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TAXILA UNDER SIEGE: ANCIENT BATTLEFIELD BETWEEN INVADERS (HISTORICAL NOTES ON TAXILA'S INVASION)

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ABSTRACT

Taxila is an important city of Archaeological remains in the District of Rawalpindi in Punjab, it is an old city of considerable Archaeological and Historical heritage, housing important ancient landmarks. Taxila remains are the national assets of Pakistan and it is also one of the six world heritage of our country. Taxila is the land of ancient Buddhist civilization. The large number of Buddhist Monuments, Stupas, Monasteries and Temples are stands with dignity and these valuable remains spread In all over Taxila region around 30 kilometer in range. Taxila has its rich political history it was flourished city ever under many great periods and became an important and prominent battlefield between invaders. With the passage of time Taxila faced many invasions and it was the center of power and the land of attraction for Persians, Greeks under Alexander the great and Central Asian invaders. In this study I discussed the splendid era of ancient Taxila under great Kingdoms and different invasions. Taxila was not only historical center for the Buddhist civilization but also was the political and economic hub in ancient time

Keywords:- Persians, Aryans, Achaemenids, Maurians, Greeks, Indo-Greeks, Scythians, Parthians, Kushans, Sassanids, Kedara Kushan, White Huns, Turk Shahis, Hindu Shais.

Map of Taxila



Introduction

Taxila has its rich Political history; it attracted many invaders like Achaemendis, Greeks, Indo-Greeks, Scythians, Kushan and Turk Shahis etc. Taxila economically flourished under many Kingdoms and was badly destroyed by the white Huns; they destroyed all Buddhist Monasteries and Monuments In 5th century A.D. Taxila was a city of Gandhara civilization and also a hub of Buddhism⁷. Buddhism thrived in the period of the king from Mauryan Empire, the great Asoka, when he accepted Buddhism as future religion in his life. In addition, deep routed Buddhism was his most lasting gift to Taxila¹.

¹ R. E. M. Wheeler, Five Thousand Years of Pakistan: An Archaeological Outline (London: C. Johnson, 1950). 36-47

Taxila was a gathering spot of many cultures, namely the Achaemendis, Greeks, Mauryan, Scythians, Parthians, Kushans, Huns and eventually the Muslims². It was a gateway to ancient India all the lands routes from the west and north have to pass through this city³. So, Taxila acted as a focal point of east-west route⁴, from this point of view Taxila was a meeting place of various cultural and trade routes in ancient time

Taxila played a leading role in the formation of Civilizations; it was a center of Buddhist art and architecture. So, Taxila shows its significance, worth and positive role in promoting and development of human institutions in Asia throughout the history for more than 1000 years beginning from the sixth century B.C.⁵.

Taxila attracts tourists all over the world throughout the year, especially Buddhist visitors from Buddhist countries⁶. It is also a religious point of Buddhism. The ruins of Taxila are the national assets of Pakistan, so, it is our government responsibility to promote these historical, archaeological and cultural heritages across the globe. The history of Taxila holds a legendary Past which went back to the remotest antiquity⁷. Puranas, the Rig-Veda, Ramayana and Mahabharata, the epics, these all religious Sanskrit texts mention Taxila, and According to Ramayana Taxila was founded by Bharata the younger brother of the legendary Rama⁸. The King of Hastinapura, Janamejaya conquered Taxila and performed the great snake sacrifice, heard Mahabharata. Visampayana recited Mahabharata during the performance⁹ of great snake sacrifice. The Jain Religious text also ascribes remote antiquity of Taxila¹⁰.

² Naveed, "Taxila" Ancient History of Encyclopedia.

³ Dr. Saif ur Rehman Dar, "Pakistan and the Silk Road the Taxila Context,"

⁴ Ibid

⁵ Mughal, "Feasibility Study on the Establishment of International Institute Of Comparative Civilizations at TAKSHASCHILA (TAXILA),"

⁶ Shabnam Baber Malik, "Sang-Tarash: The Legendary Master Sculptures of the Ancient Buddhist Sculptural Art of Gandhara in Taxila," *Asian Social Science*, Vol. 7, No. 10 (Fall 2011): 195-212.

⁷ John Marshall, "Taxila: An Illustrated Account of Archaeological Excavations Carried Out at Taxila under the Orders of the Government of India between the Years of 1913 and 1934; In Three Volumes," (Delhi: Bharatiya Publishing House, 1975), P. 11.

⁸ Sir John Marshall, *A Guide to Taxila*, Fourth Edition, Cambridge, 1960, P. 10.

⁹ Muhammad Ishtiaq Khan, *World Heritage Sites in Pakistan*, United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), Islamabad. 2000. P. 21.

¹⁰ Ibid

*"Gandhara-vishaye siddhe
Takshasya dikshu vikhyata*

*tayah puryan mahatmanoh
ramya Takshasila puri"*

In Gandhara district, of the great cities, the city of Takshasila is beautiful, well-known for the consecration of Taksha[Prince of the Serpent Tribe].

