

attached to Surāṣṭra. After his conquests, Skandagupta deliberated for days and nights together as to whom should be entrusted important task of guarding the land of the Surāṣṭras.²⁷ At last he was satisfied by appointing Paṇḍadatta as a governor over this western²⁸ region.

Surāṣṭra corresponds with Southern Kathiawar with its Prakrit name Sorath.²⁹ Literally the name means a good country. It was so named probably on account of the natural fertility of the land, Sorath is well known for rich crops of all kinds, and splendid cattle.³⁰

Surāṣṭra³¹ is mentioned in the Junāgaṛh Rock Inscription of Rudradāman I (A.D. 150). It was governed by Puṣyagupta, under Candragupta Maurya and by a Yavana Tuṣāspa under Aśoka.³² The Purāṇas³³ and the Kāvya-mīmāṃsā³⁴ mention it a country in the west while the Bṛhatsamhitā³⁵ mentions it as a country in the South. It may be due to the different geographical units made by the authors of the Kāvya-mīmāṃsā and the Bṛhatsamhitā.

Under Gupta emperors Bāmanasthalī (modern Banthali) was the capital of Surāṣṭra, before Valabhī became its capital.³⁶ The name Surāṣṭra also occurs in the Mahābhārata, the Jātakas³⁷, and several times in the Rāmāyaṇa.³⁸ It is also mentioned in Patañjali's Mahābhāṣya.³⁹ In Kauṭilya's Arthaśāstra, Surāṣṭras are mentioned as one of the corporations of warriors who lived by agriculture and trade.⁴⁰ According to the Arthaśāstra the elephants of Surāṣṭra were inferior to those belonging to Aṅga and Kaliṅga.⁴¹

In the medieval period,⁴² in three directions, Bhavanagar, Porabandar and Somanath (the famous temple) were the limits of Surāṣṭra.

Place-names ending in Bhukti

Bhukti (from √bhuj)

Literally it means 'enjoyment' or possession.⁴³ Bhukti denoted an administrative division smaller than a modern Tehsil or Taluka in the Deccan and M.P., but in Northern India under the Guptas and Pratihāras it denoted a unit as large as the Commissioner's Division in modern times.⁴⁴ Thus