

Chandragupta-II, Vikramaditya ascended the throne in 375 A.D. Samudragupta selected Chandragupta-II as his successor to the throne 'out of his many sons' by considering him as his Sat-putra or the most worthy son. Chandragupta-II was the son of queen Datta or Dattadevi, described as Mahadevi.

The Bihar and Bhitari stone pillar inscriptions of Skandagupta describe Chandragupta-II as 'Tatparigrihita' which implies that he was selected by his father from among his other brothers.

On Chandragupta-II's character V. A. Smith writes, "Little is known concerning his personal character, but the ascertained facts of his career suffice to prove that he was a strong and vigorous ruler, well qualified to govern and argument an extensive empire".

On the basis of literary evidence some scholars opine that Ramagupta the elder brother of Chandragupta-II succeeded Samudragupta. From the Drama Devichandraguptam of Vishakadatta it is known that Ramagupta was defeated by a Saka king. The Saka king demanded the surrender of his queen Dhruva Devi, Chandragupta-II killed the Saka king. He replaced his brother on the imperial throne and married Dhurvadevi.

But scholars do not accept this story to be a genuine historical tradition. Contemporary epigraphic records do not make reference to any prince named Ramagupta. Moreover no coins bearing the name of Ranigupta have been discovered so far.

Many names of Chandragupta-II have been discovered Sanchi inscription mentions him as 'Devaraj' and 'Vakataka Inscription' refer to him with the name of 'Devagupta' Scholars are of the view that his real name was Chandragupta-II and he had adopted the titles of 'Devaraj', Devagupta and Devashree etc.

Like his grand father Chandragupta-1. Who strengthened his position by wisely marrying a Lichchavi Princess? Chandragupta-II strengthened his position and extended his influence by two possibly three important marriage alliances.

(1) He married Kubernaga. a Naga princess. Though the Nagas had been several times defeated by Samudragupta, they have not annihilated and their power influences in Northern India were considerable.

(2) He married his daughter. Prabhavatigupta with Rudrasena-II. The Vakataka king. Samudragupta no doubt had occupied eastern part of the Vakataka territory but under Prithvisena, the Vakatakas had extended their power and influence. The Vakataka alliance helped

The Vakataka alliance helped Chandragupta-II in defeating the Western Satraps.

(3) Possibly a third alliance was made with the Kadainbas of Kuntala.

Kalidasa's Kuntalas Varadantyaam refers to such an alliance.

Kakusthavarman, of Kuntala, in an inscription has also stated with evident pride that he had married his daughters in honoured families like the Guptas. Just as the Vakataka and Naga kingdoms Kadamba country too, was strategically situated, in view of Chandragupta's aim of conquering the Western Satraps.

His Conquests:

At first Chandragupta-II wanted to knock down the Saka Satraps. The Sakas were a foreign power and very influential in India. For more than three hundred years the Sakas had been ruling over three-provinces of Malwa (Ujjain), Gujrat and Saurashtra (Kathiaward).

The Satavahanas and the Nagas had tried to eclipse the power of the Sakas but failed in their mission.

Samudragupta could have knocked them down but he was otherwise busy in conducting war operations in other important areas. Bui Chandragupta-II could not tolerate the existence of the powerful Sakas in the border of his empire.

The second reason was that Chandragupta- II wanted to occupy the rich ports of the West Indian Coasts which were controlled by the Sakas.

Chandragupta-II directed his campaign against the Sakas and marched to Eastern Malwa being accompanied by his minister.

Virasena Saba and General Amarakarddeva. It is confirmed by the coins of Chandragupta-II that the conquest of the Saka dominions took place towards the close of fourth century and the beginning of fifth century A.D. Chandragupta-II first occupied Eastern Malwa and made it a base of operation in the war against the Saka ruler Rudrasimha-III.

After a prolonged war Rudrasimha was defeated and killed. Chandragupta-II then annexed Malwa, Gujrat and Kathiawar to the Gupta Empire. Then Chandragupta-II bestowed upon himself the title 'Sakari' or the destroyer of the Sakas. He also assumed the honorific title of Vikramaditya.

The result of the victory over the Sakas was that it enhanced the prestige and glory of the Gupta dynasty. The Gupta Empire now extended from the Bay of Bengal to the Arabian Sea Coast.

The acquisition of the fertile and rich regions of Western Malwa Gujrat and Saurashtra (Kathiawar) the Gupta Empire could enhance its economic prosperity. The overseas trade brought unbounded wealth for the empire, by conquest of all the three kingdoms that the Gupta Empire was brought into direct touch with the Western sea-ports like Broch, Cambay and Sopara.

Trade with Rome made the country prosperous. The overseas trade also brought the exchange of cultural ideas between India and the West. In India the Island trade and traffic remarkably increased because of the free passage of mercantile goods between Northern and Western India.

After the conquest of Western India Chandragupta-II established his 2nd capital at Ujjain and made it the political, religious and cultural centre of India.

The Mehrauli Iron Pillar Inscription near the Qutbminar at Delhi mentions the military exploits of a king called 'Chandra' who defeated a confederacy of hostile chiefs in varge and "having crossed in warfare, the seven months of the Sindu conquered. Valialikas, King Chandra has been identified by many scholars with Chandragupta-II.

So if this identification is accepted, the Chandragupta-II defeated a confederacy of hostile Vanga kings and conquered the Vahalika territories or Bacteria. The province of Bengal was brought under his direct control. Vahalika is identified with Balkh or Bacteria beyond the Hindukush Mountains.

According to Dr. R.C. Majumdar. "Thus if we accept the identity of Chandra of the Delhi Iron Pillar Inscription with Chandragupta-II we may well presume that his victorious arms penetrated as far as the Eastern limits of India and beyond Hindukush to the North-West.

If we remember that he had also conquered the Saka kingdoms in Western Malwa Gujarat and Kathiawar. We may regard Chandragupta-II as having rounded off the Gupta imperial dominions in Northern India in all directions. He thus completed the task began by his father "