilla Chief who had come from Marwar and had entered Saurashtra as the head of the army. He and his descendants settled down there. Then was born in his family one Raj Singh, who married the daughter of Khem Raj, a Baghela Chief, who had also come from Marwar. The son of Raj Singh was Rohilla Maldev, whose grandfather Khem Raj had helped Khangar to beat back the Muslim king Mohammad Tughlak when he had encircled Rawatpir and Junagarh. A reference to Rohilla Maldev in the inscription establishes the fact beyond any shadow of doubt that the Rohillas have a historical background and not only were they found in Marwar but also in Saurashtra. History is silent as to what happened to these people after the Fourteenth Century. It appears, however, that they were

forced to retire into obscurity after Gujrat fell into the hands of the Tak Chief, Raja Saharan, who had embraced Islam and whose descendants had set up an independent Muslim kingdom there. We shall refer to him again later on.

The point for consideration now is whether there is any place in Marwar which can be associated with the Rohillas. We cannot name it with definiteness, but in the history of Rajputana (Volume 1) by Pandit Gauri Shankar Ojha, we come across two inscriptions. Pandit Ojha says on Page 166: 'Mandor is a place four miles away from Jodhpur where some inscriptions have been found. These inscriptions give an account of the origin of the clan of the Pratihar. One of these inscriptions is also found in the Fort of Jodhpur, which previously was on a Shiv Temple. One of the them is in Prakrit. Both of them refer to 917 of Vikram Era. From these inscriptions we learn that there was Harish Chandra who was a scholar of Sanskrit. He was Pratihar or Viceroy of the place. His title was "Rohil Ladhi". This title of Harish Chandra clearly indicates that he ruled the place on behalf of some Rohilla king of the region, where the Rohillas must have been living. Luing of the Sanskrit inscription of 1445, the Vikram Era, previously referred to, may have been of this region, from where he led an army into Saurashtra.

Moreover, in Ghatial in Marwar was also a village called Rohinskop, with this inscription can be associated. From what is mentioned in the inscriptions referred to above, we can safely conclude that the Rohilla Rajputs, after their migration from Roh Desh, must have gone as far as Marwar and established themselves there as well.

Rohillas of Mahecha Gotra:

There is a clan among the Rohilla Rajputs, the gotra of which is "Mahecha". According to Bhim Raj this clan claims descent from one Mohan Das who held a high position in the Army of the King of Ghazni. After his death his brother Sita Ram made his way to Bhutan, where he too lost his wife while engaged in fighting against billmen. His son Ratan Chand migrated to India and settled down in Ujjain. In the seventh line of descent to him was one Mohan Pal, whose younger brother entered the Maratha Army and was appointed as Governor of Kailai, now in Punjab Pepsu. In the third battle of Panipat, a descendant of his lost his life. There after his

family settled down in the district of Ambala, where their descendants are still said to be continuing the line.

7. Rohillas of the Jaura Gotra Descendants of Guga Chohan:

Bhim Raj, in his book already quoted, writes about the famous Rajput warrior Guga Chohan: “Rana Hara left Sambhal, (Morada bad) and reached Dagdera Fort. His son was Rana Bega whose descendant was Guga Chohan, the son of Jaivar”. Tod, in his book ‘Annals of Rajasthan (Volume 11 popular Edition, page 362)’ writes: “Gugo Chohan was the son of Vacha Raja, a name of some celebrity. He had the whole of the jungle or the forest lands from Sutlej to Hariana. His capital called Mehra, or as pronounced Goga-Ca-Mari, was on the Sutlej. In defending this he fell with forty-five sons and sixty nephews, and as it occurred on Sunday, the ninth of the Month, that day is held sacred to the name of Guga by the 36 classes throughout Rajputana, but especially in the desert a portion of which is yet called ‘Guga Dev Ka thall’. Even the steed javadia has been immortalized, and has become a favourite name for a war-horse throughout Rajputana, whose mighty men swear by the ‘Saca of guga,” for maintaining the Rajput fame when Mahamud crossed the Sutlej.”

