

CHAPTER VII.

HOME OF MĀGHA.

After considering the question regarding the date of the poet, we shall now take up the question regarding his home. We are pleased to observe that the question of the home of Māgha is one of the few settled questions of Sanskrit literature and free from controversy. No one is known till now to have advanced any theory questioning the home of Māgha viz. Bhinmal. All the three Prabandhas - Bhojaprabandha, Prabandha-cintāmaṇi and Prabhāvaka-carita are agreed on this point and they unanimously inform us that Śrīmāla or Bhinmal was the home of the poet. There appears no reason for distrusting them in this respect in absence of any evidence to the contrary.

This place has been the home of Srimali Brahmins from early times. Māgha, himself a Srimali Brahmin, was a native of this place and enjoyed royal patronage here till he lived. It was to Śrīmāla that the couriers of king Bhoja repaired when they were entrusted with the mission of bringing Māgha to the royal court of king Bhoja. Prabandha-cintāmaṇi informs us as follows in this connection.

अथ श्रीभोजः श्रीमाधवाख्यविद्वत्तां पुण्यवत्तां च सततमाकुर्वन्
तद्दर्शनोत्सुकतया राजादेशैः सततं प्रेषमाणैः श्रीमालनगरात्.....सुखाप ।

This statement of Prabandha-cintāmaṇi is further supported by Prabhāvaka-carita. It says (XIV):

अस्ति गुर्जरदेशेऽन्यसज्जनान्यदुर्जरः ॥ ४ ॥

तत्र श्रीमालमित्यस्ति पुरं मुखमिव क्षितेः ।
यैत्योपरिस्थकुम्भालिर्यत्र चूडामणीयते ॥ ५ ॥

नृपः श्रीवर्मलानास्थः शत्रुमर्मभिदाक्षमः ॥ ६ ॥

This makes it clear that the poet Māgha flourished in the city of Śrīmāla or Bhinmala.

Moreover in some of the old Mss. of the poem Śīśu, we come across, at the end of each canto, the colophon which runs: इति श्रीभिन्नमालवास्तव्यदत्तकृष्णोर्महोपाध्यायकुरणस्य माधवस्य कृतौ शिशुपालवधे मल्लकाव्ये..... ।

¹
Pt.Durgaprasada, in his introduction to Śīśu, actually speaks of one Ms., having the^{above} colophon at the end, sent to him by his friend called Bhagavandasa Kevaldasa from Surat. The Ms. in question is dated 1827 V.S.

We are led to the same conclusion from the study of his description of the ocean near the city of Dwārka in canto III and that of the mountain Raivataka in canto IV of his poem. From both these descriptions, it appears that the poet had personal and intimate knowledge of both these places. They appear like the accounts of one who has actually minutely observed them. Over and above this, the

1. NSP. ed. p.3. f.n.

warmth of affection with which they are described smacks of patriotism. The employment of the word 'Śrī' at the end of each canto of our poem is significant. It suggests that the poet wants to immortalise his birth-place Srimāla. The word 'Śrī' is the first letter of the name of the city Śrīmāla.

Thus this external evidence furnished by the Prabandhas and tradition as well as the internal evidence furnished by the colophons of old Mss. and descriptions of the ocean and the mountain proves beyond doubt that it was the city Śrīmāla or Bhinmal where our poet Māgha lived and wrote. It was then the capital of Gurjaras.

Regarding the situation of this city of Śrīmāla or Bhinmal, it is interesting to know what Al-Beruni has to say about it. He wrote about 1030 A.D. when Mahmud was just dead. Al-Beruni says, "Again south (-west) from Kanauj Asi, Sahanya, Jandra, Rajauri and Bazan, the capital of Gujarat." It has been maintained in this connection that the town Bazan mentioned by Al-Beruni defies identification though Gujarat is recognised from inscriptions, to be the country roundabout modern Jaipur. The country was certainly the part of what is modern Marwad, and Bazan, was the capital of Gujarat or Ku-cha-lo of Hiun Tsang. Gujarat was the name of the territory about Jaipur still in 1030 A.D. when Al-Beruni wrote his "India". The part of the country where Chalukyas founded their rule was called Gujarat, yet Anahilawāda Pāṭṭan was situated in what was

1. Al-Beruni, India.

2. History of Mediaeval Hindu India, Vol.III. p.4.

then called 'Sānasvāta Mandala'. It was only towards the end of the 18th century that Chalukya records began to speak of this land as Gurjarbhūmi.¹

Dr.A.S.Altekar² is also of the opinion that Bhinmal was the capital of Gurjar kingdom but its territories were to the north of Anahilapāṭṭan and so practically outside the limits of modern Gujarat.

