

## CHAPTER - VII

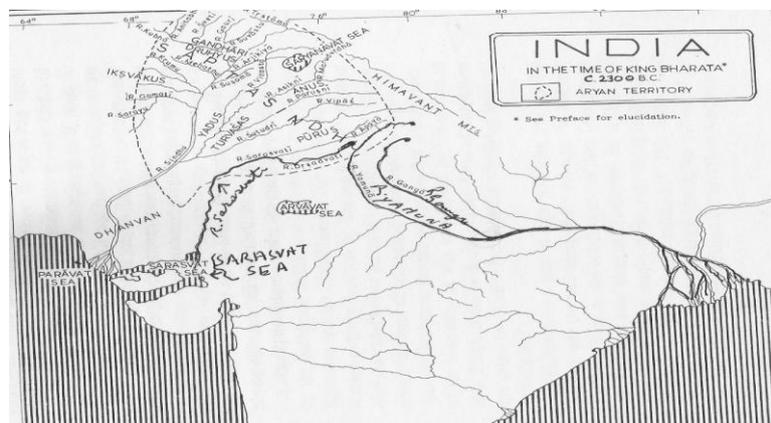
Between the period of Raja Dashratha's rule and now, thousands of years have passed. The areas East of Lucknow in ancient period was full of thick Jungles. It was thinly populated. There were hundreds of Jungles, many of them remained as such even till 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> Century. Major General Sir W.H.Sleeman K.C.B. resident at the Court of Lucknow conducted survey of the Kingdom of Oudh on the instruction of the then Governor General the Earl of Dalhouse, an appointee of East India Company and submitted his report\, which was published in 1849-1850, by Recharad Bently Publisher in Ordinary to Her Majesty, London, with the title of "A Journey through the Kingdom of Oudh", where-in besides many things he gave details of various jungles which existed at that time in Oudh and at the banks of Tamsa, Majhui, Sai , Kunwar Rivers. The River Tamsa may have been flowing from near Awantikapuri and may have changed its course more towards North where it is flowing now. Hence the statement of the Pujari of Awank temple about Lord Rama's stoppage at Awantikapuri can not be completely brushed aside as myth.

After going through the ancient history of the area it appears that Tamsa River was considered very sacred. That is why the hermitage of Valmiki was at the bank of Tamsa, Durbasa Rishi at the junction of Majhui and Tamsa Rivers, Datta Tria Rishi, Deval Maharaj had their Ashrams at the Bank of Tamsa near Nizamabad. About five miles North of Mohammadabad Gohna there is a sacred village called Devla, Tamsa also passes by Ghosi where there is a Kund called Sita Kund and Hindus believe that Lord Ram, Laxmana and Sita stayed at the spot for one night while on their way to Vanvasa. It is also believed that the famous Alha and Udal lived in a village called "Sondhi" which is also in the District of Azamgarh. According to Hindu mythology the daughter of Maharaja "Daksh" called "Sati" who was wife of Hindu god "Mahadevji" killed herself by jumping in a fire kund at the bank of Tamsa River, because her father, Raja Daksh insulted her. It is believed by Hindus that the said Sati took re-birth in Himmanchal Pradesh as "Parvati" and got married to another Hindu god Shankerji. All these even if believed as myth, still associated with the area around Azamgarh shows the importance of the area in the ancient period.

Changing of course by rivers is not uncommon. The Sacred River Sarasvati which was flowing through Punjab, Haryana, Rajasthan, Gujrat and merged with Arabian Sea in Kutch in pre-historic age. According to Hindu belief at some un-known period the river Sarasvati vanished from the surface of its original course and is flowing underground and after changing its course merged with Ganges in Allahabad.