VayuPurana,189-190¹¹

The name of the city was Takkasila or Takhasila (in Sanskrit, Takshasila)¹². So, Takshasila was a correct name of Taxila which was abbreviated in Sanskrit. In the very beginning, the name of the city spelt as Takhasila or Takshasila in the Prakrit epigraphs¹³, but in the inscription of Heliodorus, the Greek ambassador, is Takkhasila¹⁴.According to Vayu Purana the name of the city was Takshasila, no better authenticity about the name of Taxila by Puranic verse given above.

Now the present name of Takshasila spelt as Taxila, which was explained by Sir John Marshall. Taxila was transcribed by Greeks and Romans and after them the word commonly used by European writers¹⁵. In the result of excavation at different sites of Taxila, many old age coins and inscriptions of ancient local rulers have been found. Most interesting is the copper plate obtained by Mr. Roberts, containing the name of Takhasila, the Pali form of Takshasila, from which the Greeks obtained their Taxila¹⁶.

According to source, the name 'Takshasila' which is variant of the same name is recorded by Al-biruni, he acknowledge that this name, he copied the Samhita of Varahamihara¹⁷." Taxila, or correctly Taksha-sila the capital of Taksha (the serpent king) has been a city of old, where ruled the serpent king before the coming of the Aryans". The name was continued in used when the Aryans made this city the capital Gandhara¹⁸. Takshasila is the original name of Taxila, which is Sanskrit word. The name infects the combination of two words, Taksha and Sila, which

¹¹ Ahmad Hassan Dani, The Historic City of Taxila (Lahore: Sang-e-meel Publications, 1999), P.1.

¹² John Marshall, A Guide to Taxila (Delhi: Manager of Publications, 1936). 3rded, P.9.

¹³ Ahmad Hassan Dani, The Historic City of Taxila, P.21.

¹⁴ Ibid

¹⁵ Ibid

¹⁶ Surendranath Mojumdar Sastri, Cunningham's Ancient Geography of India (Calcutta: Chuckervertty, Chatterjee & Co., Ltd., 15, College Square, 1924), 120-138

¹⁷ Dr. Abdur Rahman, "Taxila under the Ghaznavids," Journal of Central Asia, Vol. VI, No. 2, December, 1983. 173-177

¹⁸ A. H. Dani, "Taxila the old Metropolis of Gandhara," Journal of Asian Civilizations, Vol. XXIV, No. 2, December, 2001. 182-184

means Serpent and hills respectively¹⁹. So, the name of the city Taksha-sila interprets as the hills of the Serpents²⁰, because this area was under the management of Takshas tribe, they inhabited and ruled over Takshasila. Takshas, the oldest ruler of Taxila called Taka tribe. The name originated from their worship of Taksha, serpents, has given the name of the city Taksha-sila. The hill capital of the Takshakas.²¹

It can be possible that the name of the city derived from its founders, Takshau, who was a son of Bharata, but it can be also possible that the name of the town may be assumed from Taksh, a Serpent god, and sila a stone or rock.²²

According to another source, the literal meaning of the word Taksha in Sanskrit is 'to cut or to split' and sila means 'stone, rock or hill'.²³ So, the Taksha-sila signified 'the city of cut stone'²⁴. The Tibetan called it rdo-hiog which means cut-stone²⁵. According to the late F. C. Andreas, Naggaruda is the name of the city Taksha-sila in Aramic translation.²⁶

Fa-Hien, who was Chinese pilgrim says;

"From this [Gandhara] going east seven days, there is a country called Chu-ch'a-shi- lo. Chu-ch'a-shi-lo in Chinese words is [read 'means'] "cut-off head."²⁷

It is Buddhist belief that Buddha gave his head in charity to a man, due to which the kingdom got its name²⁸. Hieun Tseng, transcribed the region of Taxila

¹⁹ Muhammad Bahadar Khan, M. Hassan, M. Habibullah Khan Khattak, F. Rehman , and M. Aqleem Khan. "Bhir Mound: The First City of Taxila (Excavations Report 1998-2002)," Department of Archaeology and Museums & National Fund for Cultural Heritage, June, 2002. P.13

²⁰ Ibid

²¹ Ahmad Hasan Dani, A Short Guide to Taxila (Lahore: Institute of Heritage Education-Pakistan, 2000), P.1

²² J. G. Delmerick, " Notes On Archaeological Remains at Shah Ki Dheri And The Site Of Taxila," 89-95

²³ Dani, The Historic City of Taxila, P.1

²⁴ Ibid

²⁵ Marshall, " Taxila: An Illustrated Account of Archaeological Excavations Carried Out at Taxila Under the Orders of the Government of India Between the Years of 1913 and 1934" , P.1

²⁶ Marshall, " Taxila" P . 1

²⁷ Dani, The Historic City of Taxila, P.1.

