

it may be surmised that his name also was a Sanskrit name.⁵²⁵ It seems that the tribe which originally consisted of aboriginal people was gradually coming under the influence of Sanskrit culture.

22. *Vāhlika* (No.20, L.2) :

The Meharauli Pillar Inscription (No.20) describes the *digvijaya* of a king named Candra (i. e. Candragupta II) in the first verse as stated below : “He, on whose arm fame was inscribed by the sword, when, in battle in the Vaṅga countries, he kneaded (and turned) back with (his) breast the enemies who, uniting together, came against him;—he, by whom, having crossed in warfare the seven mouths of the (river) Sindhu, the Vāhlikas were conquered;—he, by the breezes of whose prowess the Southern ocean is even still perfumed”.⁵²⁶

We find various readings of the name Vāhlika in literature which are : Vāhlika, Bāhlika, Vāhlika and Bāhlika. In our inscription (No. 20) ‘*Vāhlikāḥ*’, i.e. Vāhlika in plural denotes the people of Vāhlika i.e. Bactria (modern Balkh) region on the Oxus in the northern part of Afghanistan.⁵²⁷

Mislead by a verse in the Rāmāyaṇa,⁵²⁸ D.R. Bhandarkar⁵²⁹ places Vāhlikas in the close proximity of the Vipāsā, the modern Beas. The reading *Vāhlikān* in the passage quoted from the Rāmāyaṇa is a mistake for *Vāhikān*. Numerous passages can be quoted from the Epic, Puranic and classical Sanskrit literature to prove that the Punjab=Pañcanada, ‘the land of five rivers’, was in ancient times called the Vāhika country.⁵³⁰

‘*Vāhika*’ was, in fact, a general term for the whole of Punjab. We know Śākala as *Vāhika-grāma* from Patañjali and also *Pātanaprastha* which is modern Pathankot by the same term. Moreover, Vatsyāyana in his Kāmasūtra and Rajaśekhara in his Kāvya-mīmāṃsā mention the people of Bāhlika and Punjab as two separate entities.⁵³¹

There is, however, one verse in the Karmaparvan of the Mahābhārata which suggests that Vāhika was originally the name of a country or people on the Vipāsā, (the Beas) : “In the Vipāsā, there were two Piśācas named *Vahi* and *Hika*; their descendants are called Vāhikas who are not the creation of Prajāpati”.⁵³²