

northern division.⁵⁶² Bāhlika is the name of a person in the Viṣṇu-Purāṇa.⁵⁶³ The Nāṭyaśāstra⁵⁶⁴ of Bharata says that Bāhlikabhāṣā was spoken by the northern people (Udīcyas). A similar reference is also to be found in the Sāhitya-darpaṇa.⁵⁶⁵

In the Kāmasūtra of Vatsyāyana,⁵⁶⁶ Bāhlika is grouped with Strīrājya, which occurs in the list of North-Western division. The peculiar custom in Bāhlika of several young men being married to a single woman as in *strīrājya* (*strīrājye ca Bāhlike*), appears to be an outlandish custom prevailing in the regions to the west of India.⁵⁶⁷ The Jayamaṅgalā commentary also says that Bāhlika was in Uttarāpatha.⁵⁶⁸

We find the word Vāhlika occurring in the Amara-kośa in two ways :

1. *Bāhlika*⁵⁶⁹
2. *Bāhlikā*⁵⁷⁰

The Amarakośa shows that Bāhlika was famous for horses, saffron and Ferula Asafoetida (*hiṅgu*).

The reference to saffron leads us to the filaments of saffron on the banks of Vaṅkṣu (oxus) where Raghu gave defeat to the Hūṇas as described in Kālidāsa's Raghuvamśa.⁵⁷¹ The reading Sindhu of the passage⁵⁷² is plainly a mistake for Vaṅkṣu which is corroborated by Kṣīrasvāmin, the earliest commentator of Amara who clearly shows that the Bāhlika country was bordered on the Oxus.⁵⁷³

The Bṛhatsamhitā⁵⁷⁴ places Bāhlikas in the jurisdiction of the Sun. Ancient tradition connects the Bāhlikas with the Dhārṣṭakas, a Kṣatriya clan which occupied the Bāhlika country.⁵⁷⁵ We know that Bāhlikī was another name of Mādri, queen of the Madras.⁵⁷⁶

Buddha Prakash suggests that the Vedic school of the *Bhāllavins* enshrined the memory of the Bāhlikas; the modern sub-castes of the Barasarin sub-group of the khatrijs Bhalla and Behl represent the ancient Bāhlikas, and the Jāt clans of Bhālār and Bhalerah, found in Multan, the Baloch tribe Bhalkā, living in Sindh, Bahawalpur and Dera Ghazi Khan and the clan Bhallowana, found in Shahpur, are remnants of the far-flung Bāhlika tribes.⁵⁷⁷ There is a possibility of the Bāhlikas migrating from their original home Balkh to the Punjab.⁵⁷⁸

When Hieun Tsang visited Balkh, it was a centre of Buddh-