

not be translated to mean Śaka-lords. Following Fleet<sup>477</sup> we may better split the expression into two distinct names, the Śakas and Muruṇḍas.

The Śakas in the time of Samudragupta (4th century A.D.) must be the Śakas of Western India belonging to the *Satrapal* family of Caṣṭana and Rudradāman. In this period the Śaka ruler was Rudrasimha II and his successor Rudrasimha III, whose coins come up to A.D. 390, was killed by Candragupta II.<sup>478</sup> Other persons of that nationality were ruling in and about Sāñci.<sup>479</sup>

The Scyths, whom Indians named as Śakas, were originally living on the borders of Bactria. A nomadic people called Yueh-Chih by the Chinese forced them to move from that place. Eventually in the beginning of the first century B.C., the Śakas moved on from Bactria to attack first the Parthians of Iran, and then the Greeks in India.<sup>480</sup>

By the middle of the 1st Century B.C. there remained only a few petty Greek chiefs in India, and the power of the Śakas reached Mathurā. The Śakas continued the earlier practice of issuing coins with bilingual legends in Greek and Prakrit. The earliest Śaka king in India was Maues (about C.80 B.C.)<sup>481</sup>

Towards the close of the first Century A.D., the Sātavāhanas were pushed out from the North-West Deccan by the invading Śakas of the Kṣaharāta clan; but the Śatavāhanas under the greatest of their rulers, Gautamīputra Śātakarṇin recovered their lands about A.D. 130. After this event nothing more is heard of the Kṣaharātas.<sup>482</sup>

Another Śaka dynasty, called the Kārddamaka family but generally known as the "Western Satraps", gained control of Kathiawar and Malwa at about the same time, and ruled roughly upto A.D. 400, and at the height of their power governing much of Rajasthan and Sind also. The greatest ruler of this dynasty was Rudradāman, who has left the earliest important inscription in correct Sanskrit,<sup>483</sup> a long panegyric which records his martial exploits, and his reconstruction of a great artificial lake at Girnar in Kathiawar, which had been excavated under Candragupta and improved in the time of Aśoka. This inscription is among the earliest certainly dated records