

Kumāradevī may be located in North Bihar with Vaiśālī (modern Basarh in Muzaffarpur district) as its centre.¹⁹⁸ It was a credit for the astute diplomacy of Candragupta to marry the Licchavi princess as we know, in ancient times, the Licchavis of Vaiśālī had been the rivals of the kings of Pāṭaliputra¹⁹⁹ and that they did not marry outside their area.²⁰⁰

The name of this powerful people has come to us in many different readings :

Licchavi, Lecchavi, Lecchai, Lecchaki, Licchvi, Nicchivi, Lichikki and Lichavi.

Of these the Licchavi has been most commonly used in literature.²⁰¹

The earliest mention of this people is in Kauṭilya's Arthaśāstra,²⁰² where they are called Licchavis. Here we read that the corporations of Licchivi, Vṛji, Malla, Madra, Kakura, Kuru, Pañcāla and others were '*rājaśabdopajīvinah*'. It is noteworthy that Kauṭilya distinguishes the Licchavis from the Vṛjis though some scholars consider them to be one.²⁰³ H. Pandey²⁰⁴ says that it appears from the Pali suttas that the names Vajji and Licchavi are interchangeable to some extent. But the accounts of Chinese pilgrims point to a different conclusion. Fa-Hien describes the kingdom of Vaiśālī where 'Licchavis' were the people of the country. He does not mention Vṛji or Vajji. Hiuen Tsang describes Vaiśālī and Vṛji as two distinct countries, and Watters is inclined to doubt the accuracy of his description of the Vṛji country.²⁰⁵ But we know that Vajji was a powerful confederacy of which the Videhas along with the Licchavis, Jñātrikas, Ugras, Bhojas and others were the constituent confederate clans (aṭṭhakula). Of these the Licchavis and the Videhas were the most important, and the Licchavi Capital Vaiśālī was the head-quarter of the confederacy.²⁰⁶ But Ray Chaudhuri observes : "Vajji was not only the name of the confederacy but also of one of the constituent clans. But the Vajjis like the Licchavis are sometimes associated with the city of Vaiśālī which was not only the capital of the Licchavi clan, but also the metropolis of the entire confederacy".²⁰⁷ The Licchavi republic was generally called the saṃgha or gaṇa of the Vajjis. The Licchavis would not possibly have allowed this name, had they not themselves been Vajjians. In one passage,