But Dr.K.M.Munshi³ contradicts these opinions in the following words:-"At the same time, at no time in history were Mt.Abu and the town Srimala or Bhillamala outside the boundaries of the tract known as Gurjara or Gurjardesa or Gujarat. Bhillamala, therefore, is the centre, the fluctuating boundaries of the province have to be measured from it."⁴

But it is reasonable to believe that Bhinmal, the capital of the Gurjara kingdom, lay outside the territories of modern Gujarat and was more on the side of the territory round Jodhpur. This is supported by inscriptional evidence. Thus, as pointed out by Dr.A.S.Altekar⁵, in the Daulatpura plate, king Bhojadeva is mentioned as granting a village^{called} Sivāgrāma, situated in the Dēṇḍavāṇaka Viṣaya, which, it is stated formed part of the Gurjarāta-bhūmi (cf. गुर्जरनाभूमौ डेण्डवाणकविषयसम्बद्धसिवाग्रामाग्रहारे⁶). Dr.Kielhorn has pointed out that

1. Ind.Ant.VI. No.4.

2. A Hist. of Imp.Anct.Towns and Cities in Guj. & Kath. p.14.

3. The Glory that was Gurjardesa, Vol.III, pp.1-2.

4. Vide Chap. V. p.105 of the present thesis.

5. A Hist. of Imp. Anct. Towns and Cities in Guj. and Kath.pp.15-16.

6. En. Ind., Vol.V, p.211.

Dendavanaka is the town of Didwana. It follows from this that the territory round Jodhpur was known in the eight century A.D., as the land of the Gurjars. We are led to the same conclusion by the quotation from an unpublished Kalanjara inscription belonging to the 8th century, referred to by Dr. Kielhorn. It shows that Mangalanaka or Maglona, which is about 28 miles north-east of Didwana was regarded as located in the Gurjaratra Mandala (cf. श्रीमद् गुजरात -

मंडलान्तःपाति मङ्गलानकु विनिर्गता - नेमकान्वयजेष्टु कुसुत देहकेन).¹

Hence it was this territory round Jodhpur of which Śrīmāla or Bhinnmal was the capital and was known as such to Hiuen Tsang, the famous Chinese pilgrim.

The city bore four different names in four different Ages. It was called Śrīmāla in Satyayuga, Ratnamāla in Tretā,² Puṣpamāla in Dwapar and Bhinnmala in Kali.

The Paurānic account of the city deserves consideration as it gives a complete idea about one of the greatest centres of Aryan culture in India in the 6th cent. A.D.

According to the tradition preserved in the Śrīmāla Purāṇa, we have a beautiful account about the naming of the city. Lakṣmī, the spouse of God Viṣṇu realised herself in this place and the gods, therefore, covered it with garlands and hence it took the name of Śrīmāla³ when it was first seen by Viṣṇu and other

1. Ep. Ind., Vol. V. p. 210.

2. BG., Vol. I, p. 16.

3. Śrīmāla Purāṇa, IX, 1-22; X, 2-24; LXXII, 1-15.

gods they could not help exclaiming "what loveliness, what beauty,
what magnificence."¹

Śrīmāla-māhātmya (in Skanda Purāṇa, third Pariccheda, Brahma-Vibhāga) narrates the following story regarding the origin of the city.

