

## #CURTAIN RAISER

### Royal Marwari Horse Show



The Indigenous Horse Society of India is organizing The Royal Marwari Jaipur Horse Show at Rajasthan Polo Club in Jaipur from March 3 to March 5. Around 150 Marwari horses will participate in this show.



he equestrian culture of India is as ancient as the epics Mahabharata and Ramayana, where the horse, or 'ashwa,' has played a significant role in Indian traditions such as marriage, religious ceremonies, and war. However, the lack of documentation on the breed's conformation and lineage, even after India's independence, was a devastating realization. To address this gap, the Indigenous Horse Society of India (IHS) was established with the goal of documenting, promoting, preserving, and educating horse owners.

Owing to the efforts of the Society, the Marwari horse has regained its position not just in India but also abroad. The breed has been showcased at numerous events, such as the World Equestrian Games in the USA, the



Queen's Diamond Jubilee Celebrations in the UK, and the 40th anniversary of the Late Sultan of Oman's regime in Oman. Today, this majestic breed can be found in several countries, including the USA, Germany, France, Spain, Maldives, Oman, Luxembourg, and Sri Lanka.

The IHS is organizing the Royal Marwari Jaipur Horse

Show from March 3 to March 5 at Rajasthan Polo Club in Jaipur. During the course of the three days, there will be a multitude of interesting equestrian activities.

**Action Packed Event**  
The opening day on March 3 will feature equestrian sports, dancing horses display, working equitation, band display, march past, among others. On March 4 and March 5, there will also be competitions in various categories such as Yearlings Filly (from 1 to 2 years), Yearlings Colt (from 1 to 2 years), Filly (2 to 4 years), Colt (2 to 4 years), Mares (4 years and above) as well as Stallions (4 years and above). Cash awards, medals as well as running trophies will be given as prizes to the best judged horses.

**Judges Clinic**  
Due to the rising popularity of Marwari horses, numerous horse shows are being organized throughout India by both private and government entities in places such as Pushkar, Balotra, and Nagaur. However, the judging of these horse shows has frequently been a matter of dispute due to the lack of standardized parameters for evaluating horses.

The IHS is also conducting the 2nd Judges Clinic on 1 and 2 March to ensure that during the horse shows, judges strictly follow the rules of judging and clearly understand the point system. An international judge from UK, Zara Pawley will take the clinic and aspiring judges have to go through written and practical examination. There shall be a bar of minimum percentage to qualify as judge.

**Digital Management System**  
A unique feature of this Horse Show is that a unique digital management system which is going to be a game changer in the conduction of horse shows. It will help in scientific and accurate management as well as minimize the tedious paperwork before, during and after the show. It also facilitates better communication, leaving no room for manipulation of marks and ensures transparency.

**Where:** Rajasthan Polo Club  
**When:** March 3 to March 5  
**Entry:** Free and open to all



Bhatner fort.



Dr. GSI Devra  
Ex-Professor of  
History and Indian  
Culture at Kota Open  
University

# The Bhatias Of Bhatner (...2)

## #ARCHAEOLOGY

Scythians. The typical black-on-red painted pottery of Rang Mahal has been generally assigned to the late Kushana and early Gupta times. The lofty title of Samudra Gupta, Daiva Putra-Sahisahanushahi written in Prayag Prashasti proves that Samudra Gupta in the Punjab and frontier regions had defeated not one power but a group of several powers. Since the region of valley remained under the possession of both Kushans and Guptas it became a buffer state as well as a centre of exchange of products of different cultures. The typical black figures on red painted pottery of Rangmahal generally assigned to the late Kushana period or early Gupta times had been discovered from a large number of sites of Rajasthan. James Tod who conducted a survey of north Rajasthan had imagined that near Rangmahal, a large town is buried. Later both

Tessitory and Aurel stein came out with observations that in between Hanumangarh and Suratgarh remains of more towns could be present. Munda, located near Bhatner, on the road to Talwara and Sirsa could unfold many mysteries. Devra's work on the antiquity of Bhadrakali temple has opened up the possibility of excavation at Bhadrakali. Theed. It appears that at least during the Kushan period a wide range of urban life was present in the region.