Guga and his history are shrouded in mystery, Nothing definite is known as to when he had flourished. He is said to be a contemporary of Mahmud of Ghazni and Mohammad of Ghor. It is, however, certain that he is regarded as Manlik by the Rajputs, and is worshipped by lakhs of people all over Northern India. The ninth of Bhadon month is celebrated every year in his memory. People from all over the country flock together at his place ‘Guga Vir, Zehir Pir, Bagar Wala and Guga Nag, To a Rohilla of Jauka Gotra he is specially adorned for he is looked upon by him as his progenitor, and the ninth of Bhadon month is regarded as very auspicious in his memory.

Kokcha and Kushanwal Rohillas:

There are Rohillas who bear a gotra known as Kushanwal and claim to be the descendants of the Kushans who held a sway over India and who gave to the world one of the

most famous kings in the Buddhist history by the name of Kanishka. It appears that these Kushanwal Rohillas entered India when Roh Desh was converted into a Islamic territory.

There is another gotra found among these people known as Kokcha. There is a small stream in Afghanistan, the valley of which is called Kokcha. It appears that when the people of this region came down to India they adopted "Kokcha" as their clan name in the memory of their origin in the Kokcha Valley in Afghanistan.

Rohilla Rajputs of Takshak Clan:

We have already mentioned that in ancient times there lived a race in Afghanistan known as Takshaks. In India they were called Nag Vanshils during the period before Christ. One of their leaders, according to the Puranas, was Sehes Nag, who have founded a kingdom in Mogadha and, as asserted by some writers, Chandra Gupta, the first historical and national ruler of India, was also a Takshak. The clean of Chandra Gupta was known as Mauriya or Mori.

This Nag race, also known as Tak, had come into India from beyond the North-western Frontier of India and Colonel Tod, in his "Annals of Rajasthan (volume II, footnote on Page 1063)" writes: "I have given a sketch of this tribe (Volume I), but since I worte it I have discovered the capital of the Tak, and on the very spot where I should have expected the site of Taxila, the capital of Taxiles, the friend of Alexander. In the sketch, I hesitated not to say that the name was not personal, but arose from his being the head of Takshac or Nag tribe, which is confirmed. It is to Babar or rather to his translator that I am indebted to this discovery, In describing the limiting of Bannu, Babar thus mentions: "And on the west is Desht, which is also called "Bazar and Tak," to which the translator adds: "Tak is said to have long been the capital of Daman. Mr. Elphinston's Map, Bazar which Babar makes indentical with Tak, is a few miles from Attock. There is no question that both the river and the city were named after the race of Tak or Takshac, the Nagas, Nag Vanshi or the Snake Race who spread over India. The Taks appear to have been established in the same regions at the cariiet period. The Mahabhrat describes the on wars between Janme jaya and the Takshacs to avenge on their king the death of his father Parikshit, emperor of Indraprasht or Delhi."

The quotation above indicates that the home of the Taks was the region in the North-West of India. About the Taks Pandit Gauri Shankar Ojha writes in his History of Rajputana (Volume I, page 261-262). "The Nags existed before the age of Mahabharat. The real meaning of the poetical description of parikhit being 'bitten to death by a Nag, and the burning of thousands of snakes by his son Janme Jaya,' is that Parikshit was killed by a Nag Vanshi invader, and as a result thereof his son Janme jaya avenged himself upon the Nag Race in a terrible manner by carrying out their extermination in thousands. Mention has also been made of the wonderful power of the Nag Race in the Buddhist literature and Raj Tarangni," Takshak, Karkolak, Dhanajaya, and Muni Nag are the name of the famous kings of old. The descendants of Takshaks came to be known as Tak, Tank, etc. This tribe had spread over a large part of India. In the Vishnu Puram, we read that the Nag Rajas had established their sway in Pagvati (Gwalior), Kantipur and Mathura. In Vayu puran is mentioned that nine Nag Vanshi Rajas ruled Champapur, and seven had a sway over Mathura. The coins of Nag Rajas of Pagvati have been found in various places in Malwa. Several Nag princesses were married into Brahmin and Kshatriya families. The Malwa Raja Bhojwas married to Shashi Prabha of Nag Vansh. The Nag race was divided into many branches. The Tak branch of this race had a small kingdom in Kashta Nagar on the bank of the Jumna in 14th and 15th centuries of the Vikram Era.

