

Politics of the Kushan Empire in North India

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ABSTRACT

At the beginning of the II century BC. e. the kings of Greco-Bactria, who, according to the ancient author Justin Mark, had significant forces "due to the fertility of the country", conquered part of northern India, expanding the territory subject to them. This article is devoted to politics of the Kushan Empire in North India.

King Demetrius I extended his power to the south of the Hindu Kush mountains, capturing Arachosia, which, after the fall of the Maurya state, belonged to the Indian Shunga dynasty. According to one version, the reason for the invasion was the protection of Buddhist teachings[1]. However, as a result of various reasons, the resources of the entire state and its Greek masters were overstretched. Palace coups, unrest and unrest of the local population followed. Then began foreign policy failures and falling away of individual regions. As a result of all this, the territory of the state was reduced, it itself broke up into small possessions. And then a new force entered the scene.

To the north of the cultural regions of Central Asia, with their developed agricultural and urban life, from ancient times there was a restless nomadic world, which in Iran and Central Asia was often called the word "Great Turan".

Greco-Bactria fell under the blows of the nomads - Saks in the second half of the II century BC. e. Bactria became known as Dahia (or Dahya) as a country of Eastern Iranian-speaking nomads. Some scientists, such as L.A. Boravkov and B.I. Weinberg believed that as early as the 1st century BC. AD Bactria became a territory mainly inhabited by Saks and Yue-Chzhemi. The ancient Greek geographer Strabo noted that Dai, Massagets and Saks lived to the east of the Caspian Sea, "... others are called by the common name of the Scythians, but each tribe has its own special name. They are all nomads in general. Of these nomads, those who took Bactria from the Greeks, namely, Asins, Laskans, Tochars and Sakaravly, gained fame in particular. Chinese sources also narrated about the same event, calling the Yue-Che tribes, who came from Central Asia, the conquerors of Bactria. But most of Greco-Bactria had already been captured by

other nomads even before the arrival of the Yue-Che . So, for example, in the prologue to book XLI, the Roman historian Pompey Trog (I century BC) reports: "... Scythian tribes of Sarauks and Asians captured Bactria and Sogdiana "[2].

Under King Ashoka, the Mauryan state reached a special power. The Ceylon chronicles say that Piyadasi , while still a prince, was sent as a ruler by his father - king Bindusara to Western India (Avanti province) with a center in Ujayani . According to North Indian sources, the prince was in North-Western India, in Takshashila (Taksila), where Bindusara sent him to suppress the uprising of local residents who had risen against the royal officials. Sources tell of a stubborn struggle that Piyadasi waged with his brothers for power. The Ceylon Chronicles report that this rivalry continued even after Ashoka seized the Magadhian throne. As a result, Ashoka's official coronation took place only four years after he seized power.

The empire expanded territorially and became one of the largest in the Ancient East. Her fame spread far beyond India. But after the death of the king in 232 BC. AD The Mauryan Confederate Empire collapsed. The Satavahanas are pushing the Western Kshatrapas (Nahapana) from the south and east , seeking control over the whole of Dakshinapatha . In the lower reaches of the Indo, the Parthian kings, the heirs of the king Gondophares , are waging an endless internecine struggle with each other, the consequence of which is their mutual weakening and the loss of power over the peoples of the Punjab. The latter are listed in the " Periplus " without regard to " Scythia " and the Parthians - only in connection with the trade route going deep into the mainland from Barigaza to Central Asia.

So, neither Greek nor Eastern sources named the Kushans as conquerors. And yet, the Kushans were definitely among them. Moreover, they may have played a leading role.

The ancestors of the Kushans - the Yue-chih - came to Bactria from Northern China. Some scholars believe that in the Syrdarya, the Yue-Chzhi mixed with the local tribes of the Saks. Other scholars suggest that the Kushans came from East Turkestan or from other regions of the Great Steppe, and others - from nowhere at all, since from ancient times they lived in Dakhi (Bactria) itself. It is possible that not all the people were then called Kushans, but only their ruling dynasty Guishuang.

Be that as it may, having conquered the country, the nomads either divided into five possessions, or subjugated the five possessions that existed on the site of the collapsed Greco-Bactria.

It should be noted that not all nomadic conquests were devastating. The nomads who occupied Bactria mainly settled in semi-desert regions, far from oases, probably in order not to undermine the economic basis of the country's irrigation farming. But they derived reasonable benefits for themselves, adopting experience, methods of handicraft production and began to use the products of local potters and artisans. This went on for about a hundred years. And then one of the possessions, Kushan , subjugated all the other territories.