**Rangmahal Culture**  
Political developments of Rajasthan appeared from fifth century onwards support the existence of Rangmahal culture in the Ghaggar valley. Events recorded in the historical literature of ruling Bhati dynasty of erstwhile Jaisalmer state are in a position to throw light on the progress of new political activities in the region. The early time of Rangmahal culture fairly coincides with the advent of a tribe called, Jadams, the ancestors of Bhatias in the region. Jadams came from Afghanistan and

northwest frontier regions of the sub-continent. Jadams, after suffering a crushing defeat from the hands of Huns (rulers of Khurasan) at Ghazna and Lahor (near Ohind) at the end of fourth century, in despair dispersed in all directions and one of their branches under the leadership of Prince Bhati, son of King Balad migrated to lower course of Ghaggar there, probably, Yaudheyas founded the fort of Bhatner sometime in the middle of fifth century. Soon Bhati occupied the entire region of Ghaggar valley in north Rajasthan and even extended his kingdom up to the Sutluj River.

From the fifth century onwards Jadams became famous as Bhatias in the area, after the name of founder Prince, Bhati. Bhati is the name of a prince or the title of the prince (Parameshvara Bhattarakka), is a matter of investigation. As long as Huns (white Hephthalites) remained powerful in Punjab and northwest regions the new occupants of Ghaggar valley could not stretch their legs. Contrarily, Hun emperor Mihirkula, perhaps, had subdued them and established their hegemony over the valley. He, like the region of Punjab, here, too, had destroyed several Buddhist monasteries. Huna's presence might be the cause of decline of Buddhism in the valley.

In the mature phase of Rangmahal culture we find the growing importance of Brahmanism. After the death of Mihirkul around 530 C. or so Bhatias or Indo-Scythians found their political position better than Kedarites, Pershians and Marandas, because from their base at Bhatner they looked more militarily equipped.

During the period of second half of sixth century under the leadership of King Satta Rao Bhati (551-589 C) Rangmahal culture reached its zenith when Bhatias had succeeded in conquering the entire region of Punjab and ultimately in 567 C after defeating Huns reoccupied Ghazna, too. In their enterprise they received help from Persians as well as from western Turks of Khurasan. Satta Rao was a powerful ruler of his times and under his rule both Gandhar and Bhatner became the integrated part of newly established Indo-Scythian or Bhati Empire. During the rule of



Gandhara Art.

Satta Rao the capital town of this empire was shifted back from Bhatner to either Lahor, situated near Ohind or Hissar, the old Hastinaagar, near Peshawar in the swat valley of the frontier regions. These places were the old political centres of Bhatias or Jadams. At that time Mauryas or Sahasis who had enmity with the Persians, were ruling Sind and Baluchistan.

**Rangmahal Pottery**  
In this political background the opinion of Hanna Rydh that Rangmahal culture was influenced by Gandhara Art looks convincing. However, this view is seriously contested by other contemporary archaeologists. They linked Rangmahal culture with the late Gupta Art. F.R. Allchin adds that terracotta plaques show the influence of Gandhara School is not correct. The architectural use of terracotta plaques as facing comes into prominence with the Guptas and it

is unlikely that the present series could be of earlier period. Akinori Uesugi, after making a comparative study with the material recovered from Farnmana, a village in Haryana, not far away from Bhatner, reviewed that most of the Rangmahal pottery belong to Gupta Age. Therefore, archaeologists who advocate material of Rangmahal pottery is from Gupta period, somehow support the theory of the rise of independent culture in the Ghaggar valley. And those who admit Gandhara influence over Rangmahal ceramics and terracotta figures believe in the presence of continuity of human settlement and culture in the valley.

Huen Tsiang came to Bhatner in the month of September when rivers of Punjab and Haryana were in full spate. At that time Sutlej was flowing through its eastern arm, making her path over the land of present Indo-Pakistan border in the district of Ganganagar. This identification jus-

ifies the presence of a prosperous Rangmahal culture in Ghaggar valley. But Traveller while providing the account of religious practices projects a confused picture. He recollects that, "The people were in good circumstances and led moral lives, observing social distinctions and adhering devoutly to Buddhism." On the one hand he refers about the presence of social distinctions which he identifies with Dhawahiti, the first king of Sahasi dynasty of Sind. He, further, argued that the kings of Multan according to the author of

In the neighbouring country of Budhia, situated in Upper Sind, Buddhism was the main religion and while discussing about the character of society does not mention the presence of social distinctions. Traveller further adds that in Satadru Buddhist monasteries were in desolate condition. Rather, his account supports the argument that in the valley Buddhism was on decline. Huen Tsiang in his account does not give the name or caste of the king of Satadru as he generally did in such other cases. The reason might be that he had already met the king of Gandhara, who was the sovereign authority of Gandhar as well as of Bhatner.