²⁸ James Legge, Record of Buddhistic Kingdom, Paragon Book Reprint Corp, New York, ed., pp. 32-33

(Taksha-sila) as Ta-ch'a-shi-lo, where he mentions the monastery of the alms gift of the head by the Buddha.²⁹

Local people of the city have preserved the spelling Sir-kap for one of the sites.³⁰ Simple meaning of the word is "cut of head" in their language. In Sanskrit sir stands as 'siras' and kap meaning 'to cut'. To explain this name Alexander Cunningham taken resources to the Buddhist story of the voluntary beheading of the Buddha for charity³¹.

According to 'Pliny' and 'Ptolemy', the classical writers have spelled Taxila as 'TAXILLA' and 'TAXIALA'. Most of the classical writers have indicated that 'TAXILES' was the name as dynastic title of Taxilian rulers. It may be possible that the name of the city derived from it³².

Invasions and Political Control over Taxila

Taxila in Gandhara region faced several powers of antiquity and this region is witness of different rulers from different dynasties in period.

i. Taxila of the Aryans (pre-history)

In the middle of the second millennium BC, it was the century of Aryan's arrival in Taxila region. The legendary history of ancient Taxila goes back to glorious and remotest antiquity in the Aryan period. Taxila rose as a part of famous region of Gandhara (the land of fragrance) and stood its important position as one of the capitals of Gandhara³³.

According to Sir John Marshall, "that it (Taxila) was founded at the same time as Pushkalavati in Gandhara by Bharata, son of Kaikayi and younger brother of Rama, who installed two of his sons as rulers in the two cities; Taksha in Taksha-sila and Pushkala in Pushkalavati"³⁴ Mahabharata tells us that Taxila was conquered by the king Janmejaya of Hastinapura³⁵, he performed the great snake sacrifice here and managed to recite famous epic during his performance³⁶.

²⁹ Sameul Beal, Si-Yu-Ki or The Buddhist Records of Western World, Kegan Paul, Trench, Trubner & Co., London Vol. 1. P.136

³⁰ Dani, The Historic City of Taxila, P.1.

³¹ Ibid

³² Dr. Saifurrehman Dar, "Taxila and the Classic World," Journal of International Association for the Study of the Cultures of Central Asia Vol. VI, no. 1, July 1993:113-134

³³ Dani, A Short Guide to Taxila, P.4.

³⁴ Marshall, Taxila, P. 13.

³⁵ Khan, World Heritage Sites in Pakistan, P. 21.

³⁶ Ibid

Janmejaya was a son of Arjuna, Mahabharata hero, who established his rule in Taxila and seated on the top of Hathial mound³⁷. Hathial revealed three occupational levels and most of its levels belong to the Aryan's settlements, which are said to have settled at Taxila³⁸.

ii. The Achaemenids period (521-326 BC)

The history of Taxila begin to the period of Darius1 (521-486) of Persia, when he conquered this region and Taxila properly became a part of the Achaemenid empire about in the 6th/5th century BC³⁹. Pukkusati was the last ruler of this region⁴⁰, Pukkusati (Pushkala+Sakti= might of the city of Pushkalavati) ruled here after the Aryans,⁴¹ who defeated by Achaemenians. After that, Taxila became a seat of Achaemenian dynasty as a province of Gandhara⁴². The Achaemenians recruited soldiers from this region; they fought on the side of Darius III, against Alaxender the great in the battle of Gaugemela (331 B.C)⁴³. In addition, the Achaemenians employed of Aramean clerks, who use Aramic script of writing. The script gave origin of the Kharoshthi to the local writing.

In the decline period of the Achaemenid Empire, local armies became power full in the first half of the fourth century. In the rule of Artaxerxes II (404-359 B.C), large part of the dynasty asserting their independence, in this period Taxila had thrown off the Achaemenian yoke⁴⁴. After defeat of the Achaemenids, Taxila got the status of independent autonomy under the local ruler Ambhi. The region of Taxila maintained its independent status till the invasion of Alexander the great in 326 B.C.

iii. Greek rule / invasion of Alexander (326-324 BCE)

Alexander the great came from Macedonia in 334 B.C and started his campaign to conquest again the some parts of Achaemanid Empire, which was included in their colonies. Alexander wanted to establish the most power full empire of the

³⁷ Dani, A Short Guide to Taxila, P. 4

³⁸ Khan et al., P. 14

³⁹ Khan et al., P. 15.

⁴⁰ Dani, The Historic City of Taxila, P.43.

⁴¹ M. A. Halim, Sarwat Baig, Islamabad Museum: A Guide (Lahore: Scope International, 1995), 58.

⁴² Dani, Op Cit.,

⁴³ Ibid

⁴⁴ Khan et al., Op Cit.,

world, for this purpose he marched towards India⁴⁵. He entered in this region through Nawa pass & Bajaur and fought at Massaga in Dir, Bazira (Barikot) and Ora (Udegram) in Swat valley and then he entered in Peshawar region⁴⁶.