"Lakṣmī (Śrī) said to gods, " I want to see the earth covered with palaces just as she is adorned by your aerial cars .² Moreover she expressed her desire that one of her many aspects (Aṃsa)³ should remain there in the city. Viṣṇu ordered his divine attendants to call Brahmins from all quarters and ordered the divine architect Viśvakarmā to construct in the mean time a wonderfully beautiful city. Goddess Śrī, who was pleased, granted a boon to Viśvakarmā, "You will be regarded the best architect in all the three worlds. The best science concerning building is composed and the best Brahmins will study it like Dharmasāstra."⁴

⁵
From these words, Prof.R.C.Parikh very rightly observes that when we remember the legacy in architecture and its architects of Gujarat, it appears that the boon has come true.

The city, according to Śrīmāla Purāṇa was about 15 to 20 miles in extent laid out in the shape of a square.⁶ There were 1000 Ganapatis, 4000 Ksetrapalas, 84 Candikā-devīs, 11100 Śiva lingas, 999 other temples^{18000 temples} of Durgā, 4000 Brahmasālas, 8000 shops

1. R.C. Int. to Kavyānūśāsana, II, Pt I, p.91.

2. Śrīmā; VIII.38 3. Ibid, VIII.42-46. 4. Ibid, IX.31.

5. Int. to Kavya, p.91. 6. Śrīmā. B. X. 58.

and 1000 assembly halls. It had 84 gates. Learning in all its branches was pursued in its 4000 mathas.¹ Śrīmālamāhātmya also informs us that the city was inhabited by Brahmins of 84 sects, Banias, coppersmiths, ksatriyas, 9000 prostitutes, dyers, somapas, potters, actors, barbers, washermen, gardeners, vaisyas and sūdras. (Srimal. 72. 2, 4, 5, 6, 7, 13, 14, 18-22, 23-25). Granting that this is an exaggerated poetic description and therefore making due allowance for it, it is certain that it was a great seat of learning and culture in those days.

We come across its other name Bhillamala. The Bombay Gazeter notes that it is surprising that such a name of the city was current even when Gurjars were at the height of their power. And then it infers that the city may have been so called (Bhillamala) on account of the Gurjars being as good archers as Bhills. But the conclusion arrived at by Prof. Parikh in this connection seems to be more reasonable. He has drawn our attention to the suffix 'Māla' occurring in all the four names of the city. The word 'Māla' has three meanings (1) a forest between two villages, (2) hilly high land (3) A Desya tribe like Kirāta or that other than Ārya (Abhidhāna-cintāmaṇi - मालं ग्रामान्तराद्वी । 4. 598, माला भिल्लाः किराताश्च सर्वेऽपि म्लेच्छजातयः । 4. 29), (Mallinātha in his commentary on Meghadūta I.16 explains मालं शैलप्रायमुन्नतस्थलम् ।

). After noting that all the three meanings fit in this case, Prof. Parikh rightly remarks that the name given to it for Kali Age viz. Bhinnamala alone appears to be historical. All other

1. Ibid, VII, 42; LXXI, 9.

2. Parikh, Int.to Kāvya, II.

names are eulogistic. It is a known fact that several regions are known after the names of the tribes inhabiting them. It may be that the aboriginal tribes known as Bhills and Malas may be inhabiting this particular land in old days and it may have been known as Bhillamalas on account of this. As the prosperity of the city increased, the dignified citizens inhabiting it might have named it Srimala, though the famous astrologer Brahmagupta who flourished in the beginning of the 7th century A.D. styles himself Bhillamālākācārīya. The repeated calamities caused by Rākṣasas referred to by Purāṇas and legends may be nothing else but the uprisings of these Bhilla and Malas who were deprived of their belongings. The name of one of the holy places described by Śrīmāla Purāṇa is 'Kirāṭasarah' i.e. a lake considered holy by Kirāṭas.¹ Prof. Parikh further maintains that the name Bhillamala is obtained from PI-LO-MO-LO, the name of the city given by Hiuen Tsang. Al-Beruni also² gives Bhillamala as the name of the city.

The Jaina literature also refers to Bhinnmal. Śrīmāla is mentioned along with the names of countries enumerated in various commentaries of Kalpasūtra. A silver coin called 'Dramma' was current in Śrīmāla (cf. रुपमयं वा नाण्यं भवति यथा भिल्लमाले द्रम्मः ।) It was also called 'Pāraupatha'. This coin was current in Gujarat at least³ upto the end of the 13th century A.D.