**Sahasi Dynasty of Sind**  
Bhati records suggest that their king Vajju, who had shifted to Hissar (near Ohind) was also holding the fort of Bhatner. On his behalf his close relative Jagswap, son of Mandan and great-grandson of Satta Rao, was the Eshtatrap of the fort and region. When Pushyabhatias in the first half of seventh century invaded Gandhar actually they attacked the Bhati power of both Gandhar and Ghaggar valley.

Cunningham, Prinsep and Thomas who studied the coins recovered from Manikyale Tope, near Rawalpindi (Pakistan), observed that these belong to the royal families of the frontier region, particularly of Multan. Manikyale Tope during the period of early centuries was a centre of

Buddhism and Gandhara culture. These coins on their reverse side bear the bust of Aditya (Sun) perhaps that is a replica of the image of sun god placed at the Sun temple of Multan. Prinsep refers this head to the Mithra (Sun) of the Persians but Cunningham refuted that, "The head is surrounded by rays arranged after the Indian fashion, and quite different from the head dress of the Persian Mithra." Further, in the opinion of these scholars, referred coins belong to those kings who ruled over the parts of India and Persia both. Sistan, located in the southern parts of Persia and Sind both could be placed in this specification.

Cunningham points out that the second half of the line figured out on the coin of Manikyale Tope could be read out as 'Sri Shāhīgīn Devajarita' and here Shāhīgīn represents 'valiant king'. It is like the name of Alptigin, Subuktigin and so on. According to him the real name is Devajarita which could be identified with Dhawahiti, the first king of Sahasi dynasty of Sind. He, further, argued that the kings of Multan according to the author of



Chinese traveller Huen Tsang.

Chachnama were close relatives of Sahasis. This identification also supports the information of second Vienna coin which has the sun bust and belongs to the Persian king Khusrupuz of Persia. He is the same Persian king who made an invasion over Sind and in the encounter the grandfather of Sahasi II was killed. However, Prinsep reads it as 'Devajarita' but Thomas prefers as 'Devanarita'. Prinsep's reading gives a different meaning to this word, 'Devajarita' qualifies as a 'son of heaven', which according to him is equivalent to the Devputra of Scythians and Kushan kings. Therefore, the name of the king would be Shāhīgīn.

It appears that the deciphering and analysis of Prinsep comes close to the traditions prevalent in the frontier regions during this period. We have similar example from this very period that the founder Prince of Turkishshahi dynasty on Kabul was called as Varha Tigin and the actual name of the Prince was Varha. Tigin or Tegin is a Turkish title for the rulers which came into fashion by that time in these areas. There are examples that this title



was frequently adopted by a good number of Princes during the medieval period, particularly by the rulers of Kabul, Ghazna, Makran, Nimroz, Punjab and Sistan. Now it appears that Sa-to-Rao is the Rajasthanization (Aphhransha) of the name of Shāhīgīn. The titles of 'Rao' and 'Rana' for the princes or clan chiefs have quite frequently been used in the areas of western India during the medieval period. In this particular case the Khyat writers of the later periods have not replaced the address of Tigin by 'Rao' rather they added it at the end as a suffix.

There is a possibility that the name of J(d)a-swin or Sat or Satarao was applied by the tribes of frontier area. Now it is accepted that Jadams, ancestors of Bhatias had Indo-Scythian connections. Jaisalmer ri Khyat describes that Sato Rao had conquered the whole Punjab and also recovered Sistan or Ghazna. Perhaps such coins represent that this is not only the case of the sphere of the authority of the king who belongs to one state or kingdom but of a large clanish confederacy which had controlled over a large territory over the frontier regions located both in India and Iran. Records of Bhati confirm that they administered their territories in the form of a political confederacy. Huen Tsiang also supports that in the frontier regions he met two kings who were brothers and separately ruling at Kapisa and Gandhara.