Darius III was the most active enemy of Alexander in the way of his conquest in 330 BC. He defeated Darius III, with the removal of his power full enemy; he marched ahead towards India and Afghanistan⁴⁷. Alexander across Indus and enters in the Punjab in the spring of 326 BC⁴⁸. The greatest King Pours, whose kingdom spread over the part of eastern side of the salt range beyond the river of Hydespes (Jhelum). Another king Abhisares was ruling in Hazara region. The third was Astes, the king of the eight Aryan tribes at Pushkalavati (Charsada); it was the western capital of Gandhara. In the north of Malakand range, the kingdom of Massaga in the Panchkora (the land of the Kuru-Panchal tribe)⁴⁹ were present to say welcome him with resistance. Alexander the great faced harsh resistance from these kingdoms, only one king of Taxila and his son Ambhi (Omphis) warmly welcomed him in Taxila. Omphis (Ambhi) urged his father to surrender their kingdom to Alexander.

Alexander the great stayed in Taxila for five days. It was obvious that king Ambhi was not in a position of successful resistance against Greeks. Another possible reason for offering hand of friendship to Alexander by Omphis, the king of Taxila (Taksha-sila) was at war with the Pours, the king Paurva, beyond the Hydespes (Jhelum)⁵⁰. It was a unique chance for Ambhi to defeat Porus, by offering friendship to achieve the long standing wish of defeating his enemy. Alexander stayed and refreshed his army in Taxila before the battle with Pours.

According to Alexander's historians,

"Taxila was then the greatest indeed of all the cities that lay between the river Indus and the Hydespes (Jhelum)"⁵¹.

⁴⁵ George Woodcock, *The Greeks in India*, Faber and Faber Ltd., Great Britain, 1966, P. 26.

⁴⁶ Halim & Baig, 58.

⁴⁷ A. L. Basham, *The Wonder that was India*. Sidgwick and Jackson, London, 1954, P.48.

⁴⁸ Marshall, *A Guide to Taxila* (Karachi: Sani Communication, 1960)

⁴⁹ Dani, *A Short Guide to Taxila*, P. 9.

⁵⁰ Khan et al., p. 16.

⁵¹ J. W., *Th John McCrindle Invasion of India by Alexander the Great as Describe by Arrian, Qcrtius, Diodoros, Plutarch and Justin*, Indus Publication, Reprint, 1992, P. 92.

Before leaving Taxila, Alexander appointed Philip on the conquered areas, he left the garrison and soldiers from conquered areas were also left in his command. Philip was assassinated by his own army in 324 BC⁵². Taxiles received orders from Alexander to carry on their rule with Euadamus , his competent officer until a successor could be appointed , that appointed never made in future⁵³.

Alexander died in 323 BC. The Macedonian rule survived hardly for three years in Taxila. Seleucus obtained Babylon, Syria, and Persia; Ambhi got his confirmation in possession of Taxila region⁵⁴. Taxila once again got its autonomy under the local ruler of Ambhi in 323 BC, but unfortunately, he could not survive as ruler for a long time, Chandragupta in 317 BC captured this region and made himself as the founder of Mauryan Empire.

iv. Mauryan period (321-189 BCE)

Chandaragupta Mauriya was a founder of Mauryan Empire, after the murder of Philip; it was a suitable situation for Chandaragupta for fulfilling his dream of becoming the king of India. He captured a large territory that were conquered by Alexander in his time and founded a great empire, which entered from Afghanistan to Bengal⁵⁵.

Taxila became under the Mauryan Empire. According to Justin, Chandragupta the founder of Mauryan Empire, one day he was laying asleep. A Lion of a great size came to him and licked him with tongue, when he awaked, the lion had been gone. After this exertion, he convinced himself for royal dignity⁵⁶. On another occasion, when Chandragupta was going to war against Alexandra's army, a wild elephant came near to him and presented itself before him for war.

Taxila was now an integral part of Mauryan empire but the Greeks started to re-captured their areas under the leadership of Seleucus Nicator in 306/305 BC⁵⁷, But he faced shameful defeat in the war against Chandragupta Maurya, and

⁵² Marshall, Taxila, P. 18.

⁵³ Ibid

⁵⁴ Khan et al., Op Cit.,

⁵⁵ Paul Masson Oursel, Hale,. De Gallinan-Grabowska, Philloippe Stern; Ancient India and Indian Civilization, Routledge and Kegan Paul Ltd., London, 1951 , P.37

⁵⁶ Dani, A Short Guide to Taxila, P. 15.

⁵⁷ Khan et al., p. 17.

became under his terms for peace treaty⁵⁸. Several Mauryan princes associated with the city of Taxila⁵⁹.

Bindusara (297-274 BC), the second Mauryan king, he was a son of Chandragupta. He appointed Susima and then Asoka as viceroy of Taxila. After his death, Asoka who was a son of Bindusara, ruled over India (274-237 BC). In the time of Asoka, Kunala a son of Asoka was appointed viceroy in Taxila.

In the period of Asoka,

“Taxila was made a great seat of Buddhist learning, though the city was home to minor rebellions during this time”⁶⁰.