Kushan king Kuzula Kadphis lived for more than 80 years, as evidenced by ancient Chinese chronicles. During the years of his reign, the Kushan state turned from a small principality into a large empire, into a power that occupied, in addition to Dakhya (Bactria), vast territories in present-day Afghanistan and Northern India. Son and successor of King Wim Kadphis continued his conquests and conquered a large part of India. As a result of these conquests, Greek domination in the Middle East was finally ended.

The history of the Kushans is very poorly covered in the sources. The Kushan kingdom arose as a result of the unification (apparently by conquest) of the Tocharian and Saka principalities that had developed on the territory of Bactria and Sogd under the rule of one of the rulers, who belonged to the tribe (or clan) of the Guishuans. The original location of the Kushan principality is not exactly known. As for the formation of the Kushan kingdom, an interesting story about this event is given by the History of the Younger Han Dynasty (Huhanshu).

The Chinese news is confirmed and explained by the data obtained from the coins. The inscriptions on the coins of the first Kushan kings were made in Greek characters, since the Kushans considered themselves the successors of the Greco-Bactrian kings and partly imitated them in coinage. According to coins and Chinese sources, the name of the founder of the Kushan state yabgu (or yavug) Kudzula became known Kadphis , (Kyojukyu - in Chinese sources)[3]. He subjugated the valley of Kabul, Pudu (ancient Greek name Parapamisad) to the south of the Hindu Kush mountains. The latter, however, retained a certain independence as part of the Kushan association: special kings continued to rule in it, judging by their coins, dynastically associated with the Kushans . Generally, The Kushan kingdom was not centralized: in a number of conquered regions, local kings also remained, dependent on the supreme ruler.

In India, even before the arrival of the Kushans, there was a mixed culture in the field of coinage. On many Indo-Scythian coins found, kings are depicted dressed in chain mail and helmets and armed with straight swords and spears; some are shown standing, others mounted on horses or elephants. Among other weapons, short spears, clubs, etc. are presented. Some of these coins date back to the 2nd-3rd centuries. n. e., and others - to a much earlier time. Analysis of the metal of the Indo-Scythian coins by O. Bopiarachchi showed that they were of high quality for the ancient period of India[4]. But the iconography of the coins proves that the Greek (Javanese) style of coinage prevailed in North India for a long time. Especially characteristic is the depiction of a rider on silver Indo-Scythian and then Kushan coins.

The conditions of production in the agriculture of ancient India required that, in addition to slaves who had to be fed throughout the year, there were seasonal workers who could be used for short periods and only during these periods ensure their financial situation. Free community members could not be a permanent reserve, because as long as they owned the land and farmed on it, a surplus of labor force was created here either sporadically or in the off-season, when it and other farms were not needed. In the city, the need for additional labor power arose on an even greater scale due to the accelerated development of commodity production, a higher level of material well-being, as well as the emergence of new needs and new ideas about social prestige in the ruling class. The ancient Indian city, when it finally took shape, usually abounded with poor people working for others: itinerant artisans, porters, porters, day laborers, domestic servants, etc. Most of them obviously belonged to the Shudras and low castes[5]. Although Buddhism was encouraged under the Kushans in the North of India on the territory of the former state of, however, Brahmanism retained its influence in the life of the new international society. Cooks, culinary specialists, bath attendants, masseurs, healers, garland makers, water carriers, watchmen and other servants are mentioned more than once. The king and his entourage were entertained by court actors, dancers, singers, storytellers, acrobats, jugglers.

Judging by the descriptions, members of the royal family were always surrounded by a large retinue, especially during solemn exits. There were domestic servants, almost in every wealthy patriarchal family. Most of them were slaves, but there were also hired workers who were rewarded with money (krishnal), food and things[6]. Centuries-old practice has established some norms, and their presence is confirmed by various sources. A hired worker (karmakara) employed in agriculture received a tenth of the harvest, in cattle breeding - a tenth of the butter from the milk of the cows he cared for, in trade - a tenth of the proceeds of income.

Thus, it becomes obvious that the skill of artisans in ancient India reached such a height that every Indian can be proud of today. However, the uniform and progressive evolution of Indian art was repeatedly interrupted and even stopped due to prolonged invasions from the north and the depths of Central Asia. But then it developed rapidly again, thanks to the political stability created by the Yavans (Greeks and Bactrians), nomads Sakas and Kushans.

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