1. Parikh, Kāvya. II. p.98.

2. Al-Beruni: India, pp.153 and 267.

3. Dr.B.J.Sandesara: Jain Āgamasāhityamān Gujarāt, pp.179-181.

According to 'Nisīthacūrnī', a silver coin called 'Camma-
lāta'¹ (Sk.Carmalāta) was also current in the city. As this name
of the coin is meaningless, it is possible that due to the mistake
of a scribe, 'Va' might have been turned into 'Ca'. Hence if Vamma-
lāta (Sk. Varmalāta) is read instead of Cammalāta (Sk.Carmalāta),
it is possible to connect this name with the history of the city.
The famous king Varmalāta of Śrīmāla is mentioned by Prabhāvaka-
carita and Māgha in his Śīsu. Māgha's grandfather Suprabhadeva was
the minister of this king. It is quite possible that the coins²
might have been named after the king.

Considering the description of the extent given by Śrīmāla
Purāna and that given by Hiuen Tsang³ who says that it was 30 Lees
in area (about six miles), it appears that the city must be extremely
prosperous and carrying on trade on a very large scale. It must be
the centre of arts and crafts. This evident from the Śrīmālamāhātmya
which informs us that there was a large number of artisans and
craftsmen. Hiuen Tsang⁴ who visited it in 640-1 A.D. testifies to
the great prosperity of the city. He says, "It had a flourishing
population in good circumstances, mostly non-Buddhists, only a few
believing in Buddhism.

The prosperity of the town increased with the growing
power of its rulers. It was ranked fourth in India. Hence the

1. Neu, P.III. pp.616-7.

2. Jain Āgamasāhityamān Gujarāt, p.180.

3. Watters: Y.C. II.p.249.

4. Watters: Y.C.II. p.249.

the importance of the town also must have increased. Extensive fortifications were constructed. According to Uffet, the English traveller who visited it in 1611, they enclosed a circuit of 36 miles.¹ Several tanks were built within the fortified wall. These tanks served two-fold purpose of providing defence facilities and other needs of the inhabitants.

The only information that we possess about the rulers of Bhillamala during this period is that the king mentioned by Prabhāvaka-carita (XIV, 5, 6) and he is mentioned in Vasantagadh inscription of 625 A.D. Magha's grandfather was a minister of this king. Brahmagupta, the famous astronomer, himself has stated that he wrote his work in 628 A.D. when Vyāghramukha of the Cāpa dynasty was the king. Hiuen Tsang who visited the place in 640-1 A.D. describes the king seen by him in the following words.

"The king is of the Ksatriya caste. He is just 20 years old. He is distinguished for his wisdom and is courageous. He is a deep believer in the law of Buddha and highly honours men of distinguished ability"²

In Thomas Watter's 'On Yuan Chwang's Travels in India' Vol.II., we have the following description of the king:

"The king, who was a Kshatriya by birth, was a young man celebrated for his wisdom and valour, and he was a profound believer in Buddhism and a patron of exceptional abilities."

1. Altekar. p.103.

2. BRW (Buddhistic Records of Western World by Beal).II,p.270.

According to Dr.K.M.Munshi¹, this description is applicable to Tāta, the great grandson of Haricandra. This Tāta believed that life was transient and therefore left the kingdom to his brother Bhoja and devoted himself to the religious life in the holy Mandor.

We believe that this king described by Hiuen Tsang was the immediate successor of the king Vyāghramukha.²

This great city which was the capital of the Gurjars has directly and indirectly contributed its quota to the development of Anahilpur Pāttan which made Gujarat great, glorious and worth its name. It was, indeed, a great political and commercial centre of the day. But greater still is its cultural value. It was a very great centre of learning. Besides being the home-town of the great poet Māgha who has immortalised his birth-place by employing the word 'Śrī' at the end of each canto of his poem and thus shown his patriotism, the city was the birth-place of the famous astrologer Brahmagupta, the author of Brahmasphuta Siddhānta. Over and above its being the centre of Brahmanical learning, it was also the centre of Jain learning. The Jain scholar Siddharsi completed his Upamitiprapancakathā here. The great Jain Ācarya Haribhadrasūri carried on his activities of initiating Prāgvātas to Jainism here only. These Prāgvātas, later on, played a very important part in the history of Anahilpur Pāttan. Udyotanasūri completed his 'Kuvālayamālā Kathā' in this city. It is possible that the ambition of Ācarya Hemacandra might have been prompted after learning about the