The famous battle of Kalinga have been fought in Asoka’s period in which a large number of peoples have been killed, after this battle Asoka accepted Buddhism as religion and it flourished under the guardianship of Mauryan dynasty.

V. Indo-Greeks / Bactrian- Greeks (189-90 BC)

After Asoka’s death the whole empire, Taxila and other provinces assert their independence. So, the fall of empire was an easy prey for the Bactrian Greeks⁶¹. The later Greeks came from Bactaria; they raised the flag of revolt against Seleucidan Empire, established in west Asia. They built up their own separate independent kingdom in Central Asia. They lived in Bactria about 100 years and almost forgotten for a long time by the west classical writers. Classical writers discussed a very few kings from Bactrian empire.

The coins of Diodotus and Euthydemus periods have been found from Taxila. These kings fought to establish their position at two fronts. One of them is that they wanted to independence against Seleucidan Monarchs, and other hand they wanted to re- conquered the region which conquered earlier by Alexander, but later lost to the Mauryans.⁶²

However, the Greeks have come to throne in 189 BC in this region by Demetrius, but Menindar extended the Greek conquests to Kabul and all over the Punjab under the period of 160-140 BC. So it was assumed that Bactrian Greeks would have occupied Taxila sometimes after 160 BC. He pushed his conquests into Gandhara and across the Indus. It is to be said that Apollodotus and Menandar

⁵⁸ Khan et al.,

⁵⁹ Dar, 113-133

⁶⁰ Thapar Romila (1997). Asoka and the Decline of the Mauryans, (Rev . Ed.). Delhi: Oxford University Press, P. 52. ISBN 978-0-19-563932-2.

⁶¹ Marshall, A Guide to Taxila, P.13.

⁶² Dani, The Historic City of Taxila, P.63.

had played positive role in these conquests. They were contemporaries of Demetrius.⁶³

However Marshall writes that "in 189 BC. Demetrius succeeded his father Euthydemus and proceeded to conquer Gandhara; the Punjab and Indus valley. He made Taxila as his capital. From Demetrius onwards Pantaloons, Agathocles (c. 182 BC) Apollodotus I (c. 175), Menandar (c. 163), Strato I with Agathocleia as regent (c. 150), Heliocles (c. 145), Lysias (c. 135), Antialcidas (c. 125), Archadius (c. 100) ruled as the Greek kings or sub kings of Taxila⁶⁴.

Heliodrus, the latter's ambassador calls himself as a "Greeks from Taxila" however, Manendar extended Greek rule in Gandhara and he is well known in Buddhist literature. Strato, Manendar's son along Agathocleia, his queen mother ruled in Taxila until his old age. The last Greek king was Hermaeus⁶⁵. Indo-Greeks built a new capital on the opposite bank of the river called Sirkap in Taxila.⁶⁶

vi. Scythians Period (2nd century to 1st century)

The rule of Scythians (Sakas, as they are called in local literature).⁶⁷ came after the decline of the Greeks in Taxila. Scythians were the nomadic tribes from the interior of Asia. They called in Chinese as Sai or Sai-wang. These tribes related with three great tribes of Masagetae, Sacaraucae and Dahae⁶⁸. They were settled in Sistan in Parthian

province and they were mixed in Parthians and freely intermarried with them. Their country was situated between Jaxartes River and the Caspian⁶⁹.

Scythians conquered the Punjab and Taxila under their chief Maues or Mauakes, in Kharoshthi as Moa or Moga, in Chinese as Mu ku'a. King Maues use his title of "King of the Kings" on the coins. After his death, the title passed to the Parthian Vonones⁷⁰.

According to Sir John Marshall that the last Greek king of Taxila was overthrown by Maues about 90 BC and the Jandial temple was erected under Vonones, the

⁶³ Khan et al., p. 18.

⁶⁴ Ibid

⁶⁵ Dani, A Short Guide to Taxila, P. 19.

⁶⁶ Hermann kulke, Rothermund Dietmar (2004). A History of India (4thed.). Routledge.ISBN 0-415-32919-1

⁶⁷ Dani, The Historic City of Taxila, P.66.

⁶⁸ Marshall, A Guide to Taxila (Karachi: Sani Communication, 1960)

⁶⁹ Ibid

⁷⁰ Marshall, Op Cit.,

Parthian emperor (54-45BC)⁷¹. However, Marshall gives names and periods of the Saka ruler at Taxila which includes, Vonones (53 BC), Hermacus (48 BC), Azes I (38 BC), Azilises (10 BC), Azes II (AD 5)⁷².

vii. Parthians period (1st century BC to 1st century CE)

Scythians and Parthians were two sections of invaders. In Arochosia, one section of invaders established its supremacy under the supervision of Vonones, they were Parthians. Second one is Maues, who conquered Taxila. Maues raised his power in Arachosia in 95 BC; he reached Taxila some ten or fifteen years later⁷³. Azes I (58BC), who was associated with the family of Vonones in Arachosia government, as much a Parthian as a Saka⁷⁴. Scythians or Saka power was broken by Gondophares of Parthians. Sir John Marshall states that Gondophares in C.25 AD, defeated Azes II, established his rule in this region and set up his capital at Taxila⁷⁵.

