

Magadh Mahila College

Patna University

Department of History

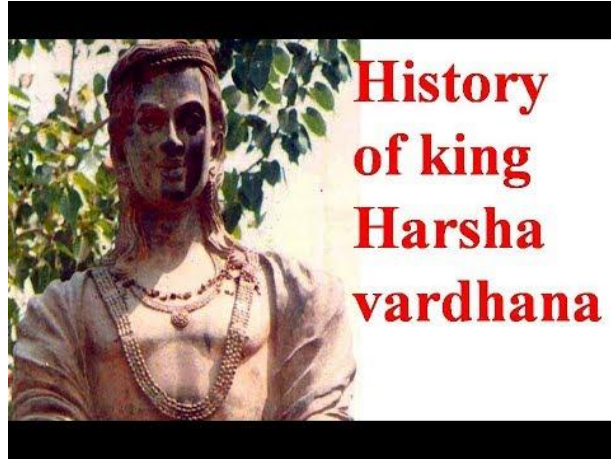
Bhawana Singh(Guest Faculty)

Email id- singhbhawana47@gmail.com

B.A- 2nd year

Paper-III, Unit-03

The Vardhana Dynasty (Harshavardhana)



After the downfall of Gupta Empire in North India the most prominent and strong Dynasty was the Pushyabhuti Dynasty. In history this Dynasty is known as Vardhana Dynasty.

Source of Information of the Vardhana Dynasty:

We know about the Vardhana Dynasty from the historic literature, writings of foreign travelers and archeological sources.

Historic Literature

Harshacharita was composed by Banabhatta. He was the Asthana kavi(poet) of Harsha's court. This literature is the most important source of information of Vardhana Dynasty .

The Harshacharita was the first composition of Bana Bhatta and is considered to be the beginning of historical poetic works in the Sanskrit language. Harshacharita has eight chapters or

sections, which were called as Ucchvasas. In first three sections Banabhatta has written autobiography which does not hold any importance in history.

Second Ucchavasas: In this Banabhatta has given detailed information about the ancestry and early life of King Harsha(Mainly about Pratikat village which was associated with Vatsayana Gotra and Bhriguvanshiya Brahmin). It also tells about the first meeting of Banabhatta with king Harshavardhana in Manitarā which was a Skandhavar (Military camp) located on the bank of river Achirawati.

Third Ucchavasas: It describes about the shrikhand Janpad and Thaneshwar. It also tells about the relationship of Harshavardhana with Pushyabhuti and shaiva sanyasi Bhairawacharya.

Fourth Ucchavasas: It has detailed information related to Prabhakarvardhana.

Fifth Ucchavasas: It has informations related to the destruction by the Hunas. It also tells about demise of Prabhakarvardhana.

Sixth Ucchavasas: It explains about the discompose state of king Rajyavardhana who later became ascetic (Sanyasi).

Seventh Ucchavasas: It has the information about the Military conquest of Harshavardhana as well as it also tells about the friendship proposal sent by the king of Kamrupa, Bhaskarvarma through his ambassador Hansweg to king Harshavardhana.

Eighth Ucchavasas: It gives details about discovery and acceptance of Rajyashree.

Kadambari

Kadambari is also composed by Banabhatta. It is considered as one of the greatest novel in Sanskrit. Study of this novel gives a very elaborate information about the social and religious conditions prevailing during Harsha's Reign.

Arya Manjushri-Mula-Kalpa

It is a very famous Buddhist text. It was for the first time published in 1925 by Ganpat Shastri. It has 1000 shlokas as well as a very detailed information of Indian history between seventh century to eighth century. The text uses the letter Haa (ह) to relate to king Harshavardhana.

Compositions of Harsha

- 1) Nagnanda
- 2) Ratnawali

3) Priyadarshika

Even these are the priceless contributions of Sanskrit text by Harshavardhana.

Hsuan-Tsang

The famous Chinese traveller Hsuan-Tsang came to India during Harsha's rule and stayed here for 16 years. His travel logue is popular as Si-Yu-Ki.

Biography of Hsuan- Tsang

It was composed by friend of Hsuan-Tsang Hwi-lie. The texts gives relevant informations of king Harshavardhana rule.

IT- Tsang

Another Chinese traveller who visited India during Harshavardhana rule was It-Tsang. He too gave detailed information about king Harsha. The English translation of his writing is famous as 'A record of Buddhist Religion'.

Hence all the information of Harshavardhana's ruler has been generated from Historic literature, Archeological sources and writing of foreign travelers.

Archeological Sources



Ruins of Harsha-ka-tila

Banskhera Inscription

Inscriptions Banskhera is situated in the Shahjahanpur district of Uttar Pradesh. An inscription dated 22 Harsha Samvata i.e, A.D 628 was found in 1894. This inscriptions gives a lot of information regarding Harsha.The inscription says that Harsha had granted Markat Sagar village

to two brahmins Balachandra and Bhatta Swami. This also speaks of the victory of Rajyavardhana over Malwa King Devgupta and the murder of Devgupta by the king of Gaud named Sasanka.

Madhuban Inscription

Madhuban is situated in Ghoshi tehsil of Ajamgarh district in Uttarpradesh. Harsha's inscription of 25 Harsha Samvata i.e,631 A.D has been found here. It mentions about the grant of Somkunda village by Harsha to Shrawani gotri Bhatta Vats Swami and Vishuvridha Gotri Bhatta Shivdev Swami.

Aihole Inscription

The inscription of chalukya king Pulakesin II is dated AD 633-634.The inscription deals with the battle between Harshavardhana and Pulakesin II. The inscription was written by Ravikirti, the court poet of Pulakesin.

Navsari Inscription

It is the work of Valabhai ruler Jaybhatta III, which tells about the victory of Harsha over Valabhai ruler Dhruvbhatta. Harsha is referred as God (Parmeshwar) in the inscription.

Seals

Two seals of Harsha have been found in Nalanda and Sonpath. One is of clay while the other is of copper. The seal of Sonpath consist of full name of Harsha. Some seals are found in Bhitora village, they are made of silver and contain name of shri Shaldutta.



Coins of Harshavardhana