In Central India, in Chakrakot from the 11th to 14th centuries, and in Kovardhi from the 10th to 14th centuries, Nag had their sway. The sindhu branch of the Nag Vansh rule. In shergarh town of Kota Raj, we have an inscription relating to 847 of the Vikram Era in which we have the names like Hindu Nag, Pang Nag, Sarv Nag, Dev Datt. The name of the queen Sarv Nag was Shri. Dev Datt flourished in 847 and had erected a buddist monastery and temple. He was a follower of Buddhism and had been shown, in the inscription as a feudal vassal of Raghu Vanshi and Nag Vanshi Pratiharas of Kanauj. At present the Nag Vanshis and their descendants are not found in Rajputana."

In connection with these Nags, Shri Kashi Prasad Jaiswal had proved that the Nags of Manju Shri Mul Kalp were from the Bharsiv Vansh about which coins and other historical records tell us a lot. These Bharsiva Princes had the merit of freeing India from the domination

of the Kushans and celebrated the event by performing Ashva Medh Yagna in Banaras. These Nag Kings had as their emblem “Nandi Bull.”

In the middle ages, these Nag Vanshi Taks had a dominion in the North west and we read in “Yuan Chwang’s Travels in India” by Watters on page 94 : “About Samarkand the king was a man of spirit and courage and was obeyed by the neighbouring States. He had a splendid army and most of his soldiers being Cherkie (Chak or Tak) men. These men of ardent valour, who looked on their death as going back to their kindred and against whom no foe could stand in combat.”

General Cunningham in his book “Historical Geography of India (page 170)” remarks: “Tsekia represents Taki which appears to have been the name of the capital as well as of the kingdom of Punjab in the seventh century.

The people of Sakala are called Madras, Arattas, Jastlikas and Bahikas. Bahikas are said to be the same as the Takkas. Again, in “Raj Tarangni,” the district of Tukka Desa is mentioned as a part of the kingdom of Gurjara which Raja Alakahan was obliged to cede to Kashmir between A.D. 883-901. The only tributaries of the Indus must have flowed through the kingdom of Takin.” On page 176, it is given; “In the seventh century, the kingdom of Taki was divided into three provinces namely Taki in north and west, Sharkot in the east and Multan in south.” This kingdom of the Taks extended from the river Indus to Beas, and it was ruled by Tak Kshatriyas. When the Batti Rajputs were expelled from Afghanistan, they entered the Punjab and wrestled the Kingdom from the Taks and established their kingdom beyond the Indus.”

About this Tak Kingdom, Mr.C.V. Vaidya writes in his book “Hindu Medieval India” (pages 384-385); “The capital of this kingdom was Sialkot or Skala and that Mihirkula ruled there. It appears that the Hun Kingdom of Sialkot, which was destroyed by yaso Varman, was subsequently seized by a new dynasty of Kshatriyas called Tak or Takshas. Their name is mentioned even in the ChachNama. The kingdom lay between the Ravi and the Chenab, i.e. to the north of Jullundur kingdom. The description given by Tsang accords well with this position, but the remark that the Indus was on its border seems somewhat strange, unless we believe that

the kingdom stretched across the Punjab from the foot of the Himalayas to the Indus. The people, he says, were not Buddhist the Taks were, of course, Hindus and remained so throughout their history. The famous chronicler of the Rajputs says that they were one of 36 royal families of Kshatriyas, but they have left no trace of themselves now, as they were entirely converted to Mohammadism in Muslim times.

It is not quite clear if Takkiya mentioned in the reign of Shankar Varman of Kahmir by Kalhana is the same kingdom of Tak. Apparently this Tak kingdom is referred to here, though Kalhana uses the word Thakkiya.

In Chacha's days the kingdom of Multan was ruled by a Taki and was subjected to Taki in H. Tsang's time. The taki rule must have been mentioned as tributary, for we find it when Mohammed Kasim invaded Multan in 712 A.D. In 712 A.D. there was Bajra Takis rule in Sikka, who opposed him, but it eventually left the place and crossed the river over to Multan.

The above account mentions the existence of the Taks in the Punjab and the Northwest, when India was invaded by the muslims. It also asserts that all the Taks embraced Islam with the result their name was removed from the list of 36 royal houses. But this is not a fact, as Taks are found even today in large numbers. They are known as Tank Kshatriyas.