The belief that Sarasvati vanished from the surface and is flowing underground is a myth. The Yamuna originates from Yamunotari in the Himalyas and was flowing just near the spot from were Sarasvati originated from a spot called Sarasvat where even today there is a temple called Sarasvat Temple. Sarasvati originally was flowing through Punjab, Haryana, Rajasthan and Gujrat to Kutch and then to Arabian Sea which spot used to be called Sarasvat Sea in ancient age. In those days Jamuna was flowing through Karnal, to Bhiwani to Gurgaon, Delhi, Mathura, Agra and to Allahabad. Jamuna changed its course and from Ambala came straight to Delhi through some portion of Haryana.(Ref. Delhi's Ancient History, edited by Upinder Singh page 19 Chapter Pre-Historic Delhi published by Esha Beteille Social Science Press 69 Jor Bagh, New Delhi in 2006).

Similarly Sarasvati also changed its course and merged with River Jamuna right at its source. Both Sarasvati and Jamuna became one River, and merged with Ganges in Allahabad. That is why the Hindus believe that at Allahabad the three rivers, Ganga, Jamuna and Sarasvati merges. That is why the Sangam at Allahabad is also called Triveni. The place of origin of Sarasvati and Jamuna has been shown in map at page 62 of P. L. Bhargava's book (supra) reproduced hereunder. You will find that Yamuna river passes near the origin of Sarasvati river and with the passage of time Sarasvati changed its course and merged with Yamuna:-



The second story as narrated by the Pujari of the temple of Awank tall (Jheel) was about the the Temple which existed surrounded by water and that it was the abode of Raja Prakshit to escape the effect of the curse (sharap) by the son of Shiringi Rishi. Siringi Rishi died due to snakebite. The snake was thrown upon Shringhi Rishi by Raja Prakshit in anger since the Rishi did not respond to his call for water. The Rishi was in meditation at that time. Parikshit new that only place he will be safe where snake (Naag) cannot reach is in the midst of water having no dry land approach. The construction of structure in the

water to escape snake bite may be myth, instead Raja Parakshit may have constructed a fort or palace for his abode in the mist of the Tall/lake in deep water around. However ultimately Raja Prakshit was killed by Naga (according to Hindu mythology by Naag Raj Dikshit). To avenge the killing of his father, the son of Raja Prakshit, Janmayagaya conducted sarp yagya to kill and destroy the Naag. This story of the Pujari gets support from the following, but in a different form.

At Page 78 Chapter 10 of his book Dr. P.L. Bhargava writes:- “JANAMEJAYA The King Who Conquered Vast Territories. **After reigning for twenty-four years, Parikshit was killed at the age of sixty by Naga**”. Dr. P. L. Bhargava further explains that in Sanskrit Naga means Snake. There is also a human tribe called Naga. Dr. P.L. Bhargava says that probably they are of Mangolian origin. It is therefore possible that the cause of the death of this king was his conflict with the tribe of Nagas who seem to have established their dominion in the northwest of India. Parikshit was succeeded by his son, the celebrated monarch Janamejaya in about 1040 B.C. He made a carnage of his father’s enemy, the Nagas, and carried his arms in the North-West as far as Taxila and also in the East of his kingdom. The limits of his conquests in that direction is not known. The capital of Janamejaya’s kingdom was Hastinapura at the bank of Ganges.

Janamejaya was the first Aryan king to have consolidated a vast kingdom by annexing the territories conquered in his empire. By his annexations he sowed the seeds of the political unity of India, which sprouted in the reigns of the Haryanka kings of Magadha South Bihar in the sixth century BC”.

The above description of Dr. P.L. Bhargava shows that the kingdom of Raja Prakshit and Janmaayajaya included the areas of Kosala (Ayodhya) and Kasi . In other words the Awantika/ Anwak was also in his kingdom. This proves the second story of the Pujari of the Temple of the Awank Tall that Janamejaya visited the spot and may have conducted some sort of Havan at the place the remnants of which i.e. the Havan Kund full of ashes and burnt barley (Jao) and snake bones, are found there. This was checked and verified by me personally in 1968, and gets authentication when National Archive Nalanda conducted excavation in 2000, and the finding were reported in Hindi Daily Danik Jagran issue dated 14<sup>th</sup> June, 2000 published from Varanasi.