Gondophares was an only greatest and significant ruler among other Indo-Parthians rulers. He was died in 50 CE, after his death Pakores who was Gondophares succeeded

in Gandhara. In 60 CE, the rule of Parthians became an end by the Kushans attack at the region⁷⁶.

In the period of Gondophares in Gandhara, the two famous personalities visited here, Appolonius of Tayana and his companion Demis. Philostratus wrote his biography and describe his visit to Taksha-sila Sirkap and Jandia I temple , which as located near to the city⁷⁷. A large number of coins associated with Gondophares period have been discovered, the coins depict him sitting on horseback⁷⁸. The death of Gondophares (around 50 CE) created an ideal situation for Kushans to launch an attack on the region of Gandhara.

viii. Kushans Dynasty Period (1st to 5th century CE)

⁷¹ Khan et al., p. 18.

⁷² Ibid

⁷³ Marshall, A Guide to Taxila, P.14.

⁷⁴ Ibid., p. 14.

⁷⁵ Khan et al., p. 19

⁷⁶ Rafi u Samad, The Grandeur of Gandhara: The Ancient Buddhist Civilization of the Swat, Peshawar, Kabul and Indus Valleys (New York: Algora Publishing, 2011), P. 70. WWW. Algora.com.

⁷⁷ "Taxila An Illustrated Account of Archaeological Excavations Carried out at Taxila by Sir John Marshall, Vol 1", Published by Cambridge University Press, 1951.

⁷⁸ Samad, P. 70.

With the collapse of Indo-Parthian Empire the history of Taxila shows that the way of rule was opened to the Kushans. According to Chinese historian, Kushans was a tribe who lived in NorthWest of China and they called Yueh-Chih. They captured Bactria and Oxus valley and in the final they conquered Northern India. The period of these conquests probably happened between 60 and 64 AD⁷⁹.

Kujula Kadphises, the founder of Kushan Empire which was ruled by Kushan dynasty. He succeeded Heraisos, his father as Hsi-hou-wang (the king) of Bactria. There were four tribes in Central Asia and Kujula Kadphises destroyed all of these tribes and merged their territories of Yueh-Chih in the kingdom of the Kuei-shuang (Kushans).

According to some scholars, that the king Kujula Kadphises didn't conquered Gandhara, he wrested the valley of Kabul from Parthians and after that he secedes, Kujula's son Vima Taktu and Vima Kadphises his grandson carried his conquests in

Western and Eastern Gandhara. Kushan era begins from the conquest of Gandhara region in 60 AD but some scholars says that Kushan rule started in this region when Kanishka came to the throne in 78 AD⁸⁰.

However, Kujula Kadphises, became the king of his mighty empire at the age of 30 and in 60 years of his age, he conquered Taxila region and extended his ambitions to conquer newly regions. He spent the last two decades to fulfill his ambitions and strengthening his position in newly conquered areas⁸¹. The king Kujula ruled over his vast empire almost for twenty years from the place of Taxila. His rule spread over in 60CE to 80CE. It is fact that Kujula Kadphises ruled over Gandhara after Gondophares's death. But, a very less references are present and indicates Gondophares's rule in this region till 50 CE⁸².

A large number of coins around 2633 were discovered from Taxila region. Excavations carried out by Sir John Marshall in 1913-1934. These coins associated with Kushan's Empire. 2518 coins out of 2633 belonged to Kujula Kadphises, and 4889 coins found from various sites of Taxila and all belonged to the Kushans. And most of the coins belonged to the founder of Kushan Empire, Kujula

⁷⁹ Marshall, A Guide to Taxila, P.19.

⁸⁰ Khan et al., p. 20

⁸¹ Samad, P. 80.

⁸² Ibid

Kadphises⁸³. The discovery of a large number of coins dominance of Kujula, from Taxila clears that he had established himself in the region of Gandhara before his death at the age of 80.

In the period of Vima Kadphises, Kushan capital had been shifted at Sirsukh (Taksha-sila) and he laid the foundation of new capital city of the region. A large number of coins belongs to him have been found from this site⁸⁴. In the period of around 120 CE, Vima Kadphises sent his ambassador in the court of Hadrian (Roman emperor) to establish diplomatic and political relations with him⁸⁵.

Marshall has mentioned important rulers of the great Kushans, which include Kanishka I (C.128-C.151), Vasashka (C.151-C.156), Kanishka II (C.156-C.169), Huvishka (C.169-C.202), and Vasudeva (C.202-C.230)⁸⁶. These kings of Kushan's dynasty issues a new series of gold and copper plated, with the image of royal portrait, bearing the title of Shaonaoshao (Shahin Shah)⁸⁷. Kanishka was a great famous king among Kushan's rulers; he portrayed the image of Buddha on his coins.

ix. Sassanid Period

Ardashir-i-Babagan, founder of Sassanian rule of Persia (A.D. 226-40)⁸⁸, he succeeded in establishing his suzerainty in Afghanistan in about 238 and appointed his princess as governors, who used the title of Kushana Shah or Kushana Shahan Shah on their coins. Varahran II extended Sassanid rule across the Indus. This is proved by Persepolis inscription of Shapur II⁸⁹.