1. The Glory that was Gurjardesa, III, p.30.

2. Vide Chap.V. pp. 166-7 ; Chap.VI. p. 132

part played here by Acarya Haribhadrāsūri.

With such a phenomenal wealth of learning, the city naturally became the inspiring ideal of Anahilapur Pāṭṭan.¹

Its prosperity lasted upto the beginning of the 14th century A.D.² It began to decline with the rise of the Solankis during the eleventh and twelfth centuries. It is said that 18000 Gurjars left Bhinmala round about the 11th century A.D. in the reign of King Bhimasena.³ According to the Śrīmālamāhātmya, this happened in Sam 1203 : 1147 A.D. It is said at the end of this Māhātmya that on the eighth day of the bright half of Vaiśākha of the year 1203 of the Vikrama Era, the Goddess will repair to the city of 'Pāṭṭana' in Gurjarakhaṇḍa. On the departure of 'Śrī', the city of Śrīmāla will become devoid of lustre. People will follow the course taken by 'Śrī'. The place will be deserted and then it will be known as Bhillamala.⁴

Consequently the city of Śrīmāla fell on evil days and the city of Anahilapur Pāṭṭana prospered.⁵

Looking at the downfall of the city from the point of view of history, we learn/that the local dynasty continued to rule perhaps as feudatories of the Solankis to the end of the 13th cent. A.D. because the Bhinmal inscriptions take the dynasty right upto the end of that century.⁶ The Mohammadans overthrew this dynasty in about 1297 A.D.

1. Parikh: Int. to Kāvya.II.pp.96-7.

2. B.G.I.p.463

3. " " " " " p. 102

4. Śrī.Mah. 75.

5. B.G.I. p.469.

6. Altekar's A Hist. of Anct. Towns & Cities of Guj. & Kath. p.104.

and the importance of the town began to decline quickly. Still it retained some of its glory and importance as it was the chief town in the kingdom of Gongira Chowhans of Jhalor early in the 14th century A.D. But after the defeat of that dynasty of Chowhans at the hands of the Mohammedans, Bhinmal lost its importance for ever.

Dr. Buhler, following Col. Watson, has rightly opined that the village of Bhinmal of our times is the ancient Śrīmāla.¹ The present village of Bhinmal is a small insignificant village having about 1500 houses (including 120 Bhil houses) and is situated about fifty miles to the west of Mt. Abu.² Its southern, western and northern level land directly slopes towards the western desert. On the east and in the land between the hills and Bhinmal lie scattered villages.

There are only two objects of archaeological interest.³ They are the Yakṣa-kūpa and ruins of the temple of the sun as Jagatśvāmin which once must have been magnificent. On the last end of the north bank of the lake (Yakṣakūpa) is a massive seated figure believed to be that of a Yakṣa king. Its head wears long curls which look like a curled wig, an unusual equipment for an ancient image in India. Its right hand holds a ball of stone.

The following dates about Śrīmāla are maintained in folk-literature.⁴

1. B.G.I. p. 449.

2. B.G.I. p. 451

3. B.G.I. pt. I, 456 ff.

4. Purāṇomān Gujarāt. pp. 193-4.

- (1) The Jagatsvāmi Sun temple was built in 166 A.D.
- (2) The destruction of the city in 209 A.D.
- (3) The city plundered by a Rāksasa in 438 A.D.
- (4) The city rebuilt (643 A.D.).
- (5) The plunder of the city again (844 A.D.).
- (6) Repairs of Śrīmāla once more (896 A.D.).
- (7) Its prosperity lasted upto the beginning of the¹
14th century A.D.

1. B.G.I. p.463.