Prithvi Raj Chohan and Tak Chiefs:

It appears that as time passed on the Taks penetrated into the interior of India after dispersal from the north western frontier of India. There was a Mori Tak Chief of Chitor, but it cannot be said if he had any connection with these people or that he had descended from the Maurayas of Magadh. But it is certain that these Taks had their own role to play in their struggles against the Muslims to preserve their independence. After the invasion of Chitor was beaten off by Bappa Rawal, the Taks of Chitor migrated in to Asir Grah where they established their kingdom and from where they reappeared came to the assistance of Khuman Rawal, in the 9th century and to that of Prithvi Raj Chohan, when he had to face the Muslims. Chandra Bardai, the author of "Prithvi Raj Rasau" also makes a mention of a military leader Tak Chetu whom

Colonel Tod calls as the “standard bearer” of the Chohan Chief. Besides, there were five chiefs in the court of Prithvi Raj Chouhan and they were known as Nar Bahav, Nag Vanshi, Subear of Hansipur, Sawan Rai Mori, Tak Chata, Arna Rai Mori, Thandai Rai Take and Chohan Mukund Rai. This list names clearly indicate that in the time of Prithvi Raj Chohan, the Taks Vanshis figured prominently and occupied positions of trust and importance at Delhi.

Raja Saharan Of Thanesar, a Tank or Tak Rajput (Who embraced Islam):

In the popular edition of “Annals of Rajasthan” by Colonel Tod, we read on pages 87-88. “This ancient foe of Janme jaya and the friend of Alexander closed its career in a blaze of splendour. The celebrity of the kings of Gujarat will make amends for the obscurity of the Taks of modern times of whom a dynasty of fourteen kings followed each other in succession commencing from and ending with the proud title of Mozuffar. It was in the reign of Mohammad, son of the first Tughlak that an accident to his nephew Feroz, proved the dawn of the fortunes of the Tak purchased however with change of name and religion. Saharan, the *Wajeool mulk* concealed both his origin and tribe. His son Zafar Khan, was raised by his patron Feroz, to the Government of Gujarat, about the period when Timur invaded India. Zafar availed himself of the weakness of his master, and the distraction of the times, and mounted on the throne of Gujarat under the name of Mozaffar. He was assassinated by the hand of his grandson, Ahmad, who changed the ancient capital Anhiwara for the city founded by himself and called it Ahmadabad, one of the most splendid city in the East.

With the apostasy of the Tak, the name appears to have been obliterated from the tribes of Rajasthan, nor has any search even discovered one of his name now existing.”

Regarding Tak Sharan, the “Mirat Secundari” gives the ancestry of the apostate for 23 generations, the last of whom was Sehes, the same who introduced the Nag Vansh seven centuries before the Christian era into India.

The author of the work gives the origin of the name of Tak or Tank from Tarka or expulsion from his caste, which he styles Khetri evincing his ignorance of this ancient race.”

The above quotations refer to Raja Saharan who belonged to Tak tribe of the Rajputs, and about whose ancestry, details have been given in "Mirat Secundari". Saharan was the ruler of Thanesar. He happened to meet Feroz Tughlak to whom he gave away his sister in marriage. After this he embraced Islam, and he and his sons were raised to prominent positions in the State by Feroz Shah Tughlak. His descendants later on founded an independent kingdom in Gujarat, which was ultimately conquered by Akbar.

According to traditions prevalent among the Tak Vanshis the Tak tribe of the apostate Saharan was persecuted, but the courageous spirits among them preferred a life of obscurity and poverty of that of gilded slavery and apostasy. It is a fact that the Tak tribe is still found in some districts of the Punjab, as well as in Delhi. This fact has been referred to by Syed Mohd.Latif in his history of Punjab (1891 Edition-page 56.) We give below an extract from that work :-

"When Alexander invaded the Punjab, he found a tribe inhabiting the district of Rawalpindi, which was called Tak or Takshak. They belonged to that Scythic people who left their country and settled down in the Punjab 600 B.C. They founded Takshila and named it after them and it was invaded by Alexander. It was at that time the capital of Punjab. It was located between the rivers Indus and Jhelum. In the same way a city Taki came to be known after the Taks which has been identified with Asrurabad by General Cunningham. It is 45 miles to the west of Lahore, and in 700 A.D. It was capital of the Punjab. The Tak tribe is still found in the districts of Delhi and Karnal of the Punjab."

We have traced the history of Rohillas up to the Tughlak period, but little is known about them after that. This is perhaps due to the fact that they had lead a life of obscurity and did nothing worth recording.

