

whole of the Punjab from the Bannu valley to the Kankhala region and even beyond suggest an intrusion of the Śakas long before the time of Pāṇini,<sup>503</sup> who is known to have flourished one century before the invasion of Alexander, the Great. *Kanthā* is a Śaka word for city<sup>504</sup> and is akin to *kadhāvara* or *kanthāvara* of Kharoṣṭhī inscriptions, *Kand* of Persian, *Kanthā* of Khotanese, *Kandh* of Sogdian, *Kandai* of Pushto, *Kanda* or *Koent* of the dialect of the Rṣikas. It is significant that the land beyond the Oxus, the *Urheimat* of the Śakas, abounds in *Kanthā*-ending place names, such as Samarkand, Khokand, Chimkand, Tashkand, Panjkand, and Yarkand.

The reference to the stepped-well, called *Śakandhu* after the Śakas, together with that worked by Persian Wheel, known as *Karkandhu* after the Karkians, in a *vārttika* of Katyāyana<sup>505</sup> also leads to the same conclusion.

At the time of Alexander's invasion the Śakas lived at the north-western borders of India. That this tide of Śaka invasion, descending from the north-west, touched the eastern extremity of India, is manifest from the traditions of the Purāṇas that the Śakas advanced to Ayodhyā during the reign of King Bāhu and that his son Sagara checked and repelled them.<sup>506</sup>

In the Mahābhārata the Śakas are stated to have constituted along with Cūlikas, Tuṣāras and Yavanas, the right wing of the Krauñcavyūha formed by Bhīṣma on the sixth day of the battle.<sup>507</sup> Caraka in his medical treatise<sup>508</sup> refers to them in the context of Central Asiatic tribes, viz. Bāhlika, Pahlava, Cīna, Yavana and Śaka.<sup>509</sup>

Buddha Prakash also tries to trace the remnants of the Śakas in modern times.<sup>510</sup>

The Śakas came into Punjab after the Yavanas or the Greeks. During their long rule they contributed a great deal to Indian culture and ultimately became one with the Indian people.<sup>511</sup> The depth of their influence on Indian society is manifest from the word *thakura*, which implies the ideas of nobility and divinity and stands for the Rajputs in the Punjab and is derived from the word *thagora*, *taugara* or *tukhara*.<sup>512</sup> The name *Tukhāra* itself survives in the name of the *Tokhi* caste found in the North-West.<sup>513</sup> Another caste called Khosla