

Southern quarter of India.

Shafer⁵⁴ considers them to be an admixture possibly of white Iranian blood with enough Bhil blood to give them a very dark colour and concludes that they were western Ānavas.⁵⁵

2. *Ārjunāyanas* (No. 1, L. 22) :

One of the tribes subjugated by Samudragupta.

The name Ārjuneya is mentioned in the Ṛgveda as the patronymic of Kautsa.⁵⁶ The tribe, associated with the name of Arjuna, existed in the Punjab and the North-West up to the advent of Gupta power in the fourth century A.D.⁵⁷ The word Arjuna in the Vedic literature⁵⁸ denotes 'white' and 'white leprosy' and is also an epithet of Indra. But it does not denote a tribe or a human hero.

The word Arjuna has an unmistakable resemblance with the Śaka word *erzuna*, meaning a 'leader' or 'chief' which is derived from *arzi*. Analogous to it are the Śaka words *aljsā*, meaning 'silvery' and *āljsata*, meaning 'silver', that are akin to the Avestan word *erezata* (silver), the Sanskrit word *rajata* (silver) and the Persian word *arziz* (tin).⁵⁹ All these words have the original sense of whiteness and brightness, that are also connoted by the word *arjuna* in Sanskrit. It is highly significant that Arjuna, the hero of the Mahābhārata, is said to have borne this name, because he was 'white' and 'pure' in action.⁶⁰ All over the Eurasian steppes the nobles were regarded as 'white' and the commoners were considered 'black'. Hence the word for white colour was employed to denote the idea of leadership. This is why *erzuna* was used in the sense of a 'leader' in Śaka languages.⁶¹

Vedic and Śaka both branched from the same parent Indo-European language. Hence many words were common to both. But whereas *arjuna* in Vedic lost its pristine sense and was only used as an adjective, signifying 'whiteness', in Śaka it meant a 'tribe' and a human hero and later on this sense was imparted to this word in India as a result of the impact of the Śakas.⁶²

The tribe, bearing the name of Arjuna, was also connected with some people of Chinese Turkestan, whose heroes, and kings had this designation.⁶³ In the Uighur redaction of the