8. The Downfall of the Rohillas:

In the previous pages we have described how the Rohilla Rajputs had to leave their home in Roh Desh and settled down in various parts of Indian. Their settlements and kingdoms were set up in Rohilkhand and Bundelkhand divisions of Uttar Pradesh. In 1763, he entered Gujrat as Head of the Army. The heroic achievement Sanskrit of 1445 Vikram Era, in which a reference to Rohilla Maldeva establishes beyond any shadow of doubt the existence of the Rohilla Rajputs. They played a very important part in the wars fought against the Muslims.

We have also referred to the gallant deeds of the descendants of Bappa Rawal, the Gehlots of Ghazni led by their General Kupa Rawal. Moreover, all over Northern India, especially in the districts of Uttar Pradesh and the Punjab, may be heard the songs relating to the deeds of valour performed by the Rohail Banafar heroes, Alla and Udal. History cannot also forget Rohilla Govind Rai and Tak Chetu for the magnificent heroism displayed by them on the field of Tarawari while fighting against the Muslims.

However, as luck would have it, the Rohilla Rajputs had to reap the consequences of their bold stand against the onslaughts of the Muslim invaders for the preservation of their country's honour and religion, especially after the fall of Prithvi Raj Chohan and the apostasy of Raja Saharan. No wonder, therefore, that they had to occupy their positions of importance in the social and political field of the country as has always been the fate of the conquered people.

After the loss of their power and independence, however, these brave Rohilla Rajputs preferred a life of obscurity and poverty to that of luxury and affluence purchased at the cost of their faith and religions. Thus, they were cut off, as time passed on, from those Rajputs who held *Jagirs* or ruled over small states, mostly under the sovereignty of the Muslims. Pandit Gauri Shanker Ojha writes on page 46 of his "History of Rajputana (Volume 1):" "It is fact that some Rajput families, when they were deprived of *Jagirs*, became engaged in agriculture or service and lost all contact with aristocratic Rajput houses, with the result that they went down lower in the social scale. The mother of Rana Hamir Singh belonged to the Chandrana tribe, which was looked upon as noble and dignified and was a branch of the Sonigara clan of the *Chohans*. When

they held jagirs and were rich, they were regarded as good Rajputs. At present owing to their engaged in agriculture, they have no relationship with good and noble Rajputs.”

The Rohilla Rajputs, after their downfall had no other alternative but to take to agriculture or handicrafts, and this led to their being formed into a separate community. The proud Rajputs owning land and occupying a higher social position have always looked upon agriculture as an ignoble calling. In support of this view we quote from the book “Rajput Gotras” by Chudhri Mohammad Afzal Khan, Editor, Muslim Rajput, Lahore. He writes : “The poorest Sisodia Rajputs become disgraced for generation to come if he once touches a plough. The Rajput think that it is a great sin to pierce earth with the end of Plough, as also to take work from a sacred animal like the bullock”.

However, they have been known to have taken to handicrafts to earn their living in adversity and so it was that most of the Rohilla Rajputs went in for handicrafts, and were thus separated from their main stock.

9. Gotras of the Rohilla Rajputs:

In his book “ The Wonder That Was India”, Dr.A.L.Basham writes on pages 153-155.: “the Hindu social order was complicated by other features which had no original relationship to class or casts but were roughly harmonized with them. These are the institutions of Gotra and Pravara, which were in existence in the late Vedic times and probably earlier and are important to the orthodox Brahman to this day.”

“The original meaning of gotra is “cow shed or a herd of cows” ; in the Atharveda the word first appears with the meaning of a “clan”, which it has retained with a special connotation. Some ancient IndoEuropean peoples such as Roman, and exogamous clans as well as generally endogamous tribes. It may be well that the gotra system is a survival of IndoEuropean origin which had developed special Indian features.”

“Gotra as it existed in historical times was primarily a Brahmanic institution adopted half heartedly by other twiceborn classes and hardly affecting the lower orders. All Brahmans were believed to have descended from one or other Rishi or legendery seer, after whom the Gotras were named. The religious literature generally speaks of seven or eight primieval gotras, those of Kashyapa, vasistha, Bhigru, Gautama, Bhardwaja, Atri and Vishwa Mitra. The eighth gotra, that of Agastya, is named after the sage who is said to have taken the vedic religion beyond the the Vindhya, and who is a patron saint of Dravidians. His name may have been added to those of the original seven as the South became progressively Aryanized. These primieval gotras were multiplied in later times by the inclusion of the names of many other ancient sages.”