The Sassanid dynasty from Persia overthrown by the Kushans of Bactria about C.238, then they preceded towards Gandhara and West Punjab. They could not maintain their

strong hold over the region and sometime later they had lost their control. According to Marshall, Shapur II (A.D. 309-80) continued his invasion on Kabul

⁸³ Sir John Marshall, *Taxila, An Illustrated Account of Archaeological Excavations Carried out at Taxila*, Cambridge, 1951, and Dr. Saifur Rehman Dar in *Taxila and The Western World*, Lahore, 1998.

⁸⁴ Marshall, *A Guide to Taxila*, Cambridge, 1960

⁸⁵ *Historia Augusta: 'The King of the Bactrians (Kushans) Sent Ambassadors to him to seek his Friendship'*.

⁸⁶ Khan et al., p. 20.

⁸⁷ Dani, *A Short Guide to Taxila*, P. 22.

⁸⁸ Khan, *Op Cit.*,

⁸⁹ Dani, *The Historic City of Taxila*, P.74.

valley; he was occupant on Gandhara and Punjab (C.350-C.385)⁹⁰. He established Persian control at Taxila.

Sassanians control had went loose in the period of Ardashir, when he invaded the region at the initial stage in C.230, and second attempt made in the 4th century by his

Successor. It is cleared that the dominance of Sassanid dynasty prolonged till the last decade of the century⁹¹. The rule over the region of Taxila was shared between three ruling families in the 2nd half of the 3rd and the early 4th centuries. The first is called Shaka and other two families were Shiladas and Gadhara (Gadakhara or Gakkahara), who was ruling in the Punjab. Another tribe, called Jouan-Jouan (probably Janjuas in latter history) made its strong way in to the Punjab from Central Asia⁹². In the period of Sassanids, there were establishing many local rules rose up as subsidiary dynasties, one of them was Gadakhare or Gakkhara, as known from coins but traditions remembers them as Kiyanis⁹³. According to Marshall that the Kushana of Bactria moved towards South of Hindu-Kush under their chief Kidara, they faced pressure by the Hiung-nu (Jouan-Jouan) and they were forced to move immediately in C.390⁹⁴.

x. Kidara Kushan

After downfall of Sassanid rule, Kushan of Bactria raised them under their chief Kidara. They wrest the region of Gandhara and Western Punjab. Kidara Kushan was a branch of Kushan Bactrians, they known as little Kushan, or better. They called themselves on the coins as Kidara Kushans. They came in power middle of the 5th century⁹⁵.

Kidara was the first ruler succeeded by Piro in 375, and he was succeeded by other rulers, Kritavirya, Siladitya, Sarvayasa, Bhasvan, Kusala and Prakasa⁹⁶. Kidara Kushans were followers of Buddhism. They ruled over Gandhara about seventy years and they made Peshawar as their capital and Taxila was only a province

⁹⁰ Jalil Qureshi, "Arros-ul-Billad Taxila (Taksha-sila)", Translated, 2003, P . 77

⁹¹ Khan et al., p. 22.

⁹² Dani, The Historic City of Taxila, P.74.

⁹³ Ibid

⁹⁴ Khan, Op Cit.,

⁹⁵ Dani, The Historic City of Taxila, P.74.

⁹⁶ Ibid

under their rule. A very famous Chinese pilgrim Fa'Hian visited Taxila in Kidara Kushan period⁹⁷. However, Kidara Kushan established themselves as a strong ruler in those areas, in 460 AD the White Huns invaded in this region and Kidara Kushan once again over thrown by them.

xi. White Huns (5th century CE)

Ephthalites or White Huns were the new invaders in Gandhara and the Punjab in the 3rd quarter of the 5th century. They were Barbarian tribe from Central Asia. Buddhist religion and art became badly damaged and received very harsh treatment by them⁹⁸.

According to Marshall, "Ephthalites or White Huns sweeping over Gandhara and the Punjab carry fire and sword wherever they went"⁹⁹. Thujina (or tigin or Tunjina), who was the first ruler of the Huns. He conquered Gandhara about 450¹⁰⁰. Tormana and Mihirakula were the famous among other Hun rulers. Mihirakula succeeded by Pravarasena then Khinkhila. The last Hun ruler was Yudhishtira; his rule was interrupted by the founder of the Karakota dynasty in Kashmir about 670 AD. At the time of the visit of Hiuen-Tasang Taxila was a dependency of Kashmir¹⁰¹

xii. Turk Shahi

After the decline of the Huns, Taxila became under the territory of Kashmir, and then Turk Shahi replaced them. Taxila once again changed its masters, this time Taxila became under the kingdom of Turk Shahis, they were associated Kanishka (Kushan)¹⁰². Kabul was the capital of Turk Shahi's, rule. Their last ruler was Maktorman¹⁰³. Turki Shahis defeated by the Arabs Ya'kub Lais and shifted the capital to Ohind of the Indus crossing.¹⁰⁴

Albiruni says that Barhatigin was the founder of the Turk Shahi rule in Gandhara¹⁰⁵. The history of this Turkish family can be traced back to at least A.D.

