

the Central Provinces, but a more plausible location is Narasiṃhagarh in Central India,³⁹³ as much as three other tribes which are coupled with Prārjūnas, the Sanakānikas, Kākas and Kharaparikas, seem to have occupied regions more or less within the bounds of Central India.³⁹⁴ The tribe, associated with the name of Arjuna, existed in the Punjab and north-west before the advent of Gupta power in the fourth century A.D.³⁹⁵ Kauṭilya knows of a people called *Prājjunaka* (*Prārjunaka*).³⁹⁶

16. *Puṣyamitras* (No. 13, L.11) :

The Bhitari Stone Pillar Inscription³⁹⁷ records Skandagupta's victory over a powerful enemy called the *Puṣyamitras*, who possessed a strong army and a rich treasury : he (Skandagupta) placed (his) left foot on a foot-stool which was the king (of that tribe himself).³⁹⁸ H. R. Divekar suggested the reading *Yudhy-amitrān* in place of *Puṣyamitrān*. But, as pointed out by R.D. Banerji,³⁹⁹ the proposed reading is impossible.

There are several views about the identification of the *Puṣyamitras*.

- (i) Fleet identified them with the people mentioned in the *Purāṇas* as *Paṭumitras* and located them on the Narmadā.⁴⁰⁰
- (ii) V.A. Smith⁴⁰¹ regarded them as a people of the North.
- (iii) Hoernle believed that they were the same as the *Maitrakas*.⁴⁰²
- (iv) R.D. Banerji⁴⁰³ regarded them as the first wave of the *Hūṇas*.
- (v) N K. Bhattasali has suggested that the *Puṣyamitras* were the descendants of king *Puṣyavarmā* of Assam.⁴⁰⁴

Bhattasali says that a pun (*śleṣa*) has been used for "the descendants of *Puṣyavarman* of Assam who had so long been *mitras* or friends of the Guptas, but had change into foes by their desire for conquest and had invaded the Gupta empire from the east and made it totter". But as remarked by D.C. Sircar, "there is no grammatical, lexicographical, or literary support, for this interpretation of the name *Puṣyamitra*".⁴⁰⁵

Bhattasali opines that *Mahendravarman*, whom he assigns to the period A.D. 450 to 490 who performed two horse-sacrifices must have been powerful enough to launch an attack on the Gupta empire in the reign of *Skandagupta*.