“Though the gotras perhaps evolved from local units within the Aryan tribe, they had quite lost their tribal character by historical times, and Brahmans from farthest parts of India and of different caste groups might have the same gotra. The chief importance of gotra was in connection with marriage which was forbidden to the persons of the same gotra. The social prestige of the Brahmans led to the respectable classes adopting a gotra system of some sort. Kshatriyas and Vaishyas took the same gotra names as the Brahmans. Their gotras, however,

were not based on the claim to descend from an ancient sage, but merely on the gotra of the family of Brahmans, which traditionally performed their domestic rituals.”

“As imposed on nonBrahmanic families, the system was quite artificial. NonBrahman families were expected to take the parvara of their domestic priests, but the rule counted for the little. The real gotra of the Kshatriyas and the Vaishyas were secular (Laukika) ones. Founded by legendary eponymous ancestors. Legal literature takes little note of those Secular gotras, but numerous references in inscriptions show that the term was used in the sense of Sept or clan, and that many non-Brahman gotras existed which donot occur in the lists of any of the law books.”

The above quotation shows that the Brahmans alone had gotras and those too were not limited to eight only, but multiplied as time passed on. The real gotras of the Kshatriyas and the Vaishyas had secular or Laukika ones founded by legendary or historical ancestors, although the gotras of the family priests were not discarded altogether. Moreover, in course of time, even a famous person became the founder of gatras and vanshes. Mr. C.V.Vaidya, the famous historian, remarks that in course of time the clans of the Rajputs came to be known by their gotras, such as Gohil Gotra or Pratikar Gotra, etc.

There are about 84 gotras as shown in the aphen disc found among the Rohillas, a close examination of which reveals the fact that most of them are not the same as are found among Brahmans. This shows that these people had their own gotras, traceable to their ancestors. Some of them have been mentioned in the previous pages. We shall give here a brief account of a few more.

Jhojha Branch of the Chohans:

Among the Rohillas is found a gotra known as Jhola and is a branch of the Chohans.

Cont and Contwal Rohillas:

A branch of the Panwar clan is Omvat or Oont, and this is also found among the Rohillas.

Regarding this Omvat branch of the Panwar Rajputs, Chaudhri Mohammad Afzal Khan writes in this book "Rajputs Gotras" on page 114 : "There is a branch of the Panwar clan. It is said that at one period they started trading in camels and came to be Oont and afterwards were known Umvat. In Central India we have Omvat Wara called after them."

Lakhmara Gotra:

There are Rohillas who bear Lakhmara Gotra about which Rai Bhim Raj Writes in his Book "Rohilla Kshatriya Jati Niranaya". "There once flourished a Raja Lakhast of the Panwar clan, whose descendant was Hari Chand who erected in the district of Hissar a fort. In his family were born two persons Virkal and Jagat Mal, who were defeated by Raghu Ji after which their ancestral fort was lost. The wife of Virkal performed the rite of Sati after him. Traditions prevailing among the Lakhmaras relate that thousands of Rohillas lost their life in defence of their State against Raghuji. After this terrible event, the Rohillas began to call themselves Lakhmara and even today after the lapse of centuries, the Lakhmaras look upon a trip to Hansi and Hissar as highly ominous. Such was the grave disaster which befell these people at Hansi.

Pandla Gotra:

According to Bhim Raj, Pandla Gotra of the Rohillas is connected with Pundir found among other Rajputs. The author of "Kshatriya Vartman" calls the Pundhirs a branch of Dahima Clan. Owing to the changes of fortune, the Dahima clan has lost its great importance. There was a time when it was famous for its deeds of valour.

In the foregoing pages we have tried to throw light on the origin and history of a people who were quite ignorant of it hitherto, nor could they ever explain as to why they were called "Rohillas". This appears to have been due to the fact that after their ruin at the hands of Muslims they got sunk in obscurity and in order to escape persecution at the hands of their conquerors they concealed their true origin. Thus, Rohillas as a people fell into ignorance and forgot their glorious past.

However, this humble attempt on the part of the writer of this short history will enable the Rohillas to prove worthy of their cast and stimulate further research into it.