**Worshippers of Aditya**  
It seems that after the breakup of the grand alliance concluded among Persians, Indo-Scythians and Turks against Huns the Scythians or Bhatias decided to remain with the Turks. This development is also verified from the account of Huen Tsiang who repeatedly referred about the friendship existed between the Turks of Central Asia and kings of Kapisa and Gandhara. Sun head with the surrounding rays on the gates of the Bhatner and Jaisalmer forts where Bhatias had ruled after their expulsion from the Ghazna and Punjab confirm that they were the worshippers of Aditya and carried their traditions wherever they went. Jaisalmer riKhyat also claim that Sata Rao had built or repaired the famous sun temple of Multan. From these accounts it appears that Bhatner and Rangmahal became the important centres of Gandhara culture. According to V.S. Agarwal and Hanna Rydh two figures on the bowl discovered at Rangmahal, represent a pair of Sirya image with aka facial type (Rangmahal p. 158,

The titles of 'Rao' and 'Rana' for the princes or clan chiefs have quite frequently been used in the areas of western India during the medieval period.

Plate no. 73). Rangmahal situated on the south of Bhatner, not so much away from the site of Kalibunga must have been founded by the Bhatias of Bhatner.

Perhaps, during the reign of Khemkarān (589 - 627 C.), son of Satta Rao Bhati again shifted from Bhatner to their old capital, Lahor, near Ohind in the frontier region. Rao Narpāt, son of Khemkarān ascended the throne at Lahor in 627 C. Perhaps, the shifting of capital might have taken place sometime in the first decade of seventh century. It seems that resources of Ghaggar valley could not bear the burden of a mighty empire or might be water supply in the region became inadequate. Rao Satarao Bhati, sometime in the middle of sixth century built four Baoris (step wells) perhaps to solve the drinking problem of the town. At Rangmahal archaeologists in excavation find out the presence of one large tank perhaps that was built to solve the water problem. As proposed Rangmahal culture also started declining after that. But Rangmahal culture neither came into existence suddenly nor collapsed altogether. Bhatner, before the foundation of the fort was already a popular Buddhist centre.

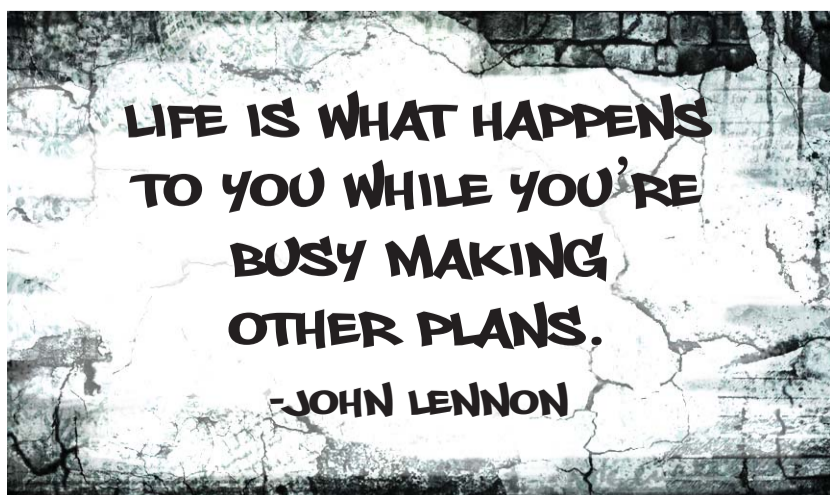
The case study of Bhatner supports the argument of continuity of cultures rather than the emergence of independent cultures in the Ghaggar valley. Invasions of Huns hit them very hard. As a result of that the fertile land was ruined. Many towns were desolated and it brought miseries to the people. Bhati literature referred that much disturbances had occurred. Town, like, Multan was desolated. The incidence of migration of Bhatias at this time provides hints that people in large number might have moved from their places. All such incidents gave a jolt to local economy and environment.

**Concluded**  
writetoarbit@rastradoot.com



Jaisalmer fort.

## THE WALL



## BABY BLUES



By Rick Kirkman & Jerry Scott

## ZITS



By Jerry Scott & Jim Borgman