⁹⁷ Qureshi, P . 77.

⁹⁸ Khan et al., p. 21.

⁹⁹ Khan et al., p. 21.

¹⁰⁰ Dani, The Historic City of Taxila, P.75.

¹⁰¹ Ibid., P . 76.

¹⁰² Marshall, Taxila, P. 77

¹⁰³ Qureshi, P . 79.

¹⁰⁴ Marshall, A Guide to Taxila (Karachi: Sani Communication,1960). P . 38.

¹⁰⁵ Tauqeer Ahmad Warraich, " Gandhara: An Appriasal of its Meanings and History,"(J.R.S.P). Journal of Research Society of Pakistan, Vol. 48, No 1, 2011), 1-20

666¹⁰⁶, for some 177 years, the Turk Shahis remained in power. 843 was the period of end of their rule in Kabul, but the western branch of the Turk Shahis still in rule until the rise of Ya'qub Laith, who was ameer of Sistan and he captured Kabul in 870¹⁰⁷.

xiii.Hindu Shahi (9th to 10th century CE)

According to Alberuni, Lagaturman was dethroned by his minister Kallar, who was a Brahman¹⁰⁸. Kallar laid the foundation of the Hindu Shahi dynasty. He was a chief of Odi tribe, Hindu Shahi were Odhis whose settlement can still be found in Gandhara¹⁰⁹. Turk Shahis replaced by Hindu Shahis, they were Rajputs and They identified in modern time as Jouan-Joun (modern Janjuas)¹¹⁰. They survived at the age of A.D. 1013, when their last king Trilochana Pala defeated by Mehmud of Ghazni¹¹¹. The famous fort of Giri was built in Taxila under the period of Hindu Shahis. Hindu Shahis ruled over Gandhara for about two hundred years. The famous Fort of Giri was built in Taxila under the period of Hindu Shahis.¹¹²

Conclusion:-

According to Arrian records, "Taxila was a great and flourishing city in the period of Alexander the great"¹¹³Taxila was a wealthy prosperous large and a populous city between Indus and Hydaspes (Jhelum).

Starbo says that, "The country around about was thickly populated and extremely fertile"¹¹⁴. He also describes Taxila "a city which is large and has most excellent laws, and the country that lies around it is spacious, and very fertile, immediately bordering also on the plains".¹¹⁵ Plutarch also remarks on the richness of the soil¹¹⁶. According to Hsuan Tsang, he tells us about lands fertility of Taxila and its richness, flowing streams and fountains, flowers and fruits and agreeable climate

¹⁰⁶ A. H. Dani, B. A. Litvinsky and M. Z. Zamir Safi, Eastern Kushans Kidarites in Gandhara and Kashmir, and Later Hephthalites, 167-186. ISBN 978-92-3-1032110.-

¹⁰⁷ Ibid

¹⁰⁸ Warraich, Op Cit., 1-20

¹⁰⁹ Dani, et al., Op Cit., 167-186

¹¹⁰ Dani, A Short Guide to Taxila, P. 27.

¹¹¹ Marshall, Taxila, P. 78.

¹¹² Dani, Op Cit.,

¹¹³ Khan et al., p. 22

¹¹⁴ Ibid

¹¹⁵ Dar, 113-133.

¹¹⁶ Khan, Op Cit.,

Pliny explains Taxila, "A famous city situated on a low but level plain in a district called Amanda".¹¹⁷

According to Jataka's early Buddhist literature, Taxila was a famous university, where students could get education in almost any subject

Taxila had badly destroyed by the Hun invaders. They burnt every sign of civilization from Taxila. They used all of wealth and resources of Taxila and looted in a very bad way. The great city of Taxila witnessed massacres of humanity. The fame of this city, height of popularity, prosperity had become ended by these ungracious tribe.

After the conquest of this region by the Muslims, Lahore and Delhi became new points of the Muslim dynasty. The whole political activities and developments shifted to Delhi and Lahore¹¹⁸. There is no any Muslim monument were built in this region. Taxila remained a local city under local Gakkhars. Taxila had lost its importance during mediaeval period; its glorious place had been taken over by Peshawar in the West and Lahore in the East¹¹⁹. In addition, with the passage of time, Taxila lost its position as place of art, culture and trade, because Lahore was the new hub of trade, culture and Muslim art.

¹¹⁷ Dar, 113-133

¹¹⁸ Dani, "Taxila the Old Metropolis of Gandhara," 182-184

¹¹